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PROCEEDINGS OF THE 88TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE AMERICAN LEGION

TRANSMITTING

THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND INDEPENDENT AUDIT OF THE AMERICAN LEGION PROCEEDINGS OF THE 88TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, HELD IN SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH FROM AUGUST 25–31, 2006 AND A REPORT ON THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR PRECEDING THE CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO 36 U.S.C. 49

FEBRUARY 6, 2007.—Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and ordered to be printed

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

THE AMERICAN LEGION,
Washington, DC, February 2, 2007.

Honorable NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM 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 88th annual National Convention held in Salt Lake City, Utah from August 25–31, 2006 and a report on our organization's activities for the year preceding the convention.

Sincerely,

STEVE A. ROBERTSON,
Director, National Legislative Commission.

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FOREWORD

This booklet has been prepared for the information of members of The American Legion. It has come to be known as the Summary of Proceedings of the National Convention for the current year. It is a comprehensive resumé, in as small space as possible, of what took place at the Eighty-eighth Annual National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29-31, 2006.

The final report of the National Organization, for the period ending December 31, 2005, and Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2005 and Surplus Analysis, January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2005 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: Willard F. Coffey, Michigan; James H. Hall, New Jersey; Taurino J. Trevino, New Mexico; Sebastian T. Roll, North Dakota; Michael E. Harris, Virginia.

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

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

* *indicates deceased*

HONORARY COMMANDERS

General 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 Judge: 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*, Califomia
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 Indiana

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

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

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

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

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

16th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Miami, Florida, October 22 to 25, 1934
Commander: Edward A. Hayes*, Illinois
Vice Commanders: Charles R. Mabey*, Utah; Robert L. Gordon*, Arkansas; Miguel Munoz*, Puerto Rico; Ed W. Carruth*, Kansas; Charles L. Woolley*, Rhode Island.
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rev. Robert J. White*, Massachusetts

Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: Neal Grider*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Remster A. Bingham*, Indiana

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

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

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

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

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

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

23rd NATIONAL CONVENTION
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 15 to 18, 1941
Commander: Milo J. Warner*, Ohio
Vice Commanders: Erwin A. Froyd*, Wyoming; James L. McCrory*, Nebraska;

Harold P. Redden*, Massachusetts; Edward R. Stirling*, Pennsylvania;
Alcee S. Legendre*, Louisiana
Adjutant: Frank E. Samuel*, Kansas
Chaplain: Rev. Brigadier William G. Gilks*, Texas
Historian: Thomas M. Owen, Jr. *, Alabama
Treasurer: John R. Ruddick*, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Ralph B. Gregg*, Indiana

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

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

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

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

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

29th NATIONAL CONVENTION
New York, New York, August 28 to 31,

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

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

31st NATIONAL CONVENTION
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, August 29 to September 1, 1949
Commander: S. Perry Brown*, Texas
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*, Califomia
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*, Califomia
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 Earnest N. Schmit, North Dakota 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 Crimes*, 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-Vazquez*, Puerto Rico; Charles R. Green*, Ohio; Robert W. Groccia, Massachusetts, John N. Lockhart*, Hawaii
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: James Clay McKee, Utah
Historian: Herberta T. Stark*, New Hampshire
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

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

68th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Cincinnati, Ohio, August 29 to September 4, 1986
Commander: Dale L. Renaud*, Iowa
Vice Commanders: Bernard Black, South Carolina; Norman Conn*, California; Vito

M. DeFilipp*, Maine; Miles S. Epling, West Virginia, H. F. 'Sparky' Gierke, North Dakota
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Dr. Gordon L. Patterson,* Nebraska
Historian: Ethel M. Matuschka,* Wisconsin
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

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

70th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Louisville, Kentucky, September 6 to 8, 1988
Commander: John P. 'Jake' Comer, Massachusetts
Vice Commanders: Neale V. Cabral*, Connecticut; Joe Frank, Jr., Missouri; W. P. 'Bill' Peterson, Montana; Paul B. Phifer, Jr.,* Virginia; F. Leon Reed*, Arkansas
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Jerry 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. Caouette, New Hampshire; Andrew J. Cooper, Alabama; Gerald Goetzinger, South Dakota;
Vinton R. Guy, Colorado
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Lynn S. Kearsley, Idaho
Historian: C. Carl Pilgrim,* South Carolina
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

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

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

75th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, September 3 to 9, 1993
Commander: Roger A. Munson*, Ohio

Vice Commanders: Joseph V. Adams, Pennsylvania; Paul Andrejewski, Minnesota; Robert E. 'Jack' David, South Carolina; John William 'Bill' Murphy*, 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, Michigan
Chaplain: Charles H. Richmond, Oklahoma
Historian: Barbara 'Bobbe' Stuvengen, Wisconsin
Treasurer: Webber LaGrange, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

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

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

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

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

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

85th NATIONAL CONVENTION
St. Louis, Missouri, August 26-28, 2003
Commander: Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania
Vice Commanders: Jefferson 'Jeff' Luginbuel; Roy L. Kirkham, Louisiana; Robert M. Johnson, Maryland; Robert G. Bournival, New Hampshire;
Donavon R. Mason, South Dakota
Adjutant: Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
Chaplain: Rev. Norris A. Keim, Indiana
Historian: Donald F. Simons, Texas
Treasurer: George A. Buskirk, Indiana
Judge Advocate: Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland

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

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

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

PROCEEDINGS

of the

88th Annual Convention

of

The American Legion

Tuesday, August 29, 2006

...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 88th Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were conducted.

Call to Order
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

Ladies and gentlemen, before we begin our program, please join me in a round of applause for Peter Ole, a friend for 32 years.

The 88th National Convention will come to order. Please rise as the National Champion Color Guard from the 2nd District, Department of Indiana, Portage, Indiana presents the Colors and remain standing for the singing of the National Anthem by Michael Peterson of Nashville, Tennessee.

...At this time the Delegates saluted the flag and remained standing for the singing of the National Anthem.

For the invocation, I call on National Chaplain Bishop Steven E. Wright of Syracuse, Utah. Ladies and Gentlemen, please uncover.

Invocation
Bishop Steven E. Wright, Utah, National Chaplain

Our beloved Father in Heaven, how we thank Thee for the great blessings of this day. We thank Thee for the blessing of coming together in convention once again. We're grateful for the preparations that have been made and pray that Thou will bless those efforts that the convention as it goes forward may do so in harmony and strength and unity. May we accomplish all that we are here to do.

Oh, dear Father, we thank Thee for this great land, this land of liberty, this home of the brave. May we forever champion it. Help us Father to keep Thee in our hearts. We love Thee.

We pray that we will be righteous as a people; that we may receive the blessings that Thou has for us. Now we are grateful for those who service in the armed forces. Wilt Thou bless them and sustain them, especially those who find themselves in the throes of battle. We pray for their families everywhere. We pray for those who have lost loved ones. Wilt Thou bless and sustain them with Thy peace and comfort, and help us their friends, their neighbors, to sustain them as well.

We pray for the leadership of this great organization. And we pray for the leadership of our country. May we sustain and support them. Bless those who will address us during this conference, that they may say the things that are right and true.

Now we pray for these things, asking Thy blessings upon the youth of this nation. And wilt Thou bless us as parents and grandparents that we will strengthen them and help them to grow into the men and women who will take care of all that we have tried to take care of ourselves.

We humbly pray and we offer a benediction offering a moment of silence to each, that we may insert the benediction of our own hearts and faith. Amen.

Pledge of Allegiance

NATL COMDR BOCK: Join me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag.

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

POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony
Michael D. Helm, Nebraska, Chairman, Foreign Relations Commission
Doc Simon, Vermont, Vice Chairman, Foreign Relations Commission

Now we pause to remember those who are listed as prisoners of war or missing in action from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War and Iraq. We in The American Legion will never forget them. We will not ease the pressure on our govemment to do the right thing and continue to work for an accounting of all those missing.

I call on the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Commission, Michael D. Helm of Nebraska, and Doc Simon of Vermont, Vice Chairman of the Foreign Relations Commission, to place the POW/MIA flag on the Empty Chair.

...At this time the POW/MIA flag is placed on the Empty Chair.

Preamble to The American Legion Constitution
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

Legionnaires, join me in reaffirming our commitment to the principles and ideals on which the great American Legion was founded by reciting the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion.

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

NATL COMDR BOCK: Welcome to our Convention a true friend of veterans, active duty personnel and the children of America. He has spent much of the past few years supporting the "Harvesting Great Americans" initiative from the Department of the Army aimed at developing our children into great Americans. He also accompanied the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on his holiday USO tour to the Middle East.

In his spare time, he's one of America's top country music artists. From Nashville, Tennessee, please give a warm welcome to Mr. Michael Peterson. (*Applause.*)

...At this time the delegation was entertained by Michael Peterson.

NATL COMDR BOCK: It is appropriate that we begin our convention honoring those we serve throughout the year. It's a perfect reminder of why we gather in this forum to plan and prepare for the year ahead. It reminds us of the exceptional men, women and children we come into contact with throughout the year. It reminds us of the impact we have on this great nation every day, in every community we serve. Let us begin by honoring our 2006 Youth Champions. Michael Peterson, would you please join me in presenting the youth awards.

ANNOUNCER: John 'Max' Taylor, 17, from Palm Bay, Florida is the 2006 Boys Nation President. He is a senior at Melbourne High School and plans to attend Vanderbilt University and study politics. Welcome the 2006 Boys Nation President, Max Taylor. (Applause.)

The American Legion Youth Champions
2006 Boys Nation President
John 'Max' Taylor, Palm Bay, Florida

Thank you all so much for being here. First of all, I would just like to thank every individual who is in this room today. Without each and every one of you, it would not be

possible for me to be standing here with so many of the heroes of our great nation.

I quote the late John Fitzgerald Kennedy. "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." This is exactly what I have learned from the Boys State and Boys Nation programs, that there is not only a deep sense of patriotism, but a sense of duty in regards to public service.

I have learned that we have so much to be thankful for as Americans, and I will spend my life trying to serve the American people. I've learned over the past three months that the American dream is achievable by anybody. I'm a very ordinary 17-year old from Palm Bay, Florida, a town that you probably never heard of. But I've learned that through hard work and dedication, anything is possible. But without The American Legion, the Legion Auxiliary, and the Sons of The American Legion, I would simply not be here today.

Few people from my town have ever met a President of the United States, let alone shaken his hand in the East Room of the White House. Furthermore, few people from my town have met Senator Hillary Clinton, let alone talked about her husband's Boys Nation experience in 1963.

You all have given me a gift and the privilege to stand here today and speak in front of so many of you heroes. I'd just like to say that I will take everything that I have learned over the past three months with me in every walk of life wherever I may go. I hope to be a senator from the great State of Florida, but that is a very tough task.

May I just say thank you for your pride and your faith in the youth of America, because without you this would not be possible. God bless you all. God bless The American Legion. And God bless America. *(Standing applause.)*

ANNOUNCER: Thomas Santelli, 17, of Washington, Pennsylvania, is the 2006 American Legion Shooting Sports Champion. He set a new precision standing record of 785, and also tied the precision prone record of 800.

He claimed the overall Precision Championship with a score of 2474.4 out of 2509. Thomas also plays baseball and the bagpipes. He's currently working on becoming an Eagle Scout and spends time volunteering in his community. Ladies and gentlemen, Thomas Santelli.

2006 Junior Shooting Sports Champion
Thomas Santelli, Washington, Pennsylvania

I'm greatly honored to be here today, thanking The American Legion for their sponsorship of the Junior Shooting Sports Program. I also thank the Sons of The American Legion for their generous donation of the $1,000 college scholarship. This scholarship has helped 15 young men and women before me to attend college and learn the necessary tools needed to be successful in life. I'd like to thank you all for making this scholarship possible for me to attend college so I may learn the tools necessary to be successful in life.

The Junior Shooting Sports Program not only supports youth shooting, but it supports the 2nd Amendment. There wouldn't be a 1st Amendment or a 4th Amendment without the 2nd Amendment. There wouldn't be a Constitution without the 2nd Amendment. But there wouldn't be a 2nd Amendment without the protection of our military, past and present.

I thank all of you and all of our men and women in the military for protecting the 2nd Amendment and fighting for the freedoms of all Americans.

I also thank all of you in this room for your selfless sacrifice to our country. I know many of you in this room have served in our military in battle and sacrificed everything you have to protect the freedoms of all Americans. It was your sacrifice to this country that protected and still protects to this day our God-given rights to live as free citizens of this great nation. And the youth programs wouldn't be possible, and youth champions, all of us, would not be sitting here without your sacrifice. *(Standing applause.)*

ANNOUNCER: A Glendale, Arizona student has been named The American Legion

Eagle Scout of the Year for 2006. Nicholas Peter Coury, 18, is a senior at Ironwood High School and a member of Boy Scout Troop 262.

The award recognizes Coury's involvement in school, religious and community service projects. Coury is also an honors student, carrying a 4.0 academic average. He plans to attend Arizona State University to pursue a double degree in math and science. Please welcome Nicholas Peter Coury, the 2006 Eagle Scout of the Year.

2006 Eagle Scout of the Year
Nicholas Peter Coury, Glendale, Arizona

It is such an honor to be named the Eagle Scout of the Year and to be here in front of all of you. Throughout my life, I've always been told that I need to remain well-rounded in what I do. As a result of that, I've always tried to get involved with a variety of different clubs and activities. So, between my running and my community service, my business clubs and my church, I've always tried to do different things so I'd see the different aspects of life.

But by far, the most valuable activity I've ever done has been the scouting program. Because in this one single program is not just one valuable thing, but a plethora of valuable activities that create a well-rounded individual.

In this program you are taught how to remain physically fit and healthy. You're taught outdoor skills of camping and hiking. You're taught to pursue scholarship in your academic success. You are encouraged to be active in your faith, whatever that may be.

Through this program you also gain many valuable friends. The strongest friends I have are the ones I've gained in scouting. You're put into many leadership roles that you lead other boys instead of just the adults taking care of everything for you.

But perhaps the most important thing to me that I see in the scouting program is that it builds strong role models. So that when you become an older scout, you're there to help the younger scouts grow and learn just as you have. And the reason this is so important is because it helps the program to strengthen itself and to continue to grow throughout the years. These same qualities I see in The American Legion, the Auxiliary, and the Sons of the Legion. And it touches me so much being here because talking to everyone I've talked to, I see how much you do that same thing. You are there to support the youth and help them to grow and learn.

I thank my parents and family for always being there to support me and help me to grow. I'd also thank those who have taught me all the different things I have learned throughout my life. I thank Dave Hart and John Aldecoa from Arizona, as well as Mike Buss for all the support and mentoring they have given to me. And I thank each of you for all that you've done, not only for me, but for all of the youth in the nation, so that the strong nation that you have built today will continue to grow tomorrow. *(Standing applause.)*

ANNOUNCER: Nicholas Russell Elledge took top honors in this year's National Oratorical Contest with a speech titled "The Constitution Is Not A Spectator Sport." Nick, who is a high school junior from Knoxville, Tennessee earned an $18,000 scholarship for his efforts. Please welcome the 2006 Oratorical Contest Champion, Nicholas Elledge.

2006 1st Place Winner National Oratorical Contest
Nicholas Russell Elledge

Thank you. That is what I have been wanting say for the past four days, waiting for this large meeting just to be able to say thank you to each of you for supporting the Oratorical Contest Program. I thank you for two reasons. First, for what it's done for me and second, for what it does for thousands and thousands of other youth who participate in the program.

The other day I saw a fish all by himself and I said, "Hey, man, stay in school." *(Laughter.)* That is exactly what the oratorical contest has enabled me to do. Through the generous scholarships I've been able to pursue educational options that would have been

otherwise impossible. So, I thank you for that.

But I also want to thank you for inspiring thousands and thousands of other people to love the Constitution of the United States and to learn effective communication skills. Because each year, this contest requires high school students to write a 10 minute speech on the Constitution, which is something they obviously would not otherwise do. So, I want to thank you for that.

This goes along with everything that The American Legion stands for such as passing things on to the next generation. You pass on democratic principles to the next generation; you pass on freedom to the next generation; and through this contest you are passing on communication skills and a love of the Constitution. *(Standing applause.)*

ANNOUNCER: Jose "Fernando" Irizarry Montero is the 2005 George W. Rulon American Legion Player of the Year. The Guaynabo, Puerto Rico athlete was accepted to the University of Massachusetts and was recruited as a catcher for the University Division One baseball team. The award is based on integrity, mental attitude, leadership, citizenship, sportsmanship, general good conduct, and playing ability. Please welcome the 2005 American Legion Baseball Player of the Year, Fernando Irizarry.

2005 Baseball Player of the Year
Jose "Fernando" Irizarry Montero, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico

I'm honored on being here for this great activity. Being part of The American Legion Baseball can mean just baseball for some people, but for me and for the Puerto Ricans it means getting people out of the streets and making them good citizens. Now, I represent The American Legion anywhere I go. And so that strengthens me to do my best and to achieve greatness. I am now going to hit the ball really hard for The American Legion. *(Laughter and applause.)*

This trip has been a great experience that I will never forget. I will go out with a bag full of experience that will serve me as an example and that of how proud you Americans are of your country. That will make me proud of it, too.

Thanks to The American Legion and to the District of Puerto Rico for helping me become a man and making my dreams come true. I will always carry you people in my heart. *(Standing applause.)*

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, another round of applause for our 2006 American Legion Youth Champions. (Standing applause.)

Presentation of the Spirit of Service Awards

ANNOUNCER: There is a special group of military men and women who, in addition to serving their country, provide a special service to their communities through their volunteer efforts. These young men and women exemplify the spirit of service and are here with us today to be recognized.

Joining Commander Bock in the Spirit of Service Awards presentation is the Secretary of the Department of Defense, the Honorable Donald Rumsfeld. (Standing applause.)

Sergeant Renee Krauss has served as an Executive Administrative Assistant for the Army Vice Chief of Staff and in the Protocol Office of the Secretary of Defense at the Pentagon. She is currently stationed at Fort Myer, Virginia, where her experience and energy are put to work serving her community and fellow soldiers.

She takes the lead in organizing community volunteer events and supports a local organization which feeds the homeless. She's also a regular volunteer at the local thrift shop and USO, preparing care packages for deployed troops. Representing the United States Army, the 2006 Spirit of Service Award is presented to Sergeant Renee E. Krauss.

SGT RENEE E. KRAUSS: I think the youth champions gave us a run for our money on our speeches. But anyway, Secretary Rumsfeld, it's always an honor to be in your presence. Thank you for coming out and joining us. And to the National Commander, I want to thank you for this opportunity and for leading this great organization that you have. I have to say a thank you to The American Legion in general for such an honorable award. Thank you for all the support you provide to the troops, so very much needed support.

I've had numerous veterans thank me this weekend for the service to my country. I have to turn the tables and thank all of you for what you've done in the past. Without you, we wouldn't be where we are today.

Being in the military not only taught me life skills and discipline, but it has taught me to give back to my community. There is a lot of satisfaction in giving a plate of food to someone who is homeless; helping the elderly accomplish something that they don't have the strength or energy to do; and assisting my fellow soldiers in any which way that I can, whether they're at home or overseas. The Spirit of Service Award is an added bonus to the satisfaction I already receive.

I have to give a special thanks to my mother who is here with me today, and to my father who is watching from above. My final thanks goes to the Alaska team. The have taken me under their wings this weekend and they have given me some exceptional hospitality and I'm learning a lot about The American Legion and I look forward to serving with you all in the future. *(Standing applause.)*

ANNOUNCER: Petty Officer Dempsey Lamar Tomblin is currently assigned to the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital in Twenty Nine Palms, California. He devotes much of his spare time as a volunteer coach and official for the city of Twenty Nine Palms Recreation Department, and with the local high school varsity basketball program.

Officials from both programs cite his dedication and his positive impact on the youth of his community. Representing the United States Navy, the 2006 Spirit of Service Award is presented to Petty Officer Second Class Dempsey Tomblin.

PO 2nd Class DEMPSEY TOMBLIN: Thank you, Secretary of Defense and Commander Brock, thank you again. Right now I want to let everybody know that the reason that I'm here is I want to give a thanks to my chain-of-command back at Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, Twenty Nine Palms, to my captain, Captain Bowman, the entire executive staff, as well as our Public Affairs Officer, Mr. Dan Barber. Because, without them, I wouldn't be here today.

Secondly, I want to also thank the basketball team at Naval Hospital Twenty Nine Palms where I devote my time when I'm off duty and when I'm not with my family. They are the greatest bunch of kids and they all look up to the military. A lot of them want to join. I thank those kids for giving me the opportunity to help build, guide and lead them as well.

I thought I knew a lot about The American Legion. I thought! *(Laughter.)* But I learned so much this week. Just like Sgt. Krauss, the Department of Alaska has been fantastic. They've been educating me all this week, as well as other veterans here. I thank everybody. My mom is in the audience but my dad couldn't be here. My two beautiful daughters have allowed me to go to practice with those kids. They are here, as well as my wife.

Thank you! I'm not the hero here, you guys are. If it wasn't for you, I wouldn't be where I am today. *(Standing applause.)*

ANNOUNCER: Sergeant Kristiana Huntington has been an active volunteer in all of her assignments in the Marine Corps. She is currently assigned to the Chemical Biological Incident Response Force in Indian Head, Maryland, where she continues to make an impact on her community.

She has helped disabled veterans celebrate Christmas at the VA Nursing Home in Washington, DC, and participates in a mentoring program with students at a local middle school. She is active with local chapters of Big Brothers Big Sisters and Summer Special

Olympics as well as the Charles County Social Services Department.

For her countless hours of devotion to fellow veterans and her community, the Spirit of Service Award is presented to Sergeant Kristiana Huntington, United States Marine Corps.

SGT. KRISTIANA HUNTINGTON: Thank you, Mr. Secretary and Commander Bock. This is a great honor. I also thank The American Legion for this award and for the service that they provide for the veterans, military personnel and their families, and the community.

Like I said, this award is a great honor, but the true award comes from the service that we do. I've been mentoring at a school for two years and the greatest reward is seeing those kids actually come to school, want to come to school, and seeing their grades improve. That's what it's all about is the youth of America.

I also like to thank my unit, the Chemical Biological Incidence Response Force in Indian Head, Maryland for recognizing my efforts in the community and supporting me.

Many of you hung up your uniforms and dropped your pack many years ago. Those of us members of the military here today, we picked up your pack and we are carrying on with those traditions and provide a valued service for our country and our community.

If we cannot be overseas helping a torn foreign nation, we can do what we can to help those in need here in the United States. I am proud to be a part of The American Legion. It is a great organization and I look forward to attending many more events with The Legion.

These past four days I have found a new family and I'm going to miss all of you dearly. Thank you very much for the award. *(Standing applause.)*

ANNOUNCER: Petty Officer second class Katie S. Anthony is assigned to the Coast Guard Air Station in Traverse City, Michigan. There are many organizations in her community touched by her contributions, including Habitat for Humanity, Special Olympics of Northern Michigan, the local March of Dimes, The Salvation Army, various walk-a-thons and many other organizations. For her selfless dedication of time in her community, the 2006 Spirit of Service Award is presented to Petty Officer Katie S. Anthony, United States Coast Guard.

PO 2nd CLASS KATIE S. ANTHONY: Secretary Rumsfeld, Commander, thank you. First, I thank The American Legion for providing this opportunity to acknowledge each servicemember's outstanding devotion. Without you, none of us would have this amazing opportunity. I also thank my command back in Traverse City for nominating me for this prestigious award.

Great leaders seem to inspire the greatest things. I believe the term 'servicemember' holds two different definitions. First is that defining moment when we raise our right hand in front of God and family and promise to defend our nation's beliefs, principles and its people. We proudly wear our uniforms and strive to be the best soldier or sailor that we can possibly be. And we try to emulate the qualities of those leaders.

Secondly, I believe we should put a special emphasis on the service part of 'servicemember'. Because we are part of the armed services, we become a special part of the community. A part, not a separate entity, but truly a part of a community. The special causes that I have given my time to affects our communities in so many different ways.

For example: The March of Dimes provides research to prevent premature births and its severe consequences. The Juvenile Diabetes Association helps educate both parents and children to prevent this awful disease. Habitat for Humanity provides low-cost affordable housing for families that would otherwise be forced into shelters, or worst, homeless.

I recently started working with the American Heart Association because it hit so close to home for me. On July 19, 2005, I lost my father. It was a massive and unpredictable heart attack. He was only 49. I give my time or whatever else I can give to ensure that we can protect other families from enduring those pains. But those organizations are just a small blip on the radar of the enormous screen of worthy causes. Selecting to whom to dedicate

your time and energy is a tremendously difficult task.

I believe I chose these organizations because they have or will eventually help you, your family, or your community. But without people like these five servicemembers standing before you, these organizations would cease to function.

Volunteering is one of the greatest rewards you can ever experience. And I understand now why The American Legion sponsors this award. You are the epitome of service. Every Legionnaire dedicates their time, resources, skills and so much more to ensure that each and every mission is carried out. You have thanked me today for my service. But it is I who should be thanking you. *(Standing applause.)*

ANNOUNCER: Senior Airman Edward Slavik registers hundreds of hours of volunteerism at various organizations in his community, including the local Red Cross and the South Carolina Aquarium. He supports the local Ronald McDonald House and Crisis Ministries preparing and serving food for those in need. He sets the example through support of the Air Force shadowing and mentor program for Charleston Academy Cadets.

He's busy organizing collections for Goodwill and local food banks and countless other organizations. Senior Airman Slavik exemplifies the Spirit of Service. Representing Airman Edward Slavik and the United States Air Force, is Sergeant John Prato, Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina.

SGT. JOHN PRATO: I have the opportunity to represent Airman Slavik for this prestigious award. First off, I thank the Secretary of Defense, National Commander and all of you Legionnaires out there because this couldn't happen without you. Airman Slavik is current deployed right now. However, from his deployed location there is a video that he made that he wanted to present to all of you. At this time, please roll the tape.

…And at this time the delegates viewed the video presentation.

SR AIRMAN EDWARD SLAVIK: Good morning, American Legion. I'm Sr. Airman Edward J. Slavik, the 332nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron in Balad, Iraq. I am honored to receive The American Legion's Spirit of Service Award for the United States Air Force.

We both have a common theme: service to our veterans, their family and our communities. My family and the Air Force taught me the importance of volunteerism. It is something that I will continue to do no matter where I'm assigned, no matter where I live.

I want to thank the NCOs and officers in my chain of command for nominating me for this prestigious award. I'm honored to be here serving in Iraq. It is such a great feeling to be part of the effort to bring freedom to an oppressed country. I am honored to receive this award from such a prestigious wartime veterans organization.

Thank you for supporting the troops, and thank you for being there for us when we return home. May God bless. Tell America we are winning the war on terror. *(Standing applause.)*

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, another round of applause for the 2006 American Legion Spirit of Service Award winners. (Standing applause.)

Presentation of Gold Medal of Remembrance
Thomas L. Bock, National Commander

ANNOUNCER: Since the American revolution, our government has paid tribute to citizens by bestowing medals as a special recognition of service and sacrifice made for our country. Until now, this type of recognition had been reserved for adults.

Now, in cooperation with the White House Commission on Remembrance, we honor the children of two individuals who gave their lives in defense of freedom.

It is a gold medal of remembrance from a grateful nation to the children of Army

Captain Dennis Pintor, and Chief Warrant Officer John Daren Smith, who were killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The children are Kiara Danielle Smith, Madeline Paige Smith, and Rhea Pintor.

Let this medal be a reminder to them that they and their fathers are not forgotten. (*Standing applause.*)

Tribute by Michael Peterson

Wow, what a moving moment. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your meeting today. I say that because I recognize very poignantly and deeply that there would be little left of me, or of our nation for that matter, if I were to discard all that I am or all that we might become, because of the sacrifice, contribution and grace of the American military. So, my hat is off to you today.

They asked me to write a song for this event especially for you, and so I'd like to share that with you as my gift and my way of saying 'thank you'.

...At this time the delegation listened to the tribute "It's Who We Are" by Michael Peterson.

NATL COMDR BOCK: He is no stranger to the concept of "service." Since his Navy ROTC days at Princeton University where he was a champion wrestler, to his military career as a Navy aviator and flight instructor, to a long and distinguished career as a statesman, he has dedicated his life to serving America. A Chicago native, he had a middle class upbringing. In high school, he successfully balanced athletics and academics while earning his Eagle Scout Badge and winning a scholarship to Princeton.

Today he is responsible for directing the actions of the Department of Defense in response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Under his leadership, a new defense strategy has replaced the old model for sizing forces with an approach more relevant to the 21st century. He has been an Eagle Scout, a Navy pilot, a congressman, an ambassador, a businessman, a civil servant—and most important—our friend.

Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to the Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld, Secretary of the United States Department of Defense. (*Standing applause.*)

Address: The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary, Department of Defense

Thank you. I appreciate that warm welcome. A few minutes ago, I had a chance say hello to Senator Bennett and Senator Hatch, both of whom have provided such fine representation for this state and strong support for the Department of Defense and for the men and women in uniform. Members of the congressional delegation, I believe, are here—Rob Bishop and Christopher Smith. We thank you for being here. The mayor, Mr. Corroon—thank you. Distinguished guests.

Michael Peterson, if I could sing, I'd sing just like that. *(Laughter.)* That is very nice. *(Applause.)*

And to the spirit of youth, young folks, I had a chance before I came on to watch their presentations on television. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and your service.

To the Spirit of Service Awardees, congratulations. It is impressive to note what you're doing while you serve our country in uniform.

My special thanks to you, Tom [American Legion Commander Tom Bock], for your service to the military, to our veterans and to our country. It was a pleasure to meet your wonderful family over there; your son who's flown Chinooks, I guess, in Iraq, is following your proud tradition of military service.

Certainly, our country is grateful to all of you who have children, relatives, serving in our nation's military. They're in our thoughts and prayers, and please tell them that we

appreciate all they do for our country.

I also want to thank each of you, members of The American Legion, for the love and the support that you provide for our troops every day. It is important and it is deeply appreciated. No one is more proud of these young people than their Commander-in-Chief. I know that President Bush is looking forward to being with you later this week. It's a privilege to work with a president who is determined to protect our flag. *(Applause.)* We are fortunate to have a leader of strong resolve at a time of war.

Through all the challenges, he remains the same man who stood atop the rubble in Manhattan with a bullhorn vowing to fight back; the leader who told a grieving nation that we will never forget what was lost; and the President who has worked every day to fulfill his vow to protect the American people and to bring the enemy to justice or to bring justice to the enemy. Our nation is so fortunate to have The American Legion stand up for all of those who are serving our country at this time of testing.

About a year ago, I participated in the dedication of the World War II Memorial in Washington. My father had served in the Pacific on a carrier during that war. When I looked out in the audience, I could see a great many American Legion caps—not surprising—and it was a reminder of the millions who sacrificed for our country, so many of whom did not come home. And it was also a reminder of all that the American Legionnaires do for our servicemen and servicewomen. Indeed, through nearly nine decades of service, The American Legion continues to find ways to undertake new initiatives that embody the motto: "For God and Country."

The Department of Defense is proud to be your partner in the Heroes to Hometowns program which is helping severely wounded veterans with job searches, with their homes, and with other activities to aid in their transition to civilian life.

Your partnership with the America Supports You program helps communities, organizations, and individuals across this nation express their appreciation to our troops and to their families. You can find it at: americasupportsyou.mil and see all of the things that the compassionate and generous American people are doing; schools, corporations, villages, helping the families and helping the troops.

On a personal note, I want to commend the American Legion for its sponsorship of the Boy Scouts. I know there are places where Scouting is kind of put down. Well, I was a proud Cub Scout; a Boy Scout; an Explorer Scout; an Eagle Scout; and a Distinguished Eagle Scout; and the Scouts represent, in my view, some of the very best qualities of our country, and they certainly merit our support. *(Applause.)*

The American Legion—actually the members of The American Legion—have achieved a great deal since its founding in the months following World War I, when those small number of folks got together in a hotel room in Europe looking for a way to help some of their fellow veterans who would be coming home soon. That year—1919—turned out to be one of the pivotal junctures in modern history with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, the creation of the League of Nations, a treaty and an organization intended to make future wars unnecessary and obsolete. Indeed, 1919 was the beginning of a period where, over time, a very different set of views would come to dominate public discourse and thinking in the West.

Over the next decades, a sentiment took root that contended that if only the growing threats that had begun to emerge in Europe and Asia could be accommodated, then the carnage and the destruction of then-recent memory of World War I could be avoided.

It was a time when a certain amount of cynicism and moral confusion set in among Western democracies, when those who warned about a coming crisis, the rise of fascism and Nazism were ridiculed or ignored. Indeed, in the decades before World War II, a great many argued that the fascist threat was exaggerated or that it was someone else's problem. Some nations tried to negotiate a separate peace, even as the enemy made its deadly ambitions crystal clear. It was, as Winston Churchill observed, a bit like feeding a crocodile, hoping it would eat you last.

There was a strange innocence about the world. Someone recently recalled one U.S.

senator's reaction in September of 1939 upon hearing that Hitler had invaded Poland to start World War II. He exclaimed: "Lord, if only I had talked to Hitler, all of this might have been avoided!"

I recount that history because once again we face similar challenges in efforts to confront the rising threat of a new type of fascism. Today, another enemy, a different kind of enemy, has made clear its intentions with attacks in places like New York and Washington, D.C., Bali, London, Madrid, Moscow and so many other places. But some seem not to have learned history's lessons.

We need to consider the following questions, I would submit:

- With the growing lethality and the increasing availability of weapons, can we truly afford to believe that somehow, some way, vicious extremists can be appeased?
- Can folks really continue to think that free countries can negotiate a separate peace with terrorists?
- Can we afford the luxury of pretending that the threats today are simply law enforcement problems, like robbing a bank or stealing a car, rather than threats of a fundamentally different nature requiring fundamentally different approaches?
- And can we really afford to return to the destructive view that America, not the enemy, is the source of the world's troubles?

These are central questions of our time, and we must face them honestly.

We hear every day of new plans, new efforts to murder Americans and other free people. Indeed, the plot that was discovered in London that would have killed hundreds—possibly thousands—of innocent men, women and children on aircraft flying from London to the United States should remind us that this enemy is serious, lethal, and relentless. But this is still not well recognized or fully understood. It seems that in some quarters, there's more of a focus on dividing our country than acting with unity against the gathering threats.

It's a strange time when a database search of America's leading newspapers turns up literally 10 times as many mentions of one of the soldiers who has been punished for misconduct—10 times more—than the mentions of Sergeant First Class Paul Ray Smith, the first recipient of the Medal of Honor in the Global War on Terror; or when a senior editor at *Newsweek* disparagingly refers to the brave volunteers in our armed forces—the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marines, the Coast Guard—as a "mercenary army;" or when the former head of *CNN* accuses the American military of deliberately targeting journalists; or when the once *CNN* Baghdad bureau chief finally admits that as bureau chief in Baghdad, he concealed reports of Saddam Hussein's crimes when he was in charge there so that *CNN* could keep on reporting selective news.

It's a time when Amnesty International refers to the military facility at Guantanamo Bay—which holds terrorists who have vowed to kill Americans and which is arguably the best run and most scrutinized detention facility in the history of warfare—as "the gulag of our times." It's inexcusable. *(Applause.)*

Those who know the truth need to speak out against these kinds of myths and distortions that are being told about our troops and about our country. America is not what's wrong with the world. *(Applause.)* The struggle we are in—the consequences are too severe. The struggle is too important to have the luxury of returning to that old mentality of "Blame America First."

One of the most important things The American Legion has done is not only to serve and assist and advocate, as you have done so superbly for so much of the past century, but also to educate and to speak the truth about our country and about the men and women in the military.

Not so long ago, an exhibit—*Enola Gay* at the Smithsonian during the 1990s—seemed to try to rewrite the history of World War II by portraying the United States as somewhat of an aggressor. Fortunately, The American Legion was there to lead the effort to set the record straight. *(Applause.)*

Your watchdog role is particularly important today in a war that is, to a great extent,

fought in the media on a global stage, a role to not allow the distortions and myths be repeated without challenge so that, at the least, the second or third draft of history will be more accurate than the first quick allegations we see.

You know from experience personally that in every war there have been mistakes, setbacks, and casualties. War is, as Clemenceau said, "a series of catastrophes that result in victory."

And in every army, there are occasional bad actors, the ones who dominate the headlines today, who don't live up to the standards of the oath and of our country. But you also know that they are a very, very small percentage of the literally hundreds of thousands of honorable men and women in all theaters in this struggle who are serving our country with humanity, with decency, with professionalism, and with courage in the face of continuous provocation. *(Applause.)* That is important in any long struggle or long war, where any kind of moral or intellectual confusion about who and what is right or wrong, can weaken the ability of free societies to persevere.

Our enemies know this well. They frequently invoke the names of Beirut or Somalia—places they see as examples of American retreat and American weakness. As we've seen—even this month—in Lebanon, they design attacks and manipulate the media to try to demoralize public opinion. They doctor photographs of casualties. They use civilians as human shields. Then they try to provoke an outcry when civilians are killed in their midst, which of course, was their intent.

The good news is that most Americans, though understandably influenced by what they see and read, have good inner gyroscopes. They have good center of gravity. So, I'm confident that over time they will evaluate and reflect on what is happening in this struggle and come to wise conclusions about it.

Iraq, a country that was brutalized by a cruel and dangerous dictatorship, is now traveling the slow, difficult, bumpy, uncertain path to a secure new future under a representative government that will be at peace with its neighbors, rather than a threat to their own people, to their neighbors, or to the world. As the nature of the threat and the conflict in Iraq has changed over these past several years, so have the tactics and the deployments. But while military tactics have changed and adapted to the realities on the grounds—as they must—the strategy has not changed, which is to empower the Iraqi people to be able to defend, and govern, and rebuild their own country. The extremists themselves call Iraq the "epicenter" in the War on Terror. And our troops know how important their mission is.

A soldier who recently volunteered for a second tour in Iraq captured the feeling of many of his peers. In an e-mail to some friends, he wrote the following, and I quote:

> I ask that you never take advantage of the liberties guaranteed by the shedding of free blood, never take for granted the freedoms granted by our Constitution. For those liberties would be merely ink on paper were it not for the sacrifice of generations of Americans who heard the call of duty and responded heart, mind and soul with 'Yes, I will.'

Some day that young man very likely will be a member of The American Legion attending a convention like this. I certainly hope so. I hope he does that and that we all have a chance to meet. One day a future speaker may reflect back on the time of historic choice, remembering the questions raised as to our country's courage, and dedication, and willingness to persevere in this fight until we prevail.

The question is not whether we can win; it's whether we have the will to persevere to win. I'm convinced that Americans do have that determination and that we have learned the lessons of history, of the folly of trying to turn a blind eye to danger. These are lessons you know well, lessons that your heroism has helped to teach to generations of Americans.

May God bless each of you. May God bless the men and women in uniform, and their families. And may God continue to bless our wonderful country. *(Standing applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: Rhea Pintor, the daughter of Captain Dennis L. Pintor, U.S. Army, killed in action October 12, 2004, in Baghdad, Iraq, would like to share a few words

with us, special for us. *(Applause.)*

It's been an absolute honor and privilege to serve side-by-side with our next guest. She was elected the 85th National President of the American Legion Auxiliary in Honolulu, Hawaii. Her theme, "Celebrate Freedom," set the tone for her messages to Legion family members and those who represent us on Capitol Hill. She has held many offices in her years of volunteer service in the American Legion Auxiliary. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the leader of the nation's largest patriotic women's organization, a member of Argonne Unit 61 of Sutton, Nebraska, Mrs. Carol Van Kirk. *(Standing applause.)*

Greetings: Carol Van Kirk, Nebraska, National President
American Legion Auxiliary

Good morning. Are we having a wonderful convention? It's terrific.

It's such a privilege to be here this morning to say hello to you. We have had an outstanding year. The first thing I want to do is thank you for providing such an outstanding Commander for me to serve with. Not only was your American Legion Commander outstanding, but you also provided a wonderful Commander for the Sons of The American Legion and it has been an honor and a privilege to serve with both of them.

I feel we have come a long way this year. We have done some wonderful things to unify our organizations and to move our organizations forward. I thank you for all the hospitality that was given to me by The American Legion Posts all across this nation and in foreign land as well—our trips to Europe and the Far East. I loved going to Puerto Rico. They were happy, happy, happy, and it made me happy, happy, happy. Every single Department visit was just outstanding. I have met some of the greatest Americans there are in our nation and I want to thank you for that.

I also wanted to tell you how I appreciate the manner in which you responded to my project. I thought I was asking a lot of just the American Legion Auxiliary, but all year I have tried to not only support our warriors, but also to provide for them. I've asked our organization to help me send them off and welcome them home. I have spoken across our nation about maintaining patience with this war. Having been on Capitol Hill September 11, and having been in Washington DC during the last little episode with the terrorists in England, I'm beginning to think they don't want me in Washington, DC, but I'll be going back, I'm sure.

At any rate, I know how very important it is that we win this war. I have 15 grandchildren and want them to go to bed every night feeling safe. I thank God for those who are serving in our military and helping them have that safety. *(Applause.)*

I always knew that I would want my project to reflect our men's service in the military. When I came up with the poly-trauma computer carts and computers, I thought it was a wonderful way to help them keep connected, not only with their family and their friends, but with those that are still deployed who are in their units. It has worked out beautifully. But your generosity has provided many more than what we needed for the computer carts. We have gone back to the poly-trauma centers and asked what it may be that they could use beyond the computer carts. They have a need for integration of our military into their communities.

We will provide the remainder of that money on a grant basis to the poly-trauma centers upon their request. As far as it will go, we will help those men and women get back into the communities, and I hope that each of us is going to make an effort to respond and welcome them back regardless of what their disability may be.

I thank each of you for your service to our country and helping provide for my safety. I can only think of one thing that could have happened that would have enhanced my year more than all of you have, and that would have been if our beautiful flag could have been protected under my watch. *(Applause.)* I assure you that as long as The American Legion fights for our flag, I will fight for our flag.

Thank you all for welcoming me. I know the Commander will have a wonderful

convention; he has such a lovely smile. Doesn't he have a great smile and a sense of humor? I thank you Commander for giving me this opportunity to say hello. *(Standing applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: This morning we have the honor of recognizing a true friend of veterans. From 2001 to 2004, he served as Chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. He worked to improve the delivery of health care and benefits promised to our nation's veterans and has delivered with several new laws to significantly expand and enhance veterans' health care and benefits programs.

Veterans laws that he has authored include one providing a record 46 percent increase in the GI Bill, which helps veterans pay for college. The increase is the largest ever since the GI Bill went into effect following World War II, helping to build the American middle class.

He also wrote the nation's first law that addresses and combats the plague of chronic homelessness among veterans. The Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act authorizes $1 billion in programs to help veterans find and retain jobs and provides them with housing, counseling, and medical care they need to rebuild their lives.

Join me in giving a warm Legion welcome to the Honorable Chris Smith of New Jersey. *(Standing applause.)*

Presentation: The Honorable Christopher Smith
United States House of Representatives

Commander Bock, thank you so very much for that kind introduction. It is a high privilege and a distinct honor to be invited to say a few words today to such an august group of genuine patriots, heroes and humanitarians.

The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary does it all, and you do it with class. You tangibly support and uplift our veterans and armed forces as well as their families. The ceremony just a few minutes ago with the Gold Medal Remembrance for the Pintor and Smith families was, again, a tangible expression of your love and compassion for the men who have passed as well as for their families. I want to say how grateful I am to them as well for their sacrifice.

You passionately defend our flag and our core values. You inculcate in our youth the responsibilities and duties imposed by democracy. I will note parenthetically, this year my youngest daughter, Elise, was elected to Girls State and she actually got one of her bills passed, and learned during the course of Girls State what it's really like to be a legislator—and you provide that opportunity throughout this country.

A good friend of my in New Jersey, Bill Baroni, a member of the Assembly, was the Boys State governor. Now, he's a member of the State Assembly. You create a farm team of men and women who eventually get elected and provide good public service. And of course, American Legion Baseball is in a league of its own.

Commander Bock and President Carol Van Kirk, I salute your extraordinary leadership and that of your predecessors as well as your officers. Let me congratulate you especially on the effectiveness and tenacity of your legislative team. National Adjutant Bob Spanogle, Executive Director John Sommer, Legislative Director Steve Robertson, are truly amazing individuals, they and their staff. They inform, they inspire, they lead with boldness and they have made, and they continue to make, an enormous difference on Capitol Hill.

Commander Bock, whatever you're paying these guys, believe me, it's not enough. They are simply the best.

It's always good to see my good friends from New Jersey, including State Commander Chuck Robbins [cheers from the delegates. He points.] All right, there they are. Adjutant Raymond Zawacki, Jimmy Hall who I've known for many many years, National Vice Commander for the Eastern District. I'd like to thank them as well for their many years of service, on a personal note, for their timely advice and guidance throughout my 26 years as a member of Congress.

To paraphrase Michael Peterson in his song just a moment ago, "I guess it's just who

you are." You care, and you care passionately, and you give and you give and you give.

Commander Bock, as we approach the 5th Anniversary of the infamous 9/11 attack on America, a slaughter of the innocent that exposed the pernicious cruelty of the terrorists, we are reminded anew that freedom isn't free and that we face today a pathologically obsessed men and women who claim a divine right to murder.

I often think that God, the God of mercy and justice and goodness, must weep uncontrollably at the specter of terrorists torturing and killing in the name of religion. When Hitler, Stalin, Mao Se Tung, Ho Chi Min, Pol Pot and Idi Amin committed massive crimes against humanity, they didn't cloak it or promote it or justify their genocide as God's will. Thus the war on terror is unlike any other war America or the free world has ever faced. And it must be won employing all means at our disposal, including wise and effective diplomacy, the credible threat of force and, as a last resort, force.

I and many others deeply appreciate the Legion's grasp of the stakes that we face and for being a steady, sure voice amidst the chaos. The American Legion's landmark Resolution 169 adopted last year, succinctly lays out the history and the reasons why the war on terror must be won and why this vexing war can't be artificially separated from the warrior. It is not surprising that you honor and thank the warriors and their families not just today, not just this week at this convention, but everyday. You set an example the rest of us must follow.

Commander Bock, as you know, the global war on terror, especially on the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq, have claimed the precious lives of more than 2,900 of our bravest along with, according to the Pentagon, more than 20,000 wounded. Clearly, words are inadequate to express our gratitude and respect for their sacrifice. But, I believe that we should at least try and to show it, in both word and in deed. *(Applause.)*

One way of saying thanks is to ensure that no veteran now or in the future is ever left behind. *(Applause.)* Whether it be full and predictable funding for VA health care, generous compensation for service-connected injury or disease, a lifeline to our homeless vets, or cutting edge research for spinal cord injuries, PTSD, the blind, Agent Orange afflicted Vietnam vets, those suffering from mystery Gulf illnesses, depleted Uranium ordnance contamination, or those in need of world class prosthetics, Congress has a sacred obligation to meet those needs. *(Applause.)*

Whether it be a death benefit that in some small way conveys our understanding of the families agonizing loss, or specially adapted housing for the disabled, or job training, or college funds, Congress has a sacred obligation to meet those needs. *(Applause.)*

There are members of Congress, as you well know, both Democrats and Republicans, Rob Bishop, my colleague who is here today; the two senators from this state, and so many others, who do care deeply and do try to meet those needs. My friends, during my 24 years of service on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am gratified that several Legion-backed landmark laws that I authored, continue to provide expanded benefits to vets and their families, although so much more needs to be done.

I'll mention just one of those laws. The Veterans Education Benefits Act of 2001, as the Commander noted a moment ago, almost doubled by almost 50 percent increase in the GI Bill. Before the law was enacted, a veteran with three years in the service got $24,000 for college. Our new law pushed that to more than $37,000. Higher education is now within the reach of more of our veterans and servicemembers. In the last five years, the utilization of this benefit has gone up by 33 percent. I want to thank the Legion for helping us to craft that legislation. *(Applause.)*

Given your tight schedule, let me conclude with some thoughts on the human rights situation in Vietnam. Congress will soon take up legislation that is likely to pass to award permanent normal trade relations, as we call it, PNTR, to Vietnam. It is a condition necessary for Vietnam's acceptance into the World Trade Organization, in a move that will mean billions of dollars for Hanoi. Also, President Bush will travel to Vietnam in November for an APEC summit. Given the high value that Vietnam places on obtaining this PNTR, and a successful summit, my appeal to you today is to press the Bush Administration

and the Congress to demand, as a prerequisite, to enhance economic cooperation, that Vietnam cease its violent and ugly repression of its own people, especially the Montagnard, Hmong, and people of various and religious faiths. He needs to press vigorously for a more thorough accounting of American MIAs. *(Applause.)*We have a window of opportunities, my friends, right now, and we have to be careful we don't squander it. We need to push right now.

Last December, I made yet another trip to Vietnam to press for the religious freedom, respect for basic human rights and a full accounting of the nearly 1,400 American MIAs. As in the past, I met with the Vietnamese and the U.S. Military Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, or JPAC, to discuss many of the ongoing problems. While JPAC is making some progress and is able to conduct about four joint field activities per year, it is readily evident that the Vietnamese could do *much more* and be much more forthcoming and transparent in providing a full accounting. Much more. I remain deeply concerned that they could and should offer better information pertaining to the missing and the last known alive. And right now with PNTR and this economic summit in the wings, we need to push harder.

When it comes to respecting the fundamental rights of its own citizens, Vietnam continues to get extremely poor grades. Vietnam's abuse of its own people is especially severe against our close allies during the war, the Montagnard and the Hmong. Many Montagnard have been incarcerated—hundreds of them—and tortured. Their churches, about 400 of them, have been bulldozed and demolished. In April of this year, two Montagnards were arrested and beaten. It turns out one was the brother of a man who came to one of my hearings on human rights in Vietnam who protested those violations. A coincidence? I think not. It was retaliation.

While Vietnam claims to be easing up, Vietnam's record on religious persecution remains so egregious that the U.S. Department of State has designated Vietnam a country of particular concern liable to punitive sanctions.

During the course of my most recent visit, I met with almost 60 religious and political dissidents in dozens of meetings. In Hanoi, for example, I met with the frighten wife of Dr. Fong Hong Sung, a democracy activist who got five years in prison for simply posting an essay on the internet entitled "What Is Democracy." As you may know, Vietnam, like China and other repressive dictatorships, scour the internet looking for democracy and religious freedom activists to abuse. So, again, what did Dr. Fong Hong Sung do? His crime was that he downloaded from the U.S. Embassy Hanoi's website this essay and for that he got five years in jail. Yesterday, after four years of wrongful incarceration and with a mind towards PNTR, and the Bush summit, the Vietnamese announced their intentions to let him go. But they need to do much more. That is only a first step.

In Hue, I met with Father Ly and Father Loi, two Catholic priests. They are under house arrest. Father Ly's crime was that he wrote and sent testimony to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom in Washington detailing religious repression in Vietnam. Over the last four years, we've mounted a vigorous campaign to effectuate his release. It worked. But while he is out of prison, he remains under house arrest. I'll never forget, as I went to leave his house, he said, (we got to the door), "That's as far as I go." Across the way, about 10 yards, were two secret police ready to push him back or to arrest him if he went over the border.

In Saigon, I met with Venerable Te Quan Doi, a Buddhist leader, who, like these other individuals, has been incarcerated—in this case house arrest—for his beliefs as a Buddhist. He told me that once he tried to leave, he was met at the door by dozens of secret police who seemingly came out of the woodwork and roughly pushed him back into his building.

All that these religious leaders and others ask for is that they be permitted to live their faith without government intimidation and coercion. What they ask for is freedom of religion, an elemental human right that the Vietnamese government either flatly denies or severely abridges.

In the 1990s, I authored some legislation to assist the last remaining boat people in the camps, who are part of the comprehensive plan of action, so that the Vietnamese who were

being forced back to Vietnam but deserved asylum could come here. I went out to the camps and met with these individuals. I'll never forget meeting a double amputee in a camp in Hong Kong, High Island it was called. He looked at me with the saddest eyes I ever saw and said, "Don't let them send me back. I served with your guys." I brought that back, held four hearings and we had legislation that was designed to re-screen these individuals to ensure that they get to the United States in safety, if indeed, they were our friends and are at risk of repatriation.

The Clinton Administration, meanwhile, was intent on sending them all back. When I went to offer an Amendment on the floor, it looked like our vote count was going to lose. John Sommer mobilized The American Legion and we turned what looked like a certain defeat into a rousing victory. The legislation passed and the Administration reversed its policy. The Rover Program was established and 20,000 Vietnamese came to the United States for freedom. John, thank you so much for that. *(Applause.)*

So given this rare two to three month window of opportunity, and The American Legion's track record in producing results, I ask you again to bring maximum pressure to bear on Washington and Hanoi to provide the fullest accounting of our MIAs and for systemic human rights reform in Vietnam, and the release of all religious and political prisoners. Human rights, my friends, as you know so well, are central and should be at the core, the absolute core, of our relationship with any government. Vietnam should not be an exception. *(Applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: I invite National Vice Commander Jim Hall to help me present this award to Representative Smith.

ANNOUNCER: The Award reads: *"For his compassionate and persistent work toward the human and religious rights of oppressed people, particularly the Montagnard in Vietnam, and for his unwavering commitment to and advocacy for the health and well-being of America's veterans and their families.*

His sincere and dedicated efforts are in keeping with one of the purposes set forth in the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion, to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotions to mutual helpfulness.

Presented at the 88th National Convention of The American Legion in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 2006."

NATL COMDR BOCK: Now it is my honor to present to you the newly elected National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion. He is a member of Orr Squadron 34 in Tecumseh, Michigan. His tireless work has made a positive impact on membership and enhancing the image of the Sons of The American Legion. He plans to enhance membership and communications across the land in the months ahead. Please welcome to our stage Commander Earl R. Ruttkofsky.

Address: Earl R. Ruttkofsky, Michigan
Newly Elected National Commander
Sons of The American Legion

What an honor to be here and it is a pleasure to be in the presence of you, the greatest body in America, the veterans of this country. I thank you from my heart truly.

It's going to be an amazing year coming up for the Sons of The American Legion. Why? Because it's our 75th year. The American Legion started this way, a long time ago and we're proud to be part of this organization.

We've asked our membership this year to do something a little more unusual, maybe not real unusual, I guess, but we're going to work harder for you, the veterans of this country. We're looking to do a little more one-on-one; to be there for you and your Post; do those things that should be outstanding to make you, the veterans of this country, to be proud

of us, your sons. And we hope that can continue.

We've had an excellent year. We've grown tremendously with the leadership that we've had and we're looking to even be better, to work the programs of The American Legion and do all we can for those programs.

As we enter this 75th year, it will be fantastic. We've asked our membership to go out and celebrate this year, our 75th birthday, and we want to celebrate it with you, the veterans of this country. We ask that you would join us, The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, to work with us on that to make it a real happening event.

So, with that, I bid you good day. I love you very much from the bottom of my heart, and thank you very much. *(Standing applause.)*

Now, I am proud to introduce my Past National Commander from Maryland, a good friend of mine, a mentor to me and last year's Commander, Mr. Bill Sparwasser.

PNC SPARWASSER: I bring you greetings from over 307,000 members of the Sons, another all time high in membership. Commander Bock, we've had a fabulous year this year. As I've said to you from day one, and I will say it to you today, as I'm officially a 'has been.' It's been my pleasure to represent your program, the Sons of The American Legion, across this country. We are committed to you. I committed to you early on that I would be at your side, at your call, we would be there to support you anyway we could support you and The American Legion. I believe we've done that and we've done that to our fullest potential this year. That's not to say that we're not in for some phenomenal growth next year, because we've got that head of steam going and we're going to maintain that.

I want to thank you personally from the bottom of my heart for giving me the opportunity to serve the countless hours with you in support of your programs and the programs of The American Legion. I'd be remiss if I didn't say it was memories I will cherish for the rest of my life. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Sons National Commander. *(Applause.)*

When you're past, you forget everything. It's indeed my honor and distinct pleasure since I've served with this man for countless years, many more than I care to count, to introduce our National Adjutant from the Department of Massachusetts, Mr. Brian O'Hearne. *(Applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: His father, Wallace Bennett, served as a U.S. Senator of Utah for four terms with honor and distinction. Following in the footsteps of his father he has served in the United States Senate since 1990.

A member of the Army National Guard from 1957-1959, he currently serves as Chief Deputy Whip, working with the Senate Majority, Whip Mitch McConnell and Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist. In this capacity, he helps set the Senate agenda and schedule and serves as a key advisor on the Senate leadership team. He is also the Chairman, Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies. He is Vice Chairman, Joint Economic Committee of Congress and Chairman of the Senate Banking Subcommittee on Financial Institutions. He sits on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. Legionnaires, welcome the Honorable Bob Bennett.

Welcome: The Hon. Robert F. Bennett, United States Senate

As I listened to Donald Rumsfeld's resume and his biography, I remembered that I enrolled in the ROTC in the University of Utah and stayed in right up to the point where they gave me a physical. At that point—this was the Air Force ROTC—they said, "With those eyes, you can never be a pilot." I said, "Well, frankly, I wasn't planning on being a pilot." And they said, "It doesn't matter, if you're not physically qualified to be a pilot, we don't want you." I found myself undergoing basic training at Fort Ord. *(Laughter.)* So, I understand the ways of the military a little bit.

My father served in World War I; my brother was in the occupation forces in Japan in

World War II and was called up again in Korea. I have a cousin whose name is on the Wall of Honor in the Punch Bowl in Hawaii, having been killed in the Korean conflict.

As I think back over those experiences that we've gone through as a nation, the various wars we've fought, the sacrifices we've made and then look at it from the perspective of today, I recognize that The American Legion can play a role in helping all Americans understand. That is contrary to those who would denigrate our activities. America is not an empire. America does not seek to do the kinds of things the Roman's did; or the Ottoman's did; or the British did to conquer and then occupy and subjugate the people who have lost the wars.

When we sent our young men and women to fight in the Pacific and defeat the Japanese war machine, we didn't just liberate the Philippines and the other countries that had been conquered by the Japanese, we liberated the Japanese.

When we sent our armies to Normandy, Sicily and Italy, to take back Europe, we didn't just liberate the Belgians, and the Dutch, and the French, we liberated the Germans. The people who suffered the most under Hitler's yoke were his own people. The people who suffered the most under the Japanese military machine were the Japanese themselves. And today, because of what we did to liberate them, they are our closest allies in Asia, and in NATO.

In South Korea, we could have had an empire. Instead, we did what we could to plant the seeds of democracy and freedom. And frankly, they took a long time to mature and grow. But now you go to South Korea, you see an American ally and a free country booming with prosperity and freedom. Right across the line in the DMZ you see the fruits of those who have not experienced freedom. The average North Korean is 6 inches shorter and 20 pounds lighter than his South Korean cousin. If you fly over Korea at nighttime and you see the satellite pictures, and I have, South Korea at night is a blaze of light in that peninsula and North Korea with the exception of a little bit of pinprick of light in (Dang Nong) is dark. They are so poor they can't light their homes at night. They are so starving that their people show the physical differences.

The American Legion can help Americans remember that legacy, that we go around the world not to conquer but to liberate and to free, including our enemies. We're in a struggle where a lot of people are saying that it's not worth it. They're asking, "What business do we have there?" Well, we have the business there that if we were not fighting there we would be fighting here. *(Applause.)* Gen. Abizaid has made it clear, if we pull out they will follow us, speaking of the military. We don't want them to follow the military back to our shores. We want to have them stay and be dealt with the military in the land where the fighting is going on.

But in the more important long-term perspective, can we do again in Afghanistan and Iraq what we did in Korea, Japan and Germany? The tiny, tiny sprouts of freedom and democracy are beginning to show in Afghanistan. They're pushing up as hard as they can against the harden soil of Iraq. And the outcome is not yet certain. I know there are those who say we will win, we must win. But there's always the chance that we might not. The consequences of failure, however, are significant enough that we must continue to try.

There was never a time in the early days of the Second World War that we were sure that we would win. The consequences of losing were too horrific to contemplate for those who would say, "Well, this isn't worth it."

The American Legion should play a role in helping all Americans understand what's at stake. Play a role in helping all Americans to understand the historic pattern that America has always followed and be proud of the consequences, not only for American freedom, but for the cause of freedom for all peoples all over the world.

I close with a statement attributed to Colin Powell. Colin Powell was in Europe shortly after America went into Iraq and the Archbishop of Canterbury said, "Isn't this just another example of American Imperialism?", indicating great disapproval of the decision to go into Iraq. Colin Powell responded, "Americans have been sending their fine, young men and women around the world to fight for peace and freedom for generations. The only foreign

soil we have ever asked for in return is enough to bury those who don't come back." Help America remember that. *(Standing applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: Our next guest lived and worked in Asia and speaks fluent Mandarin Chinese. In fact, he is very attached to an old Chinese proverb that says, "If it can be done, there is a method." That can-do philosophy is evident in everything he does.

His public service career includes serving as a White House Staff Assistant to President Ronald Reagan. Under President George H. W. Bush, he was Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Trade Development, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, as well as U.S. Ambassador to Singapore, the youngest U.S. Ambassador in a century. He also served as a Deputy U.S. Trade Representative and U.S. Trade Ambassador under President George W. Bush. As governor of the great state of Utah, he has made economic development, education, transportation and the environment his top concerns. Give a warm Legion welcome to the Honorable Jon Huntsman Jr., the Governor of the State of Utah. *(Standing applause.)*

Welcome: The Hon. Jon Huntsman, Jr., Governor of the State of Utah

I can't tell you what a thrill it is to be welcomed with such respect as you showed a moment ago to our great Senator Bob Bennett. You see, I'm raising four teenagers in the Governor's Mansion and I get no respect there at all. *(Laughter.)* So, to find it periodically is kind of a good thing throughout my day. In fact, I have two daughters who are with me today, and I hope that they took note of the respect that we're showing.

Tom, we thank you for your leadership of this great American Legion organization. I want to thank Carol for her leadership with the Auxiliary who we were able to meet earlier today. I thank Steve Wright, the National Chaplain, and so many others. The largest veterans service organization in the entire world is who you are, 2.6 million members and doing it right. All I can say is, thank you for reminding us of the importance of service in the lives of others.

I'm honored to welcome you here to what we happen to think very humbly as the greatest state in America. Not only this year, but I hasten to add, but for the past three years you've had your National Convention here and we are delighted. And I'm aware that there is a lot of hard work that goes into organizing these affairs.

I thank in particular the members of the Department of Utah, American Legion family and invite them to stand and be recognized, if they would please. *(Applause.)* Three members of this group are World War II veterans, Sgt. Loveland, Rex Bass and the NECman for Utah, Bill Christoffersen, who's a good friend. He and they have been the driving force behind this wonderful convention coming here now three times. I salute as well my good friend, Terry Schow, who does so much for veterans in this state.

I point out a couple of things as governor in this wonderful state. You're involved with Boys State, which is a remarkable program. I had an opportunity to stand before some outstanding young men recently at the Boys State Convention. Noted among them were some bright and capable young leaders. I have no doubt that in that audience I was looking at future mayors, future senators, and maybe even, heaven forbid, a future governor or two.

Thank you for what you do in supporting an organization that, in turn, is producing the leaders for tomorrow. It means a lot to those of us who are trying to provide some leadership today.

Second, I want to tell you that Mary Kaye, our great first lady, and I have had the opportunity to visit the veterans hospital here more than once. If ever you want a lesson in selflessness, particularly of the younger generation that tends to be all about 'me,'—you've heard about that generation—walk in the veterans hospital sometime as we have, knock on the doors of the people who reside therein and you will learn some lessons about life. You will learn some lessons about sacrifice and their heroic acts of bravery that so many have performed in keeping us free as a country. I want to thank you for the work that you do for

the veterans through the hospital organizations as well.

Third, I'll tell you of another kind of service that is rendered by what I think today is also one of the greatest generations. Tom Brokaw wrote that great book about the "Greatest Generation" and we know who they are, many are sitting here in this crowd. I'm here to make the point that there is another great generation and it is emerging and it is in the theater of combat even as we speak. They're a younger generation, but they're doing everything they can to protect and defend our freedoms. *(Applause.)* I have no doubt that many books will be written about this great generation as well.

I talked to a father of one soldier a couple of days ago. He's the father of Cpl. Adam Galvez. Adam's funeral will be tomorrow in Salt Lake City. He was a Marine, served proudly and in a most distinguished fashion. He was killed days ago by an IED. I picked up the phone as I typically do, and called the father. In typical fashion, the father was doing all he could to hold back the tears. I wish I could bottle up for you the sense of pride that this father had in what his son had done as a public servant in the military. I tried to console him as best I could by saying that many will be better because of his life, both here in our state, but also in the theater of combat. He said to me before he started crying,"You know, he died a hero, and that's all I need to know as a father. He died a hero believing in his cause." *(Applause.)* I will offer a salute tomorrow at his funeral from The American Legion, if you don't mind.

Currently, we have hundreds from our National Guard and from our Air Guard serving around the world: Afghanistan, Africa, Germany, Guam, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Kuwait, Qatar, Kurdistan and Iraq. They do it with pride. They do it with a sense of selflessness.

This past spring I had the opportunity to visit Iraq. I went to Baghdad and went as far in the forward deployed territories as I could to Fallujah. It was my birthday and I sat at a table with our forward deployed Marines from the great state of Utah. I saw in their faces a sense of determination, a sense of pride, a resoluteness, a steadfastness that I tried to describe to everyone I've seen since I've come home. This is a proud bunch of people who are doing work that we all believe is in the interest of the United States. We cannot let them down. *(Applause.)*

Finally, let me summarize. We as a nation have always served goals that are larger than self; that of freeing the human soul for purposes of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, interestingly enough, providing hope. Let's not forget what the most important word is in the entire English language. It's only four letters. It's called hope. We provide hope in the far corners of the world where it does not today exist. I can't think of a better form of public service for our country to be engaged in.

Thank you for your supporting role and being here in Utah. We salute you all. *(Standing applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: Our next guest is a sixth-generation son of Utah, born and reared right here in Salt Lake City. In fact, his father, the late Scott M. Matheson, was the Governor of Utah from 1977-1985. Serving his third term representing Utah's Second Congressional District, he sits on the Financial Services Committee and the Transportation Committee. He is also a member of the Science Committee, which has jurisdiction over federal funding of research and development at NASA. He has developed a reputation as a champion of bipartisanship and is always looking to reach across the aisle for common sense solutions to issues. Legionnaires, give a warm welcome to the Honorable Jim Matheson.

Welcome: The Hon. Jim Matheson, United States House of Representatives

Thank you for inviting me to join you today. I want to welcome you to the great state of Utah. I hope you'll have some time for some sightseeing while you are here because I'm very proud of this state.

The American Legion has such a proud legacy of public service, both to the veterans and to the communities where they live. I appreciate that public service and value the

relationship that I have with The American Legion. I am a proud member of the Sons of The American Legion with Post 77, in Sandy, Utah. *(Applause.)*

I always enjoy my visits to various Posts throughout this state. Leaders in the organization like Utah's own Bill Christoffersen, have been a good friend. He's been incredibly helpful to my office when it comes to providing good information about veterans' issues.

Since that tragic day in September nearly five years ago now, we've witnessed a remarkable display of courage, sacrifice and commitment by our young men and women in uniform. I think about our troops every single day. I meet with many Utah soldiers and veterans, as well as with their families. I can't say enough about my gratitude for their dedication.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur said, "The soldier, above all others, is required to practice the greatest act of religious training: sacrifice." American soldiers, whether they're active duty, National Guard or Reserve, are the finest fighting force on this earth. And since answering duty's call in the aftermath of September 11, our troops have done everything we've asked them to do without hesitation, and without complaint.

Our troops inspire me, as a member of congress, to follow policies that keep faith with our military men and women, their families, the widows, the orphans, and with the veterans community. When I visit our injured troops at Walter Reed Hospital, I see profiles in courage. One patient I met was a young tank commander blown off a bridge by an enemy bomb. He told me he needs to be back in Iraq so that he can bring his unit home.

Another said he remembered nothing from the time he was hit by an explosion until weeks after his evacuation and that his heart had stopped twice during surgery. His survival, his friends had told him, means that God has more work for him to do.

Last February, Utah lost a hero. Staff Sgt. Gregson Gourley died after his Humvee was hit by a roadside bomb in Iraq. He was a squad leader and a weapons specialist in the 101st Airborne Division. He was four weeks into his second tour of duty when he died. He leaves behind a wife and four children. Sgt. Gourley's father talked about his son's sacrifice in the context of his daughter-in-law. He said to the local newspaper, "She is as steady as a rock." These families of our soldiers worry and wait and watch and wonder. They serve as well. *(Applause.)*

We pay a steep price for freedom, a price that thousands have paid in conflicts today as well as in the past. It's a cost we bear, but it is one we must never take for granted. I have made it my mission as a congressman to keep faith with our military to attempt to repay the debt we owe. So, in Congress, let me talk about some things we've done.

First, that's why I've introduced a bill called the "Reads' Act." It changes the criteria for Montgomery GI Bill eligibility. Some Utah Marine Reservists came to me after being called up to protect us against terrorism during the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, and then subsequently, being deployed to Iraq for over a year. I was shocked to learn that they couldn't receive their full GI benefits to go to college because of a technicality. My legislation corrects that. It says that if you have two years of active duty service within a five year period, you qualify for your education benefits. *(Applause.)*

Aren't people in that situation, facing the same bombs and bullets as our active duty forces? As far as I'm concerned, they've earned that benefit and then some.

Another issue: One of the first bills I cosponsored when I was elected to Congress was the bill to eliminate concurrent receipt. It is not fair that the current law offsets military retiree pay by the amount a retiree receives in disability payments. I am also a cosponsor of legislation to repeal the offsets from surviving spouse annuities under the Military Survivor Benefit Plan. *(Applause.)* I have voted for full funding of the Veterans Administration, not piecemeal appropriations that leave gapping holes in vital programs. *(Applause.)*

I was stunned, as I'm sure you were recently, to learn the news about the VA security breach, potentially the personal information of 30 million veterans and active duty servicemembers that was vulnerable to identity theft. Thankfully, the laptop was recovered with no indication of a security breach. I intend to hold the VA's feet to the fire as far as

tightened security and correcting whatever problems led to this mistake.

I was raised by parents who taught me that your word is your bond. I am someone who believes in keeping my promise. I take seriously the pledges we have made to veterans in this country. Even if we fulfilled them all, we'd still owe a debt to the military men and women who went into harm's way. We can never thank veterans enough for their service and for their sacrifice.

Thank you to everyone here for the role you have played in our county's safety, security and in promoting liberty. I wish you and your leadership the best as you continue your conference. God bless America and God bless our troops. *(Standing applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: A public school teacher turned public servant, he has worked at nearly every level of the Republican Party, from precinct chair to member of the Republican National Committee, and has spent years working in every corner of this District. In 2003, he was swom in as the new Congressman from Utah's First Congressional District. For his first term, he was appointed to serve on the Armed Services Committee, the Resources Committee, and the Science Committee. He currently serves on the Rules Committee. Welcome to our convention the Honorable Rob Bishop. *(Standing applause.)*

Welcome: The Hon. Rob Bishop, United States House of Representatives

As the newest member of the Utah delegation, I also am happy to welcome you to Utah. We may have been the 45th State to come into the Union, but I hope we are the first in hospitality with you this week.

Also from the 1st District, though I am somewhat prejudiced, I also think we have the nicest people, the best tourism spots, and I want you to know that you are currently sitting in the 1st District of Utah. My district also understands military value, because all but three of the military installations in this state happen to be in the 1st District. Creative leadership at Hill Air Force Base has made it one of the leading bases in this nation, where the 388th Active and the 419th Reserve Wings will successfully merge and be a standard for what happens in the future. This is where the Ogden Air Logistics Center between its lean progress and its quality workforce was recommended by the BRAC panel. This is where the Tooele Army Depot has supplied the majority of ordnance used in both the Persian Gulf and the Iraq war. The is where the Dugway Proving Grounds has thousands of acres of excellent ground for homeland security, for national guards, and for active military training. This is where the Michael Army Airfield was being rebuilt by the federal government and the runway was being built too short for Air Force planes, this state of Utah donated $2 million of one-time money for a thousand feet of asphalt so that F-16s could actually land there. And we average about five emergency landings at Michael's every year, saving Air Force material as well as potential lives of pilots. This is here Deseret Chemical destroys useless nerve gas weapons keeping us in compliance with our treaties as well as safe. This is where local heroes join the Utah Air National Guard in this district and where the Utah test and training range is the largest land-based range in the continental United States, and the only land range where every weapon can be tested and improved in the United States.

Now, I am proud of all these installations, not just because they provide jobs and help or strengthen our economy, which is true. But I also think they are a value to the nation and the defense of this particular country.

As a freshman congressman, I was asked to go over to Germany and represent congress and this country in meeting with the German government. This was right after the Iraq war had started and Chancellor Schroeder had just won reelection with a good case of America bashing over the Iraq war, which seems to be in vogue every time things are going well and the need for American largess is not there.

I want to point out though, that Chancellor Schroeder did not win that election. He was a Minority Chancellor who served only because he had a coalition with the liberal Green Party. But he is the only Chancellor in German history who actually was successful because

of votes that were received in the old former east part of Germany, whereas his message in the west what used to be our allies in the cold war, did not successfully gain him votes. And the areas I learned in Germany which have the greatest contact with Americans also have the greatest support for Americans. Nonetheless, I spoke to his government and members of the Bundestag about the Iraq conflict.

I was not in congress in 1998, when 360 members of congress voted for a bill signed by Clinton that said our national policy toward Saddam Hussein would be regime change. I was also not in congress when 17 hours of floor debate were consumed discussing whether we should authorize force in Iraq. Those debates, I thought, should have been the definitive discussion as well as debate, as this nation could move forward.

But I also noted as I was talking to my German friends, that Saddam Hussein had violated 17 resolutions of the United Nations, three of them calling for force. He had violated the treaty he signed with the United States. His troops were shooting at American servicemen. He had put a bounty on the head of every American airman who could be brought to him and was offering a cash bonus to any family who could provide for suicide bombers willing to kill either Israelis or Americans. When someone breaks their treaty with the United States and shoots at our military, that is legal justification for violence and for physical action. *(Applause.)*

I would contend to you that the Iraq conflict is actually the most legal conflict we have had in the last 50 years. We went into Korea based on one resolution of the United Nations, not 17. Vietnam became a national priority based upon a treaty not with Vietnam, but with our ally at the time, France. We bombed Serbia and went into Bosnia, not because of a legal pretext, not because of a compelling national interest, but because our European allies asked for our support. We quarantined Cuba in the missile crisis, which was an act of war condemned at the time by the U.N. Secretary General; condemned in dozens of cities in the world once again because what President Kennedy did, at least in my mind, though not legal was the right thing to do. What we are doing in Iraq is legal and is the right thing to do. *(Applause.)*

Historians tell us we have always had protestors. One-third of those in America were opposed to the Revolutionary War. In the war of 1812, New England tried to secede. In the Civil War, the greatest civil disobedience we've had proportionally in this country took place in New York. Four days of rioting, 105 dead and the governor of New York inflamed the people by saying that President Lincoln only wanted the draft so he could kill off more Irish.

In the Spanish-American War, the Speaker of the House resigned post-war in protest. In World War I, the Secretary of State resigned pre-war in protest. Only World War II seems to be atypical in that particular kind of protest.

As a former history teacher, I see massive amount of parallels from what we are doing today from what has happened in history. And if all of our wars in the past 50 years should teach us anything, they should teach us that in coming up with policy, dealing with military activity, that policy should be made by the military men on the floor, military men on the ground and not by politicians in Washington trying to make one point or another. *(Applause.)* As P. J. O'Rourke used to say, "He who fails to learn the lessons of history, probably wasn't all that good in English or remedial math, either." *(Laughter.)*

When the French Revolution took place in the late 1700s, it started off as replacing a monarchy with a republic under the title of liberty, equality and fraternity. But it quickly evolved into innocent people being killed at the guillotine in the reign of terror. Sitting across the English Channel in England watching what was going on in France, Edmond Burke once said, "That the effects of liberty on the individual means they can do as they please. We ought to see what it pleases them to do before we risk congratulations."

So, in the United States today, Susan Sarandon says the United States has raped every corner of the world. Or Sean Penn says he grew up in a country of fear-based religion, corrupt government. If Oliver Stone calls us the Darth Vader Empire of the United States and America has to bleed, or if Danny Glover decides to embrace Hugo Chavez and Fidel

Castro and call the United States a terrorist country, they are free to do that. It is their right. But we don't have to congratulate them.

One of my constituents in Park City wishes to fly the American Flag upside down in protest to the war. She has every right to do that, it's her freedom. We don't have to congratulate her. If Jimmy Stewart in the height of his career in 1942, decides to leave the movies and fly 51 bombing missions in World War II, and then become a Brigadier General; or if the Galvez and Dolan family today in the middle of their grief still honor their son and their son's commitment to this country; or if you who come here today, look at your past service, your commitment to the President, your loyalty to the United States, your willingness to come here at this convention; those are also rights you have, they are freedoms you've expressed and they are worthy of congratulations. *(Applause.)*

So, my good friends and patriots of America, we welcome you here to Utah. I welcome you here to the 1st District of Utah. I want you to have an enjoyable time. Have a great convention. May God bless your very important work that you are doing here. And more than anything else, congratulations. *(Standing applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: He was elected Mayor of Salt Lake County in the 2004 general election, becoming the second mayor in Salt Lake County's history. His extensive background in community leadership, residential housing, civic affairs and small business development has enabled thousands to benefit from the services of his office.

He was responsible for starting a non-profit affordable housing company to serve housing needs that were not met in Salt Lake County. Over the years, he has also provided volunteer legal advice in Spanish to community members who had little or no proficiency in English. However, it is his vision of economic development, one that is designed with the people of Salt Lake County as the beneficiaries, that is becoming his trademark as a public servant. Legionnaires, please join me in giving a friendly welcome to our host for the 88th Annual American Legion National Convention, the Honorable Peter Corroon, Mayor of Salt Lake County. *(Applause.)*

Welcome: The Hon. Peter Carroon, Mayor of Salt Lake County, Utah

You read that introduction just like I wrote it. *(Laughter.)* Welcome. It's my honor to be able to give you the local welcome to our wonderful home, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, and the State of Utah. We wish you well during your important convention.

There have been many famous people and historic events that have occurred in this Salt Palace Convention Center, but despite a long list of notables we have seen come through these doors, there have been few groups we have been very honored to host, as The American Legion, you, who have already given so much and continue to give. Your service is truly remarkable.

I thank you for all you do in the community, in your state, and our nation and around the world. I'm reminded of a poem called "Freedom Source" that was recently shared with me. It reads: "It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us the freedom of the press. It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech. It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, who has given us the freedom to demonstrate. It is the soldier, not the lawyer, who has given us the right to a fair trial. It is the soldier who salutes the flag, who serves under the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protester to burn the flag. Were it not for the brave, there would be no land of the free."

The awards given out earlier this morning are a small indication of the good you do, in addition to encouraging youth to be involved in our country's success; to know our traditions of patriotism; and to learn about government through Girls and Boys State, as well as Girls and Boys Nation. You also support families in need of assistance, child welfare and great organizations like the American Heart Association.

Over the years you've played a significant part in honoring the flag; establishing the U.S. Veterans Bureau; and promoting the Boy Scouts of America, which as you know is

really an important program to our state. In fact, so much of what we think of ourselves as American, is tied to what The American Legion supports and that's mostly what I would like to talk to you about today, is support. Regardless if you're a Democrat or Republican, if you support the war or oppose it, it's our duty and honor to support our troops. *(Applause.)*

One of the things that I've learned since becoming Mayor of Salt Lake County is that teamwork always yields the best results. If we can focus on those things that unite us, that's when we really make progress. I think of all the volunteers who pitch in when disaster strikes. I think of neighbors helping neighbors. I think of families opening their hearts and homes to those who need a soft spot to land.

In the early 1900s, Katherine Lee Bates, penned the words to "America the Beautiful." We are accustomed to singing the first verse, but today I'd like to close by reading the last two verses.

O beautiful for heroes proved, in liberating strife.
Who more than self their country love and mercy more than life.
America, America, may God thy gold refine
Til all success be nobleness and every gain divine.

O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam undimmed by human tears.
America, America, God shed His grace on thee
And crown that good with brotherhood from sea to
shining sea.

Salt Lake County stands in appreciation of your continued bravery and service. Thank you for seeing that patriot's dream beyond the years. May God bless each and everyone of you. *(Standing applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: Working with his fellow Legionnaires is his passion. Whether working as a Vice Commander at the Spanish Fork Post 68, or serving as the District 4 Commander, or as Department Vice Commander, our next guest dedicated his life to improving the quality of life of our veterans, their families and their communities. Join me in welcoming the Commander for the Department of Utah, Thad Jensen.

Welcome: Thad S. Jensen, 2005-2006 Department Commander of Utah

Don't you just love it when the Legion comes together? Well, this is great. On behalf of The American Legion family of Utah, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the State of Utah. The last convention was held in Salt Lake City 10 years ago in 1996. We hope that during your visit you will enjoy the hospitality we extend to you.

Four years ago, we held the 2002 Winter Olympics. It was a very successful Winter Olympics. Some of the things you will see date back to that great time in our history. We hope that you will find time to enjoy the beauties and wonders of our beautiful state.

On behalf of the people of Utah, I extend to you our best wishes and hope you will have a productive and enjoyable visit with us. Thanks for allowing the Department of Utah to host this great American Legion family convention. *(Applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: He is literally a walking encyclopedia of Legion knowledge. He has been a member since 1945 and has held just about every office within the Department of Utah to include Post, District and Department levels. He is currently the National Executive Committeeman for the Department of Utah. Equally impressive is his civic career, ranging from the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce to serving on Utah committees to authorize special education classes in public schools for exceptional children.

Join me in welcoming the President of The American Legion National Convention Corporation of Utah, NECman Bill Christoffersen. *(Standing applause.)*

Welcome: William E. Christoffersen, President
The American Legion National Convention Corporation of Utah

It's indeed a pleasure to stand here before you; this large audience is something to behold. We welcome you all to Salt Lake City. I'm fortunate to have say a distinguished guest badge on my chest. To me, each of you are the distinguished guests; you're the ones that make this thing work.

I thank all of those volunteers who have help us so diligently from the State of Utah. It's been exceptional. We've had more than we could even handle; everybody wanted to help, which makes this great. But nevertheless, let's get on with our work, let's get on with our business, and God bless America.

NATL COMDR BOCK: I now recognize a fellow airman who has been sitting up here on stage with us, Gen. Robert Oaks, Air Force retired four star general. Thanks for being here General. *(Applause.)* I always wanted to do that; I had three stripes. *(Laughter.)*

Congress established the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) in 1923 to commemorate the service, sacrifice and achievements of U.S. Armed Forces where they have served overseas since 1917, and within the U.S. when directed by public law. The ABMC commemorative mission is reflected in 24 overseas military cemeteries that serve as resting places for almost 125,000 American war dead; on Tablets of the Missing that memorialize more than 94,000 U.S. servicemen and women; and throughout 25 memorials, monuments and markers.

We are honored to have with us today, the Executive Director of the American Battle Monuments Commission. A graduate of the United States Military Academy, he had a highly decorated career in the infantry. If it can march, shoot or jump out of helicopters, then he has probably commanded it. He has also held several high level assignments at the Pentagon.

His son Peter is an Infantry Second Lieutenant in the 82nd Airborne Division and has recently returned to Iraq. Welcome, Brigadier General William J. Leszczynski, Jr. *(Applause.)*

Address: Brigadier General William J. Leszczynski, Jr., Executive Director
American Battle Monuments Commission

It is truly an honor for me to be with you today. I thank the leadership of The American Legion for giving me the opportunity to address you.

For those of you who haven't heard of the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), we're a small, independent agency of the executive branch of the federal government. Our mission is to commemorate the service, achievements and sacrifices of American Armed Forces where they've served since April 6, 1917, the date of the United States entry into World War I. In a nutshell, we do this by operating and maintaining the 24 overseas military cemeteries, and 25 separate monuments and markers. As you would expect, most of our sites are in Europe, sanctified by the loss of servicemembers in both World War I and World War II.

Now, most people know the American Battle Monuments Commission is the agency that built the World War II Memorial on the mall in Washington, DC, and we are certainly very proud of that. But building memorials isn't our core mission. Unfortunately, not many Americans know what our mission is and we want to change that. We want all Americans, and especially veterans and their families, to come and visit our cemeteries and honor the men and women buried there who made the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf.

Our cemeteries are a little bit different than the ones maintained by the Veterans Administration, or the Army at Arlington. Ours are commemorative; created to bury our war dead near the places where they fell. They are magnificent and they are arguably the most

beautiful in the world. We think that they are a fitting testimony to the brave men and women who are buried there.

I'm going to stop talking now for a few minutes so that I can share with you what you will see when you visit our cemeteries and our memorials. Roll the video, please. *[At this time the delegation viewed the video.]*

They say that a picture is worth a thousand words and we think that video is worth about a hundred thousand words. Certainly, it's a lot more eloquent than I am. But I'll tell you, if that doesn't make your heart beat, then you need to go see a heart doctor right away, because that's what we're all about at ABMC. You can see from that video that our standards are pretty high. We believe our cemeteries stand as universal symbols of our nation's willingness to sacrifice. We believe they reflect how our nation honors all of its veterans who gave their last full measure of devotion.

Every time I go out and visit one of these cemeteries I'm reminded of the words of Gen. Colin Powell. You heard an earlier iteration here from one of the speakers. He said, "We have sent men and women from our Armed Forces of the United States to other parts of the world throughout the past century to put down oppression. We defeated fascism, we defeated communism, we saved Europe in World War I and World War II. And when all those conflicts were over, what did we do? Did we ask reparations? No. Did we ask for colonies? Did we ask for slaves or for gold? No. All we ever asked were little plots of land where we could bury our dead."

Americans have fought and died for the principles of freedom and democracy in every corner of the world. That same spirit of freedom is inspiring a new generation that place themselves in harm's way to deny a new enemy's attempt to abridge our freedom. In the end they, too, will prevail just like the people who've gone before them.

The reason for me joining you today at this wonderful convention is not to raise the level of your patriotism. That's never been an issue, nor will it ever be. I'm really here to extend an invitation to you and all those who you know to come and visit our overseas cemeteries. Most of you are familiar with our cemetery overlooking the Normandy Beach in France, but how many of you are familiar, even in passing, with some of the other cemeteries that we've shown in the video. How many of you have visited Paris without visiting Suresnes American Cemetery, one of our beautiful and historic cemeteries within sight of the Eiffel Tower or, equally impressive cemetery in Florence, Italy, or Cambridge, England, or Tunisia, or Manila in the Philippines?

Now, in the interest of time, I can't talk about everyone of our cemeteries that we maintain around the world, but they are explained to you in detail on our website at <www.abmc.gov>. In the video that you saw just a few minutes ago is also on our sites.

All of our cemeteries are national treasures inspiring patriotism, invoking gratitude and teaching history; powerful symbols of duty, honor and country. They are places of beauty and honor where we can show our children why our nation and our ideals are worth the sacrifice of all who rise to the colors.

In closing, I thank you for the tremendous support that this great organization has given to the American Battle Monuments Commission throughout the years. I thank each of you for your great service to our nation and everything that you continue to do to support our great men and women in uniform.

Special Presentation: Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

In 1989, the Supreme Court amended the Constitution by inserting flag burning into the Bill of Rights. Their decision took away a fundamental right from the American people, the right to protect our flag.

Since 1994, The American Legion has stood side-by-side with the Citizens Flag Alliance in the campaign to secure a flag amendment. It has been a hard battle over the years, but members and supporters of the Citizens Flag Alliance have been persistent in bringing this issue to the American people.

Senators Orrin Hatch from Utah, Dianne Feinstein from California, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist from Tennessee and Minority Leader Harry Reid from Nevada, were instrumental in opening doors to get Senate Joint Resolution 12, the Flag Amendment, to the Senate floor for a vote. Their advice was always on the mark and their eloquence in defending the flag amendment was always inspiring. It is no wonder that 70 to 80 percent of Americans favor a flag amendment. Although, Senate Joint Resolution 12 was defeated in the Senate this past June by a vote of 66 to 34—one vote shy of the necessary two thirds required—we were able to raise the awareness of this issue to new heights in our American culture.

We have with us today a gentleman whom we would like to honor with a special award for his support of the flag amendment. Please welcome a champion of 'Old Glory,' the primary co-sponsor of Senate Joint Resolution 12, the Flag Amendment, and a great friend of The American Legion, Senator Orrin Hatch. *(Applause.)*

I ask Major Gen. Pat Brady to join me in this presentation.

ANNOUNCER: Senator Orrin G. Hatch. For Courage and Perseverance in Defense of the American Flag. Presented by The Citizens Flag Alliance, August, 2006. (Applause.)

Address: The Hon. Orrin G. Hatch, United States Senate

That is really beautiful. I'm so grateful to all of you for the service that you have given to our country. Commander Bock, I want to thank you for your generous words of this high honor. Gen. Brady, I just can't tell you; you've led this fight for so many years and without you we wouldn't be where we are. You did it with a bad hip that is now repaired. It's a privilege to receive this award from an organization whose members' sacrifices have ensured that our nation's flag continues to stand for freedom.

I thank my dear friends Bill Christoffersen and Terry Schow, who over the years have worked tirelessly to ensure that our nation keeps its promises to our nation's veterans.

Additionally, I would like to recognize the leadership and good works of Thad Jensen, and The American Legion's National Chaplain Steven Wright. We Utahans are really blessed to have these men working with us as leaders of our veterans' community.

Well, just before the 4th of July, the Senate debated and voted on the Flag Amendment. Now, we've been bringing this up regularly. You've been the bulwark fighting for this amendment. This is the closest we've ever come. We got 66 votes, one shy of the 67 needed to pass this amendment. I might add that there were at least two other Democrats who would have voted with us had they been released by the leadership. In other words, we had 68 votes and it would have passed for the first time. It would have been submitted to the states. Three quarters of the states would have ratified it overnight, and we would have protected our flag once again by restoring the Constitution to what it was before five unelected jurists on the Supreme Court changed it. *(Applause.)*

Keep in mind, the phoniest argument ever given, is that this amendment would do away with the First Amendment, or would be the first time that we would amend the First Amendment of the Constitution with regard to speech. Huh, uh. Guess what that amendment says. All it basically says is that Congress shall have the power. Those are the most important words. The Congress shall have the power to protect our beloved flag from acts of physical desecration. What's that got to do with speech?

I think when people defecate on our flag, urinate on our flag, burn our flag with contempt, that's not free speech, that's offensive conduct. (Applause.)

And our left-wing media in this country continues in almost every editorial in the country to go against this amendment. They've never read it. They keep talking as though we're trying to take away free speech. The fact is, if we pass that amendment and ratified it, the Congress would still have to have a major debate over whether or not we can actually protect our flag from acts of physical desecration and it would take 60 votes in the United States Senate to do it. Or in other words, a super majority vote.

Without you, without the leaders here today, without the Flag Alliance, we would never have come this close. To be honest with you, I can't wait until the day when we show everybody that we're going to stand up for the beloved symbol of this country in ways that will help our young people understand that we do have values, that we do stand for something, that we're not afraid to stand up for our flag. *(Applause.)*

I am so honored to have this. My most precious possession is the flag that draped my brother's coffin when they brought him back from Europe where he had flown in B-24s, B-24 Liberators on the oil raid before he was killed. They were shot down twice before and got back through enemy lines. I lost a brother-in-law in Vietnam.

We just buried our top kick sergeant in the Marines back in Arlington just a short while ago. I believe in what you do. I believe in what you've done. I believe that you're the most noble people on the face of the earth.

Having said that, let me just close with these thoughts. Not long ago I had one of the major PhD professors in the country come up to me and say, "I don't like President Bush. I don't like the war." And I said, "Oh, really. Tell me if you will, when was the last time we had a major terrorist incident in our country?" And you could see the wheels grinding because he didn't want to admit it but finally he said, "Well, I guess it's September 11, 2001." I said, "Now, why do you think that's so?" And the wheels started grinding again and then finally he acknowledged he said, "Well, I guess it's because we're taking it to them over there." I said, "Bingo." Then I said, "There's another reason, too, and it's because of the USA Patriot Act which has given law enforcement the tools to be able to protect our flag from vicious enemy terrorists." We've caught over 300 terrorists in this country since the Patriot Act was enacted. And we've convicted over 130 of them.

It does take guts to stand up. You don't hear much about Afghanistan anymore because, basically, Afghanistan now has an effective representative form of government for the first time in its history. Well, all we hear about is Iraq. And, of course, if we're going to cut and run and leave that country before the job is done after all the headway we've made, where people went out and voted when their lives were in jeopardy; 80 percent of them participated in that purple revolution. If that doesn't say something to everybody about the headway we're making, I don't know what does. (*Applause.*)

I can tell you right now, you're going to be privileged to hear the President on Thursday. I'm going to be here. I've been there in Washington 30 years. I was one of Reagan's closest friends, I was like a son to him. I was one of the first to support him and I've known presidents from Nixon right on through to our current president today. All great men. I want you to know that I believe George Bush is one of the greatest. He has guts, ability and fortitude. (*Applause.*) And when I look at the way he's treated by many in the media throughout this country, who will not really tell the truth about what he's doing and what's been done, it just tears me apart.

I'm going to close, hopefully, on a humorous note. We need to support this President, no question about it. This President has guts. You had the privilege of hearing the Secretary of Defense this morning, Don Rumsfeld, he's terrific. Frankly, you'll hear Condoleezza Rice this afternoon. She is terrific. She is respected all over the world. The President has chosen good people. They're doing the best they can. These are not easy jobs, they're tough jobs.

But to end on a note of humor, because you're in my home state of Utah. A number of years ago in the last century the LDS Church called a mule skinner to become one of the top 25 general authorities. Approximately 25 general authorities are leaders of the church. His name was J. Golden Kimble. The only trouble with J. Golden Kimble was, he was 6 foot 4 inches, 147 lbs, tough as nails mule skinner. The only problem with him as a spiritual leader was that he couldn't quit swearing. He would get up in the middle of the tabernacle and be swearing a blue streak. The leader of the church would be pulling on his coat tail, saying, "Brother Kimball, Brother Kimball." And he would say, "Don't worry, Mr. President, I know they think they can get me but I repent too damn fast," he said. *(Laughter.)*

Well, one day they found the perfect assignment for J. Golden, Golden they called him. The president of the church called him in and said, "Golden we have a congregation down

here in central Utah where believe it or not, people are drinking tea and coffee." Now that's unique to Utah by the way. Then he said, "And there may even be a case of fornication and maybe even a case of adultery. And we want you to go down there and call those people to repentance." So old J. Golden went down there and just chewed them up one side down the other, emphasizing everything with this sheet of paper in his hands. He blistered them and called them to repentance. They were all very humbled by it all and then finally he said—by the way he spoke in a high falsetto voice—, "I bet you're all wondering what I have in my right hand. I bet you'd like to know what's written in this sheet of paper." He said, "Well, I'm going to tell you. It's the Lord's sh** list and you're all on it." *(Laughter and applause.)*

I want all you brothers and sisters to know that you're not on my bad list. *(Laughter.)* You are the people who have made this country the greatest country in the world. You stand up where others don't. I apologize for the people who are protesting here. Isn't it wonderful to belong to a country where we can have people who totally disagree with us in protest, but I don't think that should have happened here. But be that as it may, we can live with it because we're right. We have the greatest country in the world and the guts to stand up for freedom. We're going to do it. God bless all of you. (*Applause.*)

NATL COMDR BOCK: The Chair recognizes Larry Besson of Illinois, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs, for the purpose of making a report.

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

To the Eighty-Eighth Annual National Convention of The American Legion, Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006.

The section on Credentials and Other Internal Affairs met at 9:00 a.m., August 27, 2006, in Room 258, Upper Level, in the Salt Palace Convention Center. Larry J. Besson of Illinois was elected Chairman, and Larry D. Sheets (FL) of Florida was elected Secretary.

It was regularly moved, seconded and carried to accept the Delegate Strength Report as reported by the National Adjutant certifying membership 30 days prior to National Convention. It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the report be based upon the provisions of Section 3, Article V, of the National Constitution: Five delegates for each Department, plus one additional delegate for each 1,000 members or major fraction thereof, whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer thirty (30) days prior to the opening of the Convention (July 31, 2006); and one alternate for each delegate. In addition, in accordance with Section 3, Article VII, members of the National Executive Committee which committee includes the National Commander, who exercises his vote only in his capacity as Chairman of the National Convention, and five (5) National Vice Commanders are delegates to the National Convention.

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

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

It was also regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Permanent Committee Chairman and Permanent Secretary be authorized to make technical corrections to the resolutions reported out of this Committee to ensure proper wording and form without changing the substance or meaning of the resolution(s).

In accordance with the membership report certified to the Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Affairs by the National Adjutant on July 31, 2006, and in accordance with Article V of the National Constitution, the voting strength of the 55 Departments is 2,968 allocated as follows:

Alabama	32	Montana	19
Alaska	14	Nebraska	55
Arizona	52	Nevada	16
Arkansas	26	New Hampshire	30
California	140	New Jersey	76
Colorado	32	New Mexico	21
Connecticut	35	New York	171
Delaware	18	North Carolina	54
District of Columbia	9	North Dakota	29
Florida	143	Ohio	144
France	10	Oklahoma	33
Georgia	59	Oregon	32
Hawaii	10	Pennsylvania	232
Idaho	19	Philippines	7
Illinois	136	Puerto Rico	13
Indiana	122	Rhode Island	15
Iowa	73	South Carolina	34
Kansas	51	South Dakota	32
Kentucky	37	Tennessee	39
Louisiana	40	Texas	96
Maine	34	Utah	16
Maryland	82	Vermont	23
Massachusetts	64	Virginia	66
Mexico	7	Washington	44
Michigan	98	West Virginia	33
Minnesota	115	Wisconsin	81
Mississippi	26	Wyoming	14
Missouri	65		

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

...Second from the floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: I heard a second. All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. 'Aye.' All opposed. Motion carried. The Report of the Credentials and Internal Affairs, Section I, is adopted.

Chairman Besson, is there any other business of Internal Affairs Commission that needs to be brought to our attention?

CHRMN BESSON: Yes, sir, right here. Commander, I request permission to allow Past National Commander Butch Miller to address the Convention for the purposes of introducing The American Legion Racing Team.

NATL COMDR BOCK: So granted.

PNC MILLER: I've been to a lot of caucuses this week asking the same question, but I'm going to ask you again. Do you know The American Legion's got a race car?

..."Yeah" from the floor.

When you get home, will everybody in your Post, your District, your Department, know we've got a race car?

..."Yeah" from the floor.

How are they going to know? Because you're going to tell them, right?

You know there's four words in lexicon of almost every Legionnaire that we hold very close to our heart, and they are, "For God and Country." Now, I'm not going to say we're going to replace that, but I'd sure like to add four more words to that lexicon. And that is, "Gentlemen Start Your Engines."

It takes about $100,000 for our race car to go to a race and go real fast and turn left and

finish that race; that's a minimum. It takes about $1,700 to buy four tires to put on that car. If you've watched race cars, you know they're over that wall a lot changing a lot of tires.

You can buy a poster or T-shirt out in Emblem Sales or after that [a poster] where the cars are located for about $20 bucks. If we sell about 100 more of those posters, we're going to have enough money to put some more new tires on that car. It's your race car. You're The American Legion. It's like the song said, "It's not who we are, it's what we are." And what we are is we're about service to community, state and nation. It's our race car. We don't toot our horn an awful lot in this organization. We just do our job because that's who we are.

I'll tell you something about what that race car is and what it can do for us. Forget the tires, forget what it costs to put it on the track. It's priceless for us because it's going to get our name out there and people are going to know The American Legion is out there. It's current, it's up-to-date and it's still serving America.

I introduce you right now to the gentleman who is going to take our race car, No. 76, the Freedom Car—hey, you know we've got a race car?

...Yeah from the floor.

You want to meet the guy who is going to drive that race car?

...Yeah from the floor.

Here he is, ladies and gentlemen, Jerick Johnson our driver.

Address: Jerik Johnson, Mooresville, North Carolina
Team Johnson Motor Sports

I am proud to be the Legion race car driver in one of the most American of sports, NASCAR. It is one of the only sporting events that has a prayer and a National Anthem, along with the fly over before every event and it's really special to be able to represent The American Legion in a sport like that.

I want to answer a few questions in front of everybody that I get to answer singled out while we're sitting in the hallways and people asking questions. People go out to spread the word that The American Legion has a race car, and it is supported by the members of The American Legion having to give donations and buy merchandise in order for our car to get on the race track. They get the question as to why we go on racing from other people, why are we spending our money on racing instead of on our veteran programs that we are already supporting?

Just to let you know, The American Legion, as a national organization, knows that they need NASCAR racing to get their name out there to the 75 million NASCAR fans, but they did not want to take money away from the veteran programs that they're already supporting or any other program that they have. What they did is have a very unique relationship with Team Johnson Motor Sports. The American Legion is supposed to be supported by you, the members, through donations, merchandise, and associate sponsorship.

We can do this because of the uniqueness of The American Legion. Four million members strong between The American Legion, the Sons of The American Legion, and the women's Auxiliary. As a family, we can support this race car and get out onto the track. We're really looking forward to that. But the main reason we're getting the car out there in front of these NASCAR race fans is for the exposure to The American Legion, to show them what programs and veteran programs we support, and most of all recruit the next generation of American Legion members.

If you watch NASCAR racing, the Army, the Navy, the Marines, the Coast Guard, and the Air Force all have race cars. It's not because their generals or colonels like hearing race cars, or like going to the races on weekends. It's because it's a very powerful recruitment tool that The American Legion has decided to join in with us.

I'm very proud and anxious to get on the race track but we need your support. Only through the support of you guys, and associate sponsors like americalegiontravel.com, one of your vendors that you have over here at the convention, is how we get on the race track.

I will be over at Emblem Sales until 2:00 p.m. They have T-shirts, cars, clocks, flags,

all kinds of merchandise that supports Legion Racing. The die cast cars are great raffle items for you to take back to your Post and raise a little money for your Post. The clocks, the flags are great items to hang up in your Post to show your support of Legion Racing and help spread our news. I will be here 20 minutes or so after I get off stage. I'll be out in front by the race cars that you have already seen, and will be willing to sign any of that stuff to help promote American Legion Racing.

I'm very proud to be The American Legion Freedom Car driver. *(Applause.)*

COMM CHRMN BESSON: Jerik answered one question. I'm going to ask another one. Not only why do we want to go racing, but why do we want to join the Johnson Racing Team? Jack Johnson is a member of this organization and just like this organization, his business is family oriented. Jack and Debbie are sitting at the back. Stand up so everybody can see you. That's not only the business brains, that's the heart behind this organization.

I'm going to finish up by asking you to do one thing for me. Let's send Jerik to his race this weekend in California. Let's give him the kind of push that The American Legion puts behind *all* its programs. Four words, that's what I want to hear. What are they? *Gentlemen start your engines. (Applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: Next is our Director of Americanism and Children & Youth, Marty Justis.

Special Report: Legion Riders
Marty Justis, Director Americanism and Children & Youth

On Friday, August 18, sixty-five Legionnaires on motorcycles all wearing the colors of American Legion Riders, headed west from Wayne American Legion Post 64 in Indianapolis, Indiana. Their destination; Salt Lake City, Utah and the 88th National Convention of The American Legion. Their objective: to help assure that the children of our fallen heroes could receive the best education available. The Riders' goal: $100,000 to the American Legacy Scholarship Fund.

Led by National Commander Bock and National Adjutant Bob Spanogle who himself is a Legion Rider, the Riders traveled 1,900 miles through seven states over five days. Through Illinois and Missouri, across the Kansas prairies into Denver over the Rocky Mountains and across the great divide, up into Wyoming and then down into Salt Lake City. Three days of rain, temperatures from 102 in Columbia, Missouri to 40 degrees in the Rocky Mountains. We even saw some snow there.

Riders from around the country traveled with a caravan that at times stretched more than three-quarters of a mile, more than 100 people strong. Many rode from city to city, some from state to state. They brought with them contributions from rider groups, from Posts, and from their Departments.

In Indianapolis, Indiana, 10-year old Megan Smith gave Commander Bock $32.00 that she had raised personally to contribute to the American Legacy Scholarship Fund, a very notable contribution.

From Converse, Texas a Post down there presented a check to Commander Bock for $10,000 while we were on the road, as far as we know, the largest single contribution from a Post of The American Legion.

In all, more than 300 riders took part in this the inaugural event of the American Legacy Run. Along the way American Legion Posts fed us breakfast, lunch and dinner. And then they turned around and made their own contribution to the Legacy Scholarship Fund.

We paused for awhile on the Army installation at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas where National Commander Bock presented a memorial wreath to honor the Buffalo Soldiers, the post Civil War African American U.S. Army Regiment.

At Craig, Colorado the American Legion Riders paused again to witness the rededication of Craig Post 62, which now bears the name Mark Anthony Lawton American

Legion Post 62, named in honor of Craig's hometown hero who was killed in Iraq fighting the war on terror. His widow and his two young sons were present. It was a stark reminder to all Riders that our mission is clear. We ride for America's future.

Earlier on Tuesday afternoon, August 22, under police escort, 67 American Legion Riders rode into South Salt Lake Post 112, forty of whom had made the entire trip. We were tired, we were excited and we were proud. And the Legion Riders celebrated there at the Post with the announcement that contributions to the American Legacy Scholarship Fund as a result of the American Legacy Run tallied more than $90,000 cash in hand. *(Applause.)*

And the monies are still coming in. I would ask Membership Director Billy Johnson to bring you up-to-date on that, recognizing those who have contributed to this point and acknowledging those who are with us today to make more contributions.

MBRSH DIR JOHNSON: National Commander Bock, please join me here along with Terry Woodburn, the Department Adjutant of Illinois, and all Riders who are in vests and uniform.

On behalf of the 20,000 plus Legion Riders across the country and the more than 500 groups and chapters across the country, we would like to present to you, Commander Bock, a check for $90,230 to the Legacy Scholarship Fund. *(Applause.)* But this is not all.

NATL COMDR BOCK: We've got more, line 'em up. *(Laughter.)*

MBRSH DIR JOHNSON: In addition to the amount that we've already collected and accounted for, there were a number of contributions that have come in the last three days. The Department of France—step forward with the Commander—gave us a check for $2,650 two days ago; the Department of Georgia has already contributed almost $8,000 and they've got another $1,740 to present to you. The Department of Illinois has already contributed over $2,000 and they gave us another $1,000 on Saturday. The Department of Kansas has been giving over the last couple of days $2,275 to the Legacy Fund; the Department of Nebraska $3,000 to the Legacy Fund. And remember, this is in addition to the $90,000 that we just presented to the Commander.

The Department of New Jersey has just given an additional $432.00 in addition to over $5,000 that they gave to us previously. The Department of Pennsylvania, $4,714.54; the Department of South Dakota $1,500; the Department of Tennessee $1,501; the Department of Wisconsin, $1,110; the Department of California, $2,000; the Department of New York had previously given us $2,000 and they just gave us a check on Friday for another $6,000.

There is one more Department that initially gave us $20,000 to the Legacy Fund, which is a part of that $90,320. I'm going to step aside from the podium. They said they've got something big and better and I think it's only appropriate that they make the contribution to the Commander.

NEC SWISHER: Mr. Commander, as a representative from the great State of Ohio, we do have another check for you. It's a substantial check, I would think and you hope. But before I do that, I'd like to introduce the people who are with me because without these people we would not have this check.

I introduce my Delegate Chairman Bill Balser, our new Commander Ed Anderson, and Gary Cox who was one of the Riders. The next two people are probably the most important people because they represent the Department of Ohio Charities, Inc. It's a great and outstanding program that we have in Ohio. But before I introduce these two people I would like the Department of Ohio to rise because they also are part of all of this. *(Applause.)*

I introduce Jim Morris and also Glenn Hickman. They are the representatives and they will now present you with a check for $40,000.

MBRSH DIR JOHNSON: I think we have two more presentations, one from Commander Jake Comer and one from the Past Department Commanders Club.

PNC COMER: We're very proud to add this to the fund. Father Sweeney from New York had two masses while we were here, one in New York and one after the ANAVICUS Breakfast. The collections were $437.00, and he's turning that over to the Legacy Fund. As most of you know, I charge $1.00 for anyone that doesn't have their beret at ANAVICUS,

and that was 226 delinquents, thank God, for that. So we're turning over a total of $663.00.

PDC PERSHING (MN): The Department of Minnesota's contribution is $500.00 for the Legacy Fund.

PDC DETTORI (AK): Here is $545.00 additional dollars from the Department of Alaska. Now all those guys that gave me $20 bucks know why.

PDC WHITE (WY): I'm Todd White the President of The American Legion Past Department Commanders Club. With me is the Chairman of the Executive Committee Richard Pedro. The Past Department Commanders Club is very proud to present National Commander Bock with $5,000 for the Legacy Scholarship Fund.

MBRSH DIR JOHNSON: Thank you for your patience. We've got one more.

DEPT ADJ ZACHODNY (NH): The Department of New Hampshire originally gave a check for $2,400. We have another check for another $2,000. It's small but it all adds up.

NATL COMDR BOCK: If you just pay attention to the monitors, we have a short video of the ride that we would like to show to you know.

...At this point the delegation watched a video of the Legacy Ride.

NATL COMDR BOCK: I'll tell you what, that was a tough ride. *(Laughter.)* Of all the people involved in that the Legion Riders pulled together. They created the Pony Express. I have one of the Pony Express Rider Badges on my lapel today. It started out in Texas. A little grassroots is what we're powerful for and we join together collecting donations.

I'm so proud. They came to me in the middle of the ride and said, "Commander, I hope you can keep this going." I said, "It's got a life of its own. There's nobody here that I know that can stop it."

They come from everywhere: Florida, West Virginia, Texas, Oregon, Delaware. Goodness sakes, the Department Commander of Delaware, holy cow, Don White rode on the back of a motorcycle. They've got a name for that seat I can't use it here. *(Laughter.)*

It was a tough ride. I had to talk to the riders and try to motivate them every evening and get them charged up to go, because I had to ride in a 45-foot motorcoach. *(Laughter.)* First day out, we could not get the air conditioner balanced; it was hot, it was cold. The second day out, I couldn't get the clock on the microwave to work just right, you know. And then we got into Leavenworth and went under some trees and lost our satellite reception. We had to get down to DVDs. *(Aah, laughter.)* It was tough.

We got into Hays, Kansas that night. After the moisture you saw accumulating in the air [in the video], and on the road,, I stepped out of the motorcoach and some of the condensation off of the air conditioning unit on the RV dripped right on my shirt. *(Laughter.)* It was a tough ride. But you've got to be proud of The American Legion Riders. They moved to the top, they got national acclaim.

Our next guest has accepted many invitations to speak before this convention. He is a friend and an international partner in veteran fellowship. The Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada, ANAVIC and The American Legion enjoy a long-standing partnership between our two countries, both equally committed to their fellow veterans.

Please welcome the Dominion President of ANAVIC, Kenneth Henderson.

Greetings: Kenneth Henderson, Dominion President
Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada

On behalf of the executives and members of the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada, I bring you greetings and friendship. These were similar greetings brought by our then Dominion President Jack Wickens in October, 1948, in Miami, which began this enduring relationship that we both enjoy today.

That meeting sparked by the relationship that Father Harrington had taken the time to nurture. It's a friendship begun between our association during the early years after World War II, which lead to the establishment of ANAVICUS, the United States unit of ANAVIC. Since that time, the militaries of both our countries have shared many battles and stood

shoulder to shoulder fighting for the values of freedom, democracy that our country both enjoy today. I'd like to take a moment to explain to you why I think our relationship is so important and has kept us so closely and strongly linked and why it is imperative that we continue to be linked.

Firstly, our two great nations are literally joined at the hip. We share the same continent; we have the same border, the longest undefended border in the world. We, for the most part, have the same language; business; commerce; tourism; friendship and families that much more tie us together.

Secondly, our countries hold the same ideals of freedom and democracy which we share of our way of life, resulting in fairness, equality, law and order. Both our nations value freedom and democracy so highly that we're willing to go to war and give up our lives to protect them.

And the last reason, the reason that we are here today, is that we are both veterans organizations. It is the military of both nations that is called upon to protect freedom and democracy. We are comrades. We are brothers in arms. We are the ones that our countries call upon to protect the very ideals of freedom and democracy we hold so dearly.

And it goes much further than that. For the most part we fight in the same wars, and frequently in the same battles, relying on each other. So, as we do our own in short, there is nothing we wouldn't do for each other almost.

I don't have a psychology degree to help me explain this, but it is what I believe in. I believe that bonds, friendship, comradeship, gets stronger and stronger in more experiences that people share. I also believe that the experiences are remembered more often if they have the same special and strong feelings associated with them.

War is life and death things, and I believe there is nothing that will bond people together more than fighting or being prepared to fight for their life, their family, their ideals, and their country. Both know governments change, policies change, but the values that we hold dear do not. They stay firm. It is organizations such as ours that represents those that defend our values, the veteran that will bring unity and focus on the important values of life. For it is the veteran who pays the ultimate price for our democracy and freedom. Let us keep our relationship strong so that we are better able to ensure the best possible support for our veterans and for the good of our two nations.

Now, I would like to take two just two seconds. I was supposed to do something at the end of the ANAVICUS breakfast but due to our great postal services in both countries, they do not work on Saturdays and Sundays. Some people told me they don't work during the week, but we'll just have to take that as it is.

I would like to ask my President of ANAVICUS to come forward, please. I'm honored today to present to the President of ANAVICUS, the second highest award that my association can hand out: The Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans Order of Service. The medal goes with it. I'll read it for you.

"The Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada have arranged from a fraternal relationship of ex-servicemen and women, the expression of opinions and matters affecting veterans, assimilation of patriotism, assisting the nation when the occasion requires, operation of clubs, homes and meeting places, care of the disabled, widows, and their dependents.

And whereas, it is important that members in the association who dedicate themselves to fulfilling these obligations, be suitably recognized.

Be it therefore known on the recommendations of the Executive Dominion Command, the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada do hereby issue and award this Citation of Order for the service of John T. J. Comer, and the expression of appreciation for rendering an outstanding contribution towards fulfilling the aims and objectives of the association by the unselfish giving of time, talent and energy in serving the United States, the Post, the community, and the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada and United States on this day [it was supposed to be the 27th, we'll say] the 29th."

PNC COMER: Ken, this is an outstanding honor for me, and a surprise. I accept this

award on behalf of every member of ANAVICUS and all they do in the scholarship works in this country, United States, and Canada. I'll be forever grateful. *(Applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: The American Legion is blessed again to have partners around the world who share our dedication to veterans and their families.

Years ago the Republic of China established the Veterans Affairs Commission with the aim of serving all our fellow veterans. They assist them in seeking and successfully obtaining medical care, home care, employment assistance, and educational assistance. They also are designing specific programs regarding employment and educational assistance for newly retired veterans. We are most fortunate to have with us today a man who has dedicated his life to veterans and their families. Welcome the Minister of the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China, General Kao Hua-chu. *(Applause.)*

Greetings: General Kao, Hua-chu (Ret.), Minister
Veterans Affairs Commission
Republic of China

It's a great honor to be invited to address your convention. This is my second time to attend the Annual Convention of The American Legion. Last year, we met at Honolulu. On behalf of my colleagues and all veterans of the Republic of China and Taiwan, I wish you a successful Annual National Convention, and all of you an enjoyable stay in Salt Lake City.

The American Legion and the VAC have built a very strong relationship for about 50 years. During these years, leaders of our two organizations have exchanged the visits to maintain our close relations. Last year I had the honor to receive National Commander and Mrs. Bock and National President Van Kirk to Taipei. Although this day was short, we still managed to take them to meet with members in Taipei; visit our Taipei Veteran General Hospital, which is the biggest in Southeast Asia; our Taipei Veterans Home, which is the largest home care facility for Chinese veterans from Korean War in Southeast Asia; and Taipei 101 Financial Building, which is so far the tallest building in the world. These are our installations providing care for our veterans, for the proud achievements of them by our retired servicemen.

Ladies and gentlemen, we were all soldiers once, and we have experienced how soldiers have contributed in exchange for the safety of their country, and the peaceful life and freedom of their fellow countrymen.

You have been lucky to be American veterans. In addition, your government and your senators or congressmen who support you on all accounts. You also have the free worlds that respects you and feel proud to be friends with you. But our veterans should work harder. Our government and countrymen alike, of course, are appreciative of their contributions to defending our country. And in return, they are thoughtfully taken care of and respected by both our government and the people.

On the other hand, however, they together with our other fellow countrymen are deprived of their basic right to take part in many of the international activities such as those of World Health Organization. The WHO is a global organization watching the health issue for all mankind. We in Taiwan have left no stone unturned in the efforts to prevent the spreading of the contagious diseases like SARS an Bird Flu. Our veterans' hospitals have won a very high reputation during the period of fighting against SARS. However, because of PRC's intervention, our veterans in our country as a whole are still blocked out from the WHO.

Pursuing a life of peace and democracy and freedom have been a goal of all mankind. We in Taiwan admire our American friends to us. You have enjoyed all the above to their full extent, but we in Taiwan are still striving against PRC's threat to using force to take over Taiwan. My dear friends in The American Legion, for the past 95 years we in the Republic of Taiwan of China have been pursuing a society to democracy and freedom.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is in the best interest of both the United States and Taiwan,

that the United States continues to support the defense of Taiwan and its admission to international organizations such as WHO, WHA and the UN. The more Taiwan remains in a stable and secure condition, the more the United States will succeed in its Western Pacific security strategy. We appreciate your country for the sale of necessary weapons to defend our country in the past years. I earnestly hope that our country can continue to win your support.

Thank you again for inviting me to speak at this opening ceremony and I wish you all a successful convention.

INTERPRETER: In appreciation of all the efforts of assistance and support of The American Legion, National Commander, Mr. Thomas Bock of The American Legion is awarded by the President of my country, the Republic of China, Mr. Chen Shui-bian, a Medal of Cloud and Banner and I'll read the citation.

"Thomas Bock, National Commander of The American Legion has distinguished himself by his outstanding contributions to the promotion of friendly relations and cooperation between the United States of America and the Republic of China.

In appreciation of his meritorious assistance National Commander Thomas Bock is presented the Medal of Cloud and Banner with Cravat, No. 3634, by the government of the Republic of China in accordance with Article 11 of the Armed Forces Decoration Regulations." Signed by President Chen Shui-bian, Premier Su Tseng-chang, and presented by Minister Kao, Hau-chu, the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China.

In addition to that, the Veterans Affairs Commission is so appreciative of all the efforts that National Commander Thomas Bock has offered in the past year, therefore, the Minister of our Commission would like to present him a plague and I read the inscription.

"Presented to Mr. Thomas Bock, National Commander, The American Legion in appreciation of his outstanding contributions to the enhancement of friendship and cooperation between The American Legion and the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China." Presented by General Kao, Hua-chu, the Minister, Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China on the date of 29 August in the year of 2006.

...At this time National Vice Commander Roll, South Dakota, assumed the Chair.

NATL VICE COMDR ROLL: Our next international partner in veteran service is also headquartered across the Pacific Ocean. Like The American Legion, the Korean Veterans Association aggressively provides service to veterans and their communities.

They are dedicated to national defense, care for veterans, perpetuating their legacy, remembering our missing and fallen, maintain the memorial the Korean War Memorial and to always show their support for their fellow veterans everywhere.

Please welcome the Vice Chairman of the Korean Veterans Association, former Chief of Staff of the Republic of Korea's Air Force, retired General Hong-Rae Kim. (*Applause.*)

Greetings: General (Ret.) Kim, Hong-Rae, Vice Chairman
The Korean Veterans Association

On the occasion of the 88th Annual National Convention of The American Legion, I would like to extend on behalf of the 7.5 million members of the Korean Veterans Association my sincere congratulations to each and everyone of you. It is my great pleasure to meet and join with you today in beautiful Salt Lake City.

I'm deeply impressed at the progress made by The American Legion under the leadership of National Commander Thomas Bock, and the many of its workers to benefit veterans and the relationship between our two organizations, The American Legion and the Korean Veterans Association.

My special thanks also goes to the great organization, The American Legion, for adopting one of this year's 2006 resolution regarding support for the Republic of Korea.

Dear American Legionnaires, you are the veterans who bravely participated in many kinds of wars such as, the Second World War, Korean War, Vietnam, Gulf and the recent

wars. You are determined to sacrifice even your precious lives for world peace and the preservation of mankind.

There must be Korean War veterans here today. On behalf of all who are living in freedom in the Republic of Korea, thank you so much. *(Applause.)*

Today, the Republic of Korea stands as a strong democratic and peaceful nation. It was your unselfish service in Korea more than half a century ago, which allowed the country to abound with the courage and the distinction of your heroic actions halted communist aggression and the insurability of the freedom of Koreans today. We thank you everyday for your sacrifices. Be proud of all you have done for Korea and for the world.

Now, Korea as a peacekeeper of the United Nations, is making every effort to many parts of the world to return your contributions. Unfortunately, however, there is still tension and an unstable environment on the Korean Peninsula due to North Korea's hostile intention. Korea, the United States and the neighboring countries have continued to make tremendous efforts to resolve the North Korea problem.

We have a long way to go but there is no doubt in my mind that eventually the nuclear issue will be peacefully resolved. Thanks to the collective efforts of the United States, Korea and the peace loving countries, I, therefore, insist North Korea should give up the dangerous attempt and to become a responsible member of the world community.

Dear American Legionnaires, I believe that the strong alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea will become even stronger as the time goes by so will the strong relationship between The American Legion and the Korean Veterans Association.

May God bless the great organization The American Legion. May God bless you veterans and your families.(*Applause.*)

...At this time National Commander Bock resumes the Chair.

NATL COMDR BOCK: There are many veterans' organizations in Canada but the largest by far is The Royal Canadian Legion with more than 400,000 members and affiliates.

This past year I had the honor of attending the Royal Canadian Convention in Calgary. It was a magnificent affair and I was welcomed with open arms as a fellow veteran.

From the time of its formation the Legion has focused its efforts to secure adequate pensions and other well-earned benefits for veterans and their dependants. Acting as an advocacy agency on pensioners' behalf, the Canadian Legion works hard to ensure ex-military personnel and their dependants are treated fairly. Welcome the Vice President of the Royal Canadian Legion, Earl Kish. (*Applause.*)

Greetings: Earl Kish, Vice President
The Royal Canadian Legion

Yes, he really was in Calgary because I met him there. But we were kind of busy that I didn't recognize him when I got here. (*Laughter.*)

I bring you greetings from the northern extremes of this great continent. As the Dominion Vice President of the Royal Canadian Legion and its more than 400,000 members, and including our members in the United States of America and Europe, I am most pleased to be able to be with you today.

Our newly elected Dominion President, Comrade Jack Frost, could not be with you because of other business and sends his heart felt regrets. But I am the one who benefits. It's not bad in my case of being a fill-in, because if I hadn't been a fill-in I would not have seen such a marvelous display of colors when they had the Color Guard Competition: just a great show! I also had the privilege of attending the band competition, as well as the religious service on Sunday and the beautiful parade. So, I'd have missed all that if Jack had been here. So Jack, you can stay home anytime.

From the moment my partner Sheila and I arrived in Salt Lake City, we have been treated with the greatest of kindness. I would like to thank you for that personally. It is indeed a tribute to you and yours as to how you feel about those who carry the title

Legionnaire. There is also something else I noticed about Salt Lake City. The majority of the pro sports teams here have a double "Z." And you notice I said "Z" not said like we do back in the north. The name Jazz in basketball, the Blitzz in soccer, and the Grizzlies in hockey. That led me to believe that the ZZ Top also came from here, but I was quickly informed from a guy down in that small state of Texas, that is theirs, you can't lay claim to it. *(Laughter.)* So much for our Canadian logic.

But it is logical that the ties between The American Legion and the Royal Canadian Legion are indeed strong. And it's not because we share a common continent only, it's because we share common goals when it comes to the protection of our veterans and support to our communities. In this regard comrades, I'm happy to tell you that at our last convention in Calgary, which your Commander was at, we passed a resolution allowing allied veterans to now join the Canadian Legion. That was mainly done because of the border communities between Canada and the United States, with the comradery they have back and forth like we do in Ontario with New York State and the Goodwill Day Committee that we've had for 55 years. You good Americans now can join the Canadian Legion when you're over on your summer holidays, cottaging, whatever, and become a member. And I'm very happy that happened. *(Applause.)* This can only make our ties stronger comrades.

In this the 80th Anniversary Year of the Royal Canadian Legion, we are tempted to look back at our two organizations' past to find the link that possibly had not been brought forward before. What we found was extremely interesting. Apparently, one of your initial founders was a chap by the name of "Wild Bill" Donovan, who served in France during World War I and later went on to become a Major General in your military and also became the head of the CIA. The list of honors bestowed on him include your Medal of Honor and a knighthood by the British government, as well as the highest national awards possible from France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, and also the Vatican. Interestingly enough, he got a position as the head of the wartime OSS, later to become the CIA because of a Canadian's input, that of Sir William Stevenson known in the Commonwealth by the code name Intrepid.

Apparently, Sir William, as the personal representative of Sir Winston Churchill to that office had the ear of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Sir William was also responsible for setting up a camp in Ontario that became the first training school for wartime clandestine operations in North America. Interestingly enough, five other future directors of the CIA trained there, as well as members of the FBI, your Navy, and your military intelligence services. I also found it intriguing that Gen. Donovan himself was called on to decorate William Stevenson with the Presidential Medal for Merit, especially as this was the first time the highest civilian award America can give during wartime was given to a non U.S. citizen.

The friendship between these two great men in our history as nations is indicative of the friendship that we enjoy as organizations. Neither the politics, nor economics, can break the bounds that were forged between our sailors, soldiers, and air force members over the past 100 years. Today, they are still serving together at home and abroad for the same basic ideals; the defense of our continent and the restoration of democracy. It is our organizations that have to ensure that when they get home, they get the benefits to which they are so richly entitled.

And comrades, that reminds me of a little story about an American during the Second World War. He was on R&R heading into London and was on a train that was totally packed. As he wanders up and down the train looking for a seat, he sees this very aristocratic lady with a poodle on the seat along side of her. So, he asked the lady if she'd mine moving the poodle. She said no, find a seat somewhere else. So, he went up and down the train for a little longer and finally came back. He opened the window, picked up the poodle and threw it out. Now, the lady went wild. She screamed for help. She was calling the American all the names that you could think of. Finally, a little British gentlemen walked over and said, "Lady you're absolutely right. The Americans are a different lot. They drive on the wrong side of the road; they eat with the wrong hand; now he threw the wrong bitch out the window."

It is too easy for a nation to forget these young men and women when the job is done and they come home. That's why it is not only our job to ensure their care, but to keep their sacrifices and those of their fallen comrades at the forefront of the public's attention.

So, friends and comrades of The American Legion, keep your organization strong and healthy for the good of those who have and will still serve, and for the good of your great country. Remember that your ally to the north is indeed your best ally in both war and peace.

With this, I wish you all the best in your remaining days of your convention, where I know that you will be deeply involved with both past and the future as you go about the business of making sure your veterans receive everything that they so richly deserve for their service to not only the United States, but the country in general and the whole world.

On behalf of Sheila and myself, we thank you for inviting us to be with you.

NATL COMDR BOCK: There are four pillars of service that supports The American Legion's roof of veteran fellowship: national security, veterans affairs, children's welfare and Americanism. Within this house you will find Americans dedicated to the service of God and country and the never-ending pursuit of freedom.

Our next guest has dedicated her professional and private life to the service of this great country and seeks every opportunity to perpetuate the concept of freedom abroad. To this end, she is our country's lead in the pursuit of world peace and diplomacy. Whether testifying before the U.N., playing a key role in talks with North Korea and Iran over nuclear arms, or going full steam ahead to help bring peace in the Middle East, she is always on the mark and represents our country well. After all, diplomacy *is* the first line of defense. She does an excellent job. She is a diplomat's diplomat, a skillful negotiator, and a great humanitarian.

Please give a warm Legion welcome to the Secretary of State, the Honorable Condoleezza Rice. *(Standing applause.)*

Address: The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary, Department of State

Thank you, Commander Bock, for the generous introduction. I thank Commander Bock for his leadership of this great organization.

The Commander is serving the American Legion so well. And you, the people of this great organization, are serving our country so well. Perhaps Commander Bock's story is a common one to some of you. I just had the great pleasure of meeting his son, Adam, who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He's soon leaving for Afghanistan. It just shows that America's families are contributing and giving to our nation. Thank you, Commander Bock, for your family's service to our nation.

I recognize National Adjutant Robert Spanogle and all the national officers of The American Legion who are here today, and other distinguished guests.

I am so honored to be with you here in Salt Lake City today. As our nation's largest veterans' service organization, The American Legion plays a very special role in America's history and in America's life. The men and women in this hall, and others like you, have made the greatest of sacrifices: leaving your families, and your friends, and your loved ones to protect America's freedoms, America's democracy, and especially American lives.

It was you, our veterans, who stopped Nazi aggression in Europe and Japanese militarism in Asia during World War II. It was you, our veterans, who fought heroically to contain the spread of communism in Korea and in Vietnam. And it was you, our youngest veterans, whose valiant service has removed old threats and brought new hope to Afghanistan and to Iraq. America owes an immeasurable debt of gratitude to the brave veterans of our nation.

So today, on behalf of President Bush, and all of the American people, I want to thank the members of the American Legion for your service to our country, and I want to

join with all of you today in sending this message to our fighting men and women overseas: your service is bringing hope to others, honor to yourselves, and you are making every American very, very proud.

Earlier today, I had the opportunity to spend some time with the women of the American Legion Auxiliary, and I want to salute them for their volunteerism, for their patriotism, and for their commitment to the veterans of our country. There are few better examples of the American spirit than the members of The American Legion and of the Auxiliary. Through your two signature programs, Boys State and Girls State, you're introducing a new generation of Americans to the principles of the American republic. You're setting them on a course to become the new leaders of our country. And you're teaching our youngest citizens to be proud that we Americans are and will always be, "One Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

The service of America's Legionnaires was especially inspiring one year ago to this day, when our nation suffered the worst natural disaster in our history: Hurricane Katrina. On that day and in those that followed, American Legion Posts all across this country sprang into action to help the residents of our Gulf Coast. In DeRidder, Louisiana, for example, Post 27 turned its bingo hall into an emergency shelter for 41 kidney dialysis patients. And right here in Salt Lake City, Post 71 sent truckloads of clothing to displaced hurricane victims living in Houston.

In times like those, in times of unbearable loss and heartache, the compassion of the American people shines through in groups like The American Legion. It serves as a beacon to the world and tells the world that America is proud, America is resilient, and when tragedy brings us to our knees, we will help one another to rise to our feet, united every time.

I'm especially reminded of America's resolve in times of adversity, as we come upon the fifth anniversary of September the 11th. That day, America encountered the darker nature of our world, and our nation's course was profoundly altered. Since September 11th, we have taken the fight to the enemy, and we are making America safer.

Consider the progress we have made: Five years ago, the members of al-Qaida were largely free to operate, to organize, to travel, to move money, to communicate with each other, and to plan attacks to murder innocent people. Today, however, five years later, America is leading a great coalition of countries in the fight against terrorists. Together, we are seizing their money. We're closing their sanctuaries. We're hunting their cells. We're killing and capturing their leaders. Ladies and gentlemen: we are waging a global war on terrorism, and we are breaking the back of the al-Qaida network.

Because we've gone on the offense, America is safer, but we are not yet safe, as we've seen just recently with the foiled terror plot in London. We know that every day, each and every day, violent extremists are plotting new ways to do us harm. And we know that now and for many years to come, America and our allies will be engaged in a long war, a war that we can and must win.

Today, five years after the attack on our nation, people still differ about what September 11th called us to do. On the one hand, if you focus only on the attacks themselves and believe that they were caused by 19 hijackers supported by a network called al-Qaida, operating from a failed state, Afghanistan, then the response can be limited.

But if you believe, as I do, and as President Bush does, that the root cause of September 11th was the violent expression of a global extremist ideology, an ideology that thrives on the oppression and despair of the Middle East, then we must seek to remove this source of terror by helping the people of that troubled region to transform their countries and to transform their lives. We must be very clear about this broader struggle: yes, it is a war, but a war of completely new and different dimensions. It is a struggle between the vast majority of moderate Muslims, who desire peace and freedom from oppression, and a small minority of violent extremists who will do whatever it takes to further their ideology of hatred and injustice.

The dream of some, that we could avoid this conflict, that we did not have to take sides in this battle in the Middle East, that dream was demolished on September the 11th. For as we learned on that fateful day, America's stake in this struggle is very clear: the security of our citizens is inextricably linked to the success of freedom and moderation and, yes, democracy in the Middle East.

Under President Bush's leadership, the United States is now standing shoulder to shoulder with moderate men and women all across the Middle East. Together, we are summoning a vision of hope to combat the ideology of extremism that we face. And in the past few years, we have witnessed some unprecedented events.

Five years ago, who could have imagined that a vibrant debate about democratic reform and economic reform and social reform would be raging in every country of the broader Middle East, a debate not about whether to proceed with reform, but how to proceed? Who could have imagined the positive changes we have already witnessed in places as different as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait and Morocco, and Jordan? Sure, there have been many setbacks and step backs in each of these cases, but the steps forward are also taking place.

And who could have imagined that the people of Lebanon would stand up by the hundreds of thousands and call for the Syrian occupation of their country to end and for a new democratic future to begin? And of course, who could have imagined that the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, after years of tyranny and misery, would turn out by the millions to make their voices heard and to vote for a better life?

These events were remarkable. And they were setbacks for the forces of extremism in the Middle East. But the elections of the previous years only marked the beginnings of a journey to democracy, not its completion. Advancing the work of democracy, the daily effort to build effective institutions through which all of a country's citizens can experience justice and exercise power equally, this is a longer and far harder process. And it is made even more difficult because the moderate citizens of the Middle East face violent enemies who are determined to reverse the gains of democracy.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban is terrorizing the Afghan people and trying to stop their democratic progress. But we and our NATO allies are helping the Afghan people, their government, and their army fight them and beat them back. In Lebanon, the radical leaders of Hezbollah launched a war against Israel to undermine the moderate Lebanese Government and to put at risk the lives of the Lebanese people. But now, we and the international community are helping this young democracy to strengthen and to expand its sovereign authority.

In the Palestinian territories, radical elements of Hamas are holding an Israeli soldier hostage, as well as the aspirations of the Palestinian people and their leaders. And of course, in Iraq, we see the same struggle being played out daily, as terrorists and sectarian militias seek to strangle the promise of peace and unity and democracy.

I know that many of you here today have friends and family members who are serving in Iraq. Some of you have served there yourselves. We've all seen stories about Iraq, some positive and inspiring; others, indeed many, that are disheartening and frustrating to hear. I know that Americans are concerned about the course and the future of Iraq. On the one hand, Americans want desperately to succeed in Iraq. They want to do whatever it takes to achieve victory. But on the other hand, there are unsettling questions. Is success possible? Is it really worth the effort? Do the Iraqi people really want to live together in peace and freedom, the peace and freedom for which our troops have sacrificed so much. Or do they desire a darker path, somehow, of violence?

Ladies and Gentlemen: I am here today to tell you that I am confident that Iraq, Iraqis, and America will succeed. When you speak with our fellow citizens who are serving in Iraq and when you ask them why they fight, why they are optimistic and inspired to conduct their mission, I am sure that most of them give you the same answer that I hear from troops when I speak to them, and from members of our diplomatic corps, and other civilians who are there risking their lives in Iraq. Most of these men and

women say that what motivates them to do their job every day is the overwhelming hope that they witness in the Iraqi people and the tremendous sacrifices that Iraqis themselves are bearing to realize that hope.

Most Iraqis want what all people want. They want freedom from coercion and oppression, safety from violence and injustice, opportunities for a better life for themselves and for their children. They want a future of peace and moderation for their country, as do the leaders they freely elected in December, who are now serving at great personal risk in Iraq's national unity government.

To a small number of extremists in Iraq, however, this vision of a moderate, democratic future is an existential threat, because it is one in which their ideology of sectarian hatred will find no support. So these terrorists and these militias resort to unthinkable acts of brutality to drag the country into civil strife and to destroy the hopes of their fellow Iraqis. They target innocent civilians making a religious pilgrimage. They murder people with a certain first name, because it signifies a sectarian difference. And they lay bombs on soccer fields to murder young children, because games like soccer are deemed "idolatrous."

Though the risks to their lives are clear and present, Iraqis of every sect and every ethnicity carry forward in their hope. They are pulling together to make a new Iraq succeed. Despite rocket attacks and campaigns of terror, they are building water treatment facilities and laying new roads, and preparing to open classrooms for the start of a new school year. And of course, despite intimidation and assassination and the murder of their friends and loved ones, Iraqis volunteer by the tens of thousands for the new Iraqi Army. And when they find themselves in a fight against terrorists and militias, I am told by our military people that they do not cower and run; they join the battle and they fight until that battle is won.

One American soldier in Iraq—Army Major Michael Jason, tells the story of one Iraqi who would wake up at 2 o'clock in the morning, each morning, for months, just to begin the long, dangerous walk to Baghdad to stand in line for an application to the new Iraqi Army. And when he was finally cleared to serve, when he was asked one day why he would risk his life and that of his family to join up, his response was, "I am a soldier and my country needs me." All of you understand that statement and that desire because you have felt it yourselves.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is that desire for freedom, it is that belief in country and in family that unites us with people in Iraq and Afghanistan and other parts of the Middle East who simply want a better future.

Now in Iraq, we are helping them with the strategy of "clear, hold, and build." It means that with Iraqi forces in the lead and with our strong support, areas are cleared from terrorists and militia control. And this difficult, yet promising work that you are witnessing in Baghdad right now is a part of that effort.

Second, we are helping the Iraqi government to hold the areas we have cleared together; most importantly, by supporting Prime Minister al-Maliki's plan for national reconciliation. That plan got a significant boost over the weekend when 100 of Iraq's tribal leaders signed a "pact of honor," declaring that they would do what they could to stop the sectarian killings that have plagued Iraq.

Finally, we are helping the government and the people of Iraq to rebuild their country. The keystone of this effort is a compact which will rally new international support for Iraqi reconstruction as the Iraqi government proceeds with democratic and political reform.

Ladies and gentlemen, this strategy can succeed and it will succeed, but if we quit before the job is done, the cost of failure will be severe, indeed, immeasurable. If we abandon the Iraqi people before their government is strong enough to secure the country, then we will show reformers across the region that America cannot be trusted to keep its word. We will embolden extremist enemies of moderation and of democratic reform. We will leave the makings of a failed state in Iraq, like that one in Afghanistan in the 1990s,

which became the base for al-Qaida and the launching pad for the September 11th hijackers. And we should not assume for one minute that those terrorists will not continue to come after the American homeland. That is why President Bush calls Iraq a central front in the war on terror.

I know that the struggle before us sometimes seems daunting. I know. I feel it. I see it in the challenged eyes of Americans across this great country. But I know, too, that America has a proud tradition of struggling with others and helping them to secure their freedom. This tradition is embodied in the members of the American Legion and I know many of you, like me, can also remember extraordinary times in history when American leadership and American perseverance and American resolve were required. We stood strong and we must stand strong now.

All of us know, as we look back on history, that there were things that seemed impossible at the time that, in retrospect, seemed quite inevitable. Last summer, I spent some time reading the biographies of our founding fathers. By all rights, the United States of America, facing the greatest imperial power of the time, simply should never have come into being. This past summer, I read a wonderful book about Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. By all rights, this country should never have survived our violent division to come back united and free.

The last time I was in government, I was fortunate enough to serve at the end of the Cold War and I was there for the unification of Germany and the liberation of Eastern Europe and for the peaceful breakup of the Soviet Union, events to which many of you contributed in the steadfastness that you exhibited during the Cold War.

But you know, again, in looking back, I know that that victory was assured not in 1989 and in 1990 and 1991, but in 1946 and 1947, and 1948 and 1949, when in the aftermath of World War II, Europe was devastated and prostrate and the Soviet Union seemed on the march; when in 1947, there was civil war in Greece and civil conflict in Turkey; when Germany was permanently divided in 1948 by the Berlin crisis, Czechoslovakia fell to communist coup; and in 1949, the Soviet Union exploded a nuclear weapon five years ahead of schedule, and the Chinese communists won and a year later, the Korean War broke out.

Who would have thought in 1946 or 1947, or 1948 or 1949, or 1950 that by 1991, we would be celebrating the victory of free men and women over communism? But indeed, we were and it was because of the steadfastness and the commitment of America, of our men and women in uniform, of our leaders, and, indeed, of the American people to a cause greater than ourselves. Because we knew that only when the world was freer would America be so secure. Now, no one can imagine war again in Europe, and no one imagines war against Japan or in Asia, but in 1949, it didn't seem that way.

I submit to you that if we stay strong, if we stay committed, if we remain true to our values, that one day, people will look back and say, "Who could ever have doubted that, of course, the universal values of democracy and freedom would take hold in the Middle East?" And they will say, "Who could have ever doubted that the people of Iraq and Afghanistan would be free?" And they will look back and they will say, "Thank God that America stayed the course." *(Standing applause.)*

Special Presentation: International Amity Award

NATL COMDR BOCK: Now I would like to make a special presentation.

The International Amity Award, established by Resolution No. 21 in 1961, is awarded to individuals in recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans affairs and for service and contributions made in the development of international goodwill and comradeship between their organization and The American Legion.

This year's award goes to an individual who has dedicated his life to helping veterans and their families. He continues to set high standards for cohesive development of international good among wartime veteran organizations. I am honored to present this

year's International Amity Award to Modesto P. Agyao, of the Department of the Philippines.

ANNOUNCER: The award reads: "In grateful recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans affairs, and for contributions made in the development of international goodwill and comradeship between The American Legion and our wartime allies of the United States Armed Forces in the Phillippines-Northern Luzon. Awarded by the National Executive Committee to Modesto P. Agyao. Given this day of August 29, 2006."

PDC AGYAO: First, I thank the members of the committee regarding this award. The committee hasn't chosen well, because this, I think, I know. But to me, I feel I don't deserve this. But since it is the committee that decided to chose me as one of the recipients of this coveted award, I have to accept.

I thank the leadership of our National Commander Thomas Bock who helped make this award possible. Also, I remember the Filipino veterans of World War II and the resolutions being passed under the leadership of our National Commander Thomas Bock.

In this connection, I would like to clarify about the surrender of Gen. Yamashita. First, in the previous years, it was wrongly published that it was Maj. Marcos, who would become the president, on Gen. Yamashita's surrender. He did not. Gen. Yamashita did not accept the offer of the surrender to these Korean forces. Instead had chosen the U.S. Army Division. So, Gen. Yamashita sent a letter to the commanding officer of the U.S. Army 37th Division that it was his choice to surrender to them.

The 37th Division announced to have a cease fire so the surrender of Yamashita would be peaceful and the Korean forces would be promulgated by a General of the U.S. Department of the Army.

Gen. Yamashita surrendered peacefully after which he was first immediately to go to the lowlands to be presented to the overall commander of the 37th Division army which was in the Philippines. So, Gen. Yamashita surrendered peacefully to the U.S. Army of the 37th Division but not to your 38th Med Company. So that is clarified, because most of those do not know how Gen. Yamashita surrendered.

I am so glad to say that Yamashita surrendered to Americans. He was afraid if he accept the surrender of the Korean forces he might be dead. As you know, some Filipinos were really mad at him because he allowed his soldiers to kill so many civilians and bum houses. That is the thought that Yamashita surrendered to the U.S. Army of the 37th Division.*(Applause.)*

Special Presentation: Sgt. Alan Dale June

NATL COMDR BOCK: It is my pleasure to introduce a true American World War II hero. Sgt. Alan Dale June is one of the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers. With other young Navajo men, he left the Navajo Reservation in 1942 and joined the Marines. These men developed a code that the Japanese were never able to break. There were no books to translate their language.

Because their service was classified, the Code Talkers swore an oath of secrecy. They honored their oath. Their historic work was kept from the public eye and out of the annuals of history. These men were even denied VA benefits.

In 1968, government officials revealed their war contributions. In 1982, President Reagan proclaimed a Code Talker Day. In 2001, President Bush presented Sgt. June and the other three living Navajo Code Talkers with a Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award given by Congress.

At last report, Sgt. June's case is currently being rated and he will be receiving VA benefits very soon. Sgt. June is served by his lovely wife, Virginia, a retired nurse who has made it her life's mission to properly care for 'Pops'.

Please welcome one of the last original Navajo Code Talkers, a recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal, Sgt. Alan Dale June, accompanied by his wife, Virginia and daughter Christianna. *(Applause.)*

…Acceptance of award and responded in native tongue.

ALAN DALE JUNE: Thank you American Legionnaires, most especially, the Sons of The American Legion who helped us immensely to get back on our feet. We were down and out at one time and they helped us out. We love you all, American Legion members, family and all the above. *(speaking in Navajo.)*

Now, I need Japanese interpreter to interpret all the Navajo I'm going to say here. *(Laughter.)* So, if there's one here in the crowd, please, I'd really like for that individual to step forward here to interpret what I have to say. Basically, I want to say a quick prayer for the session here. *(Speaking in Navajo).* Amen. *(Applause.)*

Certificate of Appreciation
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

The man who has served as our National Chaplain this year is truly dedicated to the principle of "God and country." He was ordained as a bishop in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. From 1962 to 1965, he served as a missionary for the Latter-Day Saints church in Sweden. Bishop Wright, a former attorney, has served as the Department Judge Advocate since 1996. His involvement with The American Legion has always centered on the religious needs of veterans and their families. During his 12 years in the Legion, Bishop Wright has served as a Post commander and a Department chaplain.

It is an honor for me to present a Certificate of Appreciation marking his year of service to The American Legion, Bishop Steven E. Wright. (*Applause.*)

NATL COMDR BOCK: Now an announcement. The American Legacy Run total, $163,619.

I call on National Adjutant Robert Spanogle from the Department of Michigan to issue the Call for Convention.

Call for Convention
Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan, National Adjutant

The Call for the 88th Annual National Convention of The American Legion. By the authority of the National Executive Committee, the 88th Annual National Convention of The American Legion is hereby called to meet in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29-31, 2006.

The Convention business sessions will be held in the Salt Lake Palace Convention Center, Halls A & B, Lower Level.

Purpose

The Annual National Convention is the legislative body of The American Legion. The Convention is called for the purpose of setting the programs of The American Legion for the ensuing year amending the National Constitution and By-Laws and for the transaction of such other business as may be brought before it. At 12:00 o'clock (noon) of the final session or at the conclusion of all other business of the National Convention, whichever first occurs on Thursday, August 31, 2006, 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)

"…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 29, 2006, 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 that said substitution shall be officially certified by the Department Commander and Department Adjutant at the time of the certification required by the National Constitution or at any time prior to the adjoumment 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 By-Laws.

Department Officials

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

Convention Committees

Each Department is entitled to one delegate for each of the following committees:

Americanism
Children & Youth
Constitutional Amendments and By-Laws
Credentials and Internal Affairs
    Credentials and other Internal Matters, (Section I & II)
    Membership (Section III)
Economic
    Employment & Veterans Preference
    Other Economic Matters
Finance
Foreign Relations
Legislation & Rules

National Security Committee: Joint Meeting (Includes
Aerospace, Homeland Security and Civil Preparedness, Law and Order,
Merchant Marine, Military Affairs, Naval Affairs
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
Claims and Rating
Hospital and Medical Services

NATL COMDR BOCK: I now declare the 88th Annual National Convention of The American Legion to be regularly convened.

The Chair recognizes Dave Rehbein of Ames, Iowa, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules
David K. Rehbein, Iowa, Chairman

The Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules met at 10:00 AM on Sunday, August 27, 2006 in the Hilton Hotel in Salt Lake City, Utah. Forty-seven (47) delegates assigned to this Convention Committee were in attendance, plus fourteen (14) guests.

Following the preliminary activities to officially organize the Committee, the Permanent Chairman and Secretary were duly elected. I, David K. Rehbein, a delegate from the Department of Iowa, was elected Permanent Chairman. Leo P. Burke, a delegate from the Department of California, was elected Permanent Secretary.

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

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

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

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

I presented delegate Stanley Gold (FL) with a plaque from The American Legion National Legislative Council in recognition of his outstanding work as a Council Member.

The Committee heard remarks from Bill Cahill, a staff member from the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. Mr. Cahill discussed a number of legislative issues and held a question and answer session.

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

The Congress went into its August recess without completing work on funding for Departments of Defense and the Veterans Affairs. The American Legion is deeply concerned over adequate funding for both of the Departments, especially in time of war.

Congress is working hard to provide a level of funding for DoD that will avoid a veto threat from the White House. This may require additional funding as emergency appropriations to prevent potential confrontation and provide the Pentagon with necessary resources for day-to-day operations.

Last year, VA required emergency appropriations to cover significant fiscal shortfall for both FY 2005 and 2006. The American Legion is concerned VA may face a similar fate in FY 2007 as Congress struggles to finish its work before adjourning prior to the November elections.

Mr. Chairman, on September 20, 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 the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. Later that morning, he will also testify before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee to address other veterans' issues.

National Commander Bock, as a duly authorized Delegate to this Convention from the Department of Iowa, 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.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Do I hear a second?

...Second from the floor.

All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. 'Aye.' All opposed. Report of the National Convention Committee on Legislation and Rules is adopted.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Direct your attention to the large screen for a special presentation on America's Values.

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

It is my honor to present to this body, a man who has devoted his life supporting and protecting American values. He is the Chairman of the Board of Citizens Flag Alliance and the recipient of the Medal of Honor for his life saving actions in Vietnam.

Please stand and join me in rendering proper honors to a true American hero, a recipient of the Medal of Honor, Maj. Gen. Pat Brady, USA (Ret.) Hand salute, two! *(Standing applause.)*

Special Report: Flag Amendment Campaign
Maj. Gen. Patrick H. Brady USA (Ret.)
Chairman of the Board, The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc.

As always, it's a great thrill for me to be with America's nobility. It was about 10 years ago at your last convention in Salt Lake City that I spoke to you for the first time and joined your campaign for the flag. We've come a long, long, way.

I want to thank all of you who wished me well during my recent surgery, especially those who prayed for me. The older I get the more important prayers become.

Now, as you know, this spring we went through a massive effort on behalf of our crusade to return to the people the right to protect 'Old Glory'. Our goal was two-fold: one, to get a vote in the Senate. There had not been a vote in the Senate since 2000, although it has passed the House in every Congress. And two, get the one vote we needed for victory. We got a vote. We did not get that one vote. But, it was not for lack of effort. In fact, it was a magnificent effort, and my first order of business is to thank those involved. There would be no crusade for the flag without the Legion. You are the rock upon which traditional America stands.

Our deepest thanks to the Auxiliary and its President. If you've heard me speak before you've heard me say that Adam's rib was the greatest investment in the history of mankind. Carol Van Kirk is a charming combination of beauty and the bulldog. Beauty and the beast, if you will. She has had her teeth sunk in this issue for a long time and she just won't let go, and our thanks to that great lady.

The Sons of the Legion have been extraordinary in their contributions. I recently had the honor of helping dedicate a Vietnam Memorial at Iron Mountain, Michigan. Surely, it is one of the most beautiful settings of any monument in this country. It was a truly wonderful experience being with those folks. Our thanks to the Sons.

And the A-Teams are a group of elite troopers from the CFA key states. You know who you are, and I hope you know how much we appreciate all that you have done.

A special thanks to Anna Gear, who is the secretary of the CFA. She is another

beautiful bulldog.

Rick Monday and his wife, who are with us in this effort, allowed us to display in public for the first time the flag he rescued from two nuts who were about to burn it at Dodger Stadium 30 years ago. The announcer at the time could not believe that anyone would burn the American flag. The crowd spontaneously began to sing God Bless America right after the rescue. Many people have called Monday's rescue of the flag the greatest play in baseball history.

Now, many would have been disheartened by the one vote setback. We have to remember that you don't win a war in a single battle. The last vote found us four votes short. To come within one vote is a great victory. One vote. There is no other issue, no other amendment, which enjoys the same support as does the Flag Amendment. And it is that support and that support only that keeps this issue alive. Your support, the Legion's support is at the heart and soul of this issue.

After the vote, some asked me if we would quit. And my answer is, as it has always been, how do you quit doing what's right. (*Applause.*) Does one vote determine what's right? Does the ACLU determine what is right? The media, the courts, do they determine what's right? What kind of a person will give up doing what is right?

What if our veterans had given up in the wars when they fought for our rights. There would not be the America we all love if we quit. If we quit before the likes of the ACLU and their fellow travelers with their valueless vision, people who revel in pornography, obscenity and flag burning, who can rationalize evil but are repelled by prayer, the Boy Scouts, the Ten Commandments, traditional marriage and the Pledge of Allegiance.

This is not a time to lick our wounds, it's a time to flex our muscles. A time to thank our supporters and let our misguided opponents know that we have just begun to fight. (*Applause.*)

Now, before we're done the battlefield will be strewn with their misinformed, misbegotten and dishonest concepts of our America. An America in which the will of the majority must always trump the outrageous conduct of a minority.

And that brings us to the election. There is no better time to flex your muscle than during an election. I hope we never again hear from politicians who are not hearing from us. Remember that public opinion is like faith, it can move mountains. They should hear from us over and over again year-round.

I believe that a candidate's position on the right of the people to protect their flag is a litmus test that reveal much about that candidate, about their reverence for the will and wisdom of the people, about their values, about their beliefs of the Constitution and about their beliefs about traditional America. Politicians who disregard the will of the people should not represent those people.

There should be consequences for such people. Now, one senator actually said that his financial base did not support the amendment. Another said her father, now dead, opposed it. Another senator said he had always supported dissenters. The truth is, we are the dissenters. You and I are the true dissenters in this issue, against the government, against the courts, who have taken away one of our fundamental rights.

Now, we should be wary of candidates, who say, "I support veterans but I don't support the right of veterans to support their flag." We need to look for candidates who not only support veterans, but also support our values.

It's time to elect patriots, not politicians. Candidates who support the right of the people to protect the flag, they will teach us the truth. It's not flag burners that are the problem, it's people who call flag burning speech. Such men and women will realize that when they raise their hand and swear to protect and defend the Constitution, that that oath carries with it an obligation to correct the errors of all three branches of our government, especially the courts. Veterans were crucial in the last election, and I hope you will be in this one.

Now, as we go forward we need to tidy up the battlefield. We must work the media. We should never have a problem meeting with an editorial board on the topic that has

national attention. But, I have never seen as extensive coverage as we got during this vote. Front page coverage all across the country. But most of the coverage was not fair. They give us the sentimental arguments and they give our opponents the constitutional arguments. We will never win this on sentiment. We have to put our constitutional arguments before the public. Our side, in fact, owns the constitutional arguments. We absolutely have to establish this.

This debate, as is true of all debates, is about words, the words about the Flag Amendment and the words about the First Amendment. We should begin every op-ed, every letter, every debate with the words of the amendment: the Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

You seldom see in a debate the refusal of one side to define the issue. Our opponents refuse to use the words of the Flag Amendment, retreating rather to ridiculous arguments about the Bill of Rights, free speech and making felons of flag burners. Those words will cut through the deceit and dishonesty of any opponent. Those simple ingenious words of the Flag Amendment reduce their arguments to ashes. And this fact is finally getting through to the Congress. I've read the entire testimony of the last debate, and almost every single supporter used those simple words, but not one of our opponents used them; nor did any member of the media who opposes us. The Supreme Court has laid a mine field around 'Old Glory.' The Flag Amendment clears that mine field.

I once landed my helicopter in a mine field. The wounded troops were scattered among the mines. No soldier would move. They would not budge even to bring their own wounded to my aircraft. They were frozen in place, afraid seemingly even to breath. My two crewmen looked at me, and I said simply, "Go get them." And they did. They literally ran into the mine field and began to carry the wounded to our aircraft.

Now, in the process they set off a mine which physically blew them into the air almost into my rotor blades and filled them and our helicopters with shrapnel. But they got up. They staggered back into the mine field and they finished the job. They rescued every single wounded soldier, even though my medic's uniform was actually smoking from the blast from the mine.

And that's my message to all who support 'Old Glory.' Go get them. That one vote has blown some into the air, but we need to land on our feet. We need to rescue our flag and our Constitution. Know that you will be entering a mine field. The media will ridicule you. Politicians will trivialize this issue. Many believe it is hokey. Heads will turn and doors will close. Some will demonize you for trying to protect and keep a Constitution that does not fit their valueless vision.

The truth can be lost in the media and you'll be knocked down again and again, but get up and finish the mission. Rip away the cover of those who hide behind a statute. While you're in that mine field, know you will be comforted by the fact that America is with you. You are fighting for our rights. You are protected by the right of the people to define our Constitution, the right of the people to redress our government for grievance. We need one vote. Let's go get that vote. *(Applause.)*

But first, I want to introduce you to the medic with the smoldering uniform who I sent into that mine field, who disregarded his wounds from the mine and rescued all the wounded, who, in one year, rescued over 3,000 wounded soldiers while earning two Purple Hearts; two Silver Stars; a Distinguished Flying Cross; two Bronze Stars, both for valor; many air medals, one for valor. He is one of many who is responsible for me wearing this medal. He was known throughout Vietnam as super medic. His name is James Coleman. He's from North Carolina, and until this week, I had not seen him in 38 years. *(Standing applause.)*

Special Presentation: The A-Team

NATL COMDR BOCK: Senate Joint Resolution 12, the Flag Amendment, failed to pass in the Senate. I do not consider that a failure. In fact, it was a tremendous victory.

I say that for two reasons. First, we were able to get the vote on the Senate floor. That in itself is a major accomplishment. And even more importantly, never before in the history of the United States has a grassroots group come within one vote of amending the Constitution.

General Brady and I would like to recognize our A-Team. As members of the A-Team, they played an exceptionally important role in the 2006 Countdown to Victory. In all honesty, they had perhaps the toughest challenge in this campaign, to persuade certain Senators in their states who opposed the flag amendment to come over to the side of the American people. Our A-Team members defended American values by taking the flag amendment to the Congress, to the media, and to the people of our Nation. They are one in a small, influential corps of Legionnaires, Auxiliary and SAL members who truly made a difference.

NATL VICE COMDR HARRIS: Would the members of the A-Team please come forward as I read your name. Chuck Berry, Connecticut; Thomas Cadmus, Past National Commander, Michigan; Al Carpenter, Department of New York; William E. Christoffersen, National Executive Committeeman, Utah; Martin F. Conatser, National Legislative Commission Consultant, Illinois; Dale F. Davis, Department Adjutant, Washington; Anthony DeQuattro, Department Adjutant, Rhode Island; Jim Deremo, Acting Department Adjutant, North Dakota; William Detweiler, Past National Commander, Louisiana; Miles S. Epling, Past National Commander, Department Adjutant, West Virginia; Helen G. Jacob, Department of New York; Ronald Levasseur, Department Commander, Rhode Island; Carl Levi, Department of Tennessee; K. Robert Lewis, Chairman, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, Connecticut; Ruth McBride, Department of Delaware; Leo McKernan, Past Department Commander, New Jersey; Butch L. Miller, Past National Commander, Virginia; Silas M. Noel, The Department of Kentucky; Kathy Nylen, Department of Washington; Richard M. Pedro, Department Adjutant, New York; Gene Pytka, National Executive Committeeman, Rhode Island; Ed Phillips, Department Adjutant, Delaware; David K. Rehbein, Chairman, National Legislative Commission, Iowa; Sebastian T. Roll, National Vice Commander, North Dakota; Greg Rowley, Department Adjutant, Utah; Wayne D. Satrom, Past Department Commander North Dakota; Terry D. Schow, Alternate National Executive Committeeman, Utah; William F. Schrier, National Executive Committeeman Washington; William L. Sparwasser, Past National Commander, Sons of the American Legion, Maryland; Bruce Thiesen, Past National Commander, California; Donald E. White, Jr., Department Commander, Delaware; Terry L. Woodburn, Department Adjutant, Illinois; Douglas Wooddell, National Commander's Aide, Colorado.

...At this time a group photo was taken.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Let's have a big hand for the entire A-Team. (Applause.) The following members of the A-Team will receive their award at a later time: Dennis Boland, President, Child Welfare Foundation, Florida; Anna Gear, Past National President, American Legion Auxiliary, Virginia; Bill Moore, Past Department Commander, Kentucky; Mary Anne Roczynski, Legislative Chairman, Connecticut; Robert Vass, Kentucky; Carol Van Kirk, National President, the American Legion Auxiliary, Nebraska.

Presentation: The American Legion Distinguished Service Award
Michael E. Harris, National Vice Commander, Virginia,

This afternoon, we present The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal to the leader of the organization that spearheaded the movement for passage of the flag amendment since 1994. He served over 34 years in the U.S. Army. As an air ambulance pilot in Vietnam, he may have evacuated more wounded from the battlefield than anyone in history – over 5,000. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his life saving efforts in that war.

The American Legion chose this great American to receive the Distinguished Service Medal for his vision and leadership in the Citizens Flag Alliance efforts to protect Old Glory and to return to the American people the right to protect our flag.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am honored to present this year's Distinguished Service Medal to Major General Patrick Brady, United States Army Retired. *(Standing applause.)*

MAJ GEN BRADY: Well, Mike, I can't tell you how much I appreciate that. Now, if you folks have seen me speak before, you know that I will on occasion lose control and make a fool of myself. In fact, my wife warned that if I start blubbering she's going to get up and walk out. *(Laughter.)* You never know why these things happen. It's a kind of phenomenal thing. I never knew for most of my life, I think it has to do with reflections that come with aging. As I near fourscore and ten years, I find myself looking back more probably because I have a lot more behind me than I have in front of me. But more and more I wonder about the wonderful gifts God has given me, the people, the family, the friends. And I ask, "Why me, Lord?" When I talk about those things sometimes I just break down.

Now, one of the gifts has been the Legion and this crusade we share. You are a great and a good people. I must say I'm not impressed by the combat experiences many of us have shared; that was something we had to do. But I am impressed by the sacrifices some have made because of that combat. Many of us have been almost dead many times, but we walked away. Others did not walk away. Some will never walk again, or see, or even know. And I've seen in the burn wards and the amputation clinics up close and personal those sacrifices and they are the same in all wars and they always will be, because we continue to produce the kind of young people we have today, people like Commander Bock's son, my daughter, Bob Spanogle's son, who I have call the second greatest generation. These are young people who will sacrifice, who, as we say in the Army, are tougher than woodpecker lips.

Our nation is secure from any external threat. The true threat is internal. And it comes from an elite counterfeit patriots who believe they were born with boots and saddles and the rest of us with saddles on our back. These people were raised on a different playing field than we were. They never saw a battlefield. They will never sacrifice life or limb for America. In fact, they don't believe in sacrifice.

The booted in spirit are entrenched in our courtrooms, our classrooms, our cloakrooms and our newsrooms. They are a threat to the America of our founders, of our traditions, the America we all fought to perpetuate.

William James wrote, "Civic courage is the kind of valor to which the monuments of nations should most of all be reared." And so while what you do to ensure the care of those who sacrificed is important, and no organization has done more than The American Legion for our veterans. Your civic courage, what you do for the values and virtues of this country, our traditions, our morales, is more important. And that's why the flag is important to me.

The flag amendment is an assault on the core beliefs of the booted and spurred. It represents a defeat of all they stand for. Our flag is the vault for the values they despise. It's the symbol of our soul, our honor, our dignity and our unity. It's the glue that holds us together against all the forces that seek to tear us from each other. It's not a piece of textile, but a tapestry of our history; it's a family portrait. It embraces our pursuit of freedom in the past and our pledge to freedom in the future. Would anyone of us allow anyone to desecrate a picture of our children, our parents, of anyone we loved?

It's the flag that inspired us in the battles for freedom in war and united and gathered and bonded a delightfully diverse people to produce this civilization unmatched in the history of this planet. But that civilization is under attack. And I cannot emphasize enough that what you do for America is vital for our youth, the Boy Scouts, the pledge, for veterans memorials, especially the Public Expression of Religious Act, which will

cold cock the ACLU. *(Applause.)*

Now, it's beyond my belief that the ACLU is paid with taxpayer dollars to attack our God, our tradition, our Constitution and our values. That's like giving nuclear weapons to terrorists. I believe it is a characteristic of the booted and spurred also to have contempt for symbols. But for the patriot, symbols are the speech of our souls. Symbols house the treasures of our lives, our hopes, our dreams, our ideals. They enshrine our memories, the one enduring priceless pearl of all we own. They are also the mausoleum of all we have been, just symbols: a wedding ring, a cross, an old boot, a uniform, a triangular flag. They warm us, they inspire us, they ring every bell in our being.

This award is a symbol of the gift that you, the Legion, has been in my life. All veterans are gifts to each other. There is a relationship that does not dim with time, which is not tarnished by politics or race or creed. It is timeless and unconditional. We look at each other and we say, "There is a person I would want with me in combat, there is a Jim Coleman." And the relationship is settled for life.

Now, you have honored me, but I am honored to be here. I did not do America a favor by my service. God did me a favor by allowing me to be born here, by allowing me to be among patriots such as you. You are a people I would want with me in combat. And you have been a gift for which I will always be grateful.

You have always saluted me as a Medal of Honor recipient and I salute you for what you do for our veterans, but more so for what you do for America. *(Standing applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: The Chair recognizes Kenneth Danilson of Iowa, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Finance, for the purpose of making a report.

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

Forty-five members met at the Salt Lake City Convention Center, Room 260, at 9 a.m. on Sunday, August 27, 2006 in Salt Lake City, Utah. 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 the National Treasurer, George A. Buskirk, Jr. (Indiana), who updated the committee on the status of the U. S. economy. The Treasurer stated the U.S. economy remains solid, although difficult challenges continue to arise in the changing world economy that impacts our country's market status. This year Toyota, a foreign automaker, will replace Daimler-Chrysler to assume Big Three status. Employers predict a slower economy ahead, based on April hiring numbers. Our net increase of 138,000 new jobs was a decline from the 200,000 results in March. He expects economic growth to moderate soon and consumers will probably spend less money as rising interest rates and gasoline prices take their toll on consumer confidence.

The Treasurer said the Federal Reserve is correctly concerned with inflation. Rising wages and low unemployment coupled with rising energy and raw material prices are the main reasons for concern. Longer term, he remains optimistic for the larger U.S. companies as their earnings continue to grow and their prices remain at a 10-year low. He believes that our investments should maintain broad diversification recognizing that the economic facts facing the market place may rotate to out of favor sectors that are currently under valued. Shorter term, much of the profits in the stock market have already been achieved for 2006 and if oil prices cannot be controlled and return to acceptable levels with the new conflict in Palestine and Lebanon, the future performance of stocks will be minimal for the balance of 2006.

The Chairman then recognized Leo L. McKernan (New Jersey), Vice Chairman of The American Legion Magazine Commission, Daniel S. Wheeler (Virginia), the Executive Director and John Raughter (Indiana), the Editor of The American Legion Magazine. Mr. Raughter reported that the magazine sold $7.1 million in advertising so far in 2006. This is $165,000 ahead of budget. The advertising representative, the James G. Elliott Co., is expected to make or exceed its $9 million goal for the year. The October issue was especially strong with $1.1 million in ads.

While paper prices are stable, postage is a serious concern with reports surfacing of a possible 10% increase next year. If that happens, it would cost an additional half-million dollars to mail the magazine.

National Finance Director Paul M. Allen presented to each delegate and discussed a nine-page seven-year financial review and forecast. He informed the committee that we had a $14,821 deficit for the year 2005 and that from our first run reports, we are anticipating a 2006 deficit around $900,000. Mr. Allen then informed the committee our first run 2007-deficit budget is $2,300,000 but he said it would probably reduce slightly prior to the October Fall NEC meetings.

Chairman Danilson reported that the 2005 Crowe-Chizek 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 $141,610,307. He also informed the committee that our 2005 year-end deficit was $14,821.

The Chairman then recognized National Adjutant Robert W. Spanogle who gave the committee an in-depth financial report. The Adjutant told the committee that the last dues increase was approved at the 1993 Pittsburgh National Convention and went into effect January 8, 1994. It was anticipated at that time the increase would last eight to ten years. That was thirteen years ago. Mr. Spanogle provided a thorough explanation of cost-cutting and income-enhancing measures taken at National to ensure prudent management. He also said that based on current conditions, he would expect the proposed dues increase to last about 10 years.

Gaither Keener (North Carolina) made a motion to approve NEC resolution #1. The motion was seconded by Silas Noel (Kentucky), which was adopted by a roll call vote of 33 to 12.

Resolution #52 from Colorado, resolution #250 from California and resolution #286 was rejected because of the passing of resolution #1. I will read the Subject and Resolved clause.

Resolution No. 1: Increase In National Per Capita Dues of The American Legion

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That the National per capita dues for the calendar year 2007 be fixed in the amount of $13.50, provided that any 2007 dues paid at the old rate of $9.00 shall be accepted if remitted by the Departments to the National Organization by close of business January 10, 2007, which is the mid-winter 80% target date.

The motion was seconded by Silas Noel (KY), which was adopted by a roll call vote of 33 to 12.

Resolution #52 from Colorado, resolution #250 from California and resolution #286 was rejected because of the passing of resolution #1.

Myron Kirby (IL) moved to empower the Chairman and Secretary to write and/or amend the report on behalf of the Convention Committee on Finance. Denis McEneaney (NY) seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous vote.

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:21 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, as a duly elected delegate of this convention from Iowa, I make a

motion to approve this report.

...Second from the floor.

NATL VICE COMDR HARRIS: I hear a second, but the Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

PNC RON CONLEY: I am Ron Conley, delegate to this 88th National Convention. I'd like to tell you a little story before I second this motion. Yesterday, on the way over to the Hilton Hotel, I ran into a Legionnaire of 55 years. He's having some difficulty because he's losing his sight. He's from the State of Wisconsin. He's now suffering in sadness because his son died in Vietnam. He's so proud of The American Legion. He's so proud of what we stand for, like Gen. Brady just stated. He talked about the commitment for veterans affairs and rehabilitation. He talked about our commitment to the children and youth of our nation. He talked about our stand for national security. He's a paid-up-for-life member of The American Legion and does not have to worry about whether this convention endorses any kind of a dues increase. But his commitment to this organization is so strong that he said, "Ron, I'm going out and I'm going to get you a check, and I'm going to pay the $4.50, to this National Organization until I reach the age of 100." Truly a dedicated Legionnaire who really cares of who we are as an organization. It's a great honor that I second the Commission's report. *(Applause.)*

NATL VICE COMDR HARRIS: You heard the motion, there has been a second, is there any discussion?

MICROPHONE NO. 3: Discussion.

NATL VICE COMDR HARRIS: Chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

DELEGATE LENNOX (CA): Al Lennox, delegate to this convention from the great state of California. I would like to move to set aside that portion of the report that deals with a per capita increase for further discussion.

NATL COMDR BOCK: That motion is an automatic adoption, so, we will move for the vote for the Finance Report excluding Resolution No. 1. Is there any other discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, give their sign by saying 'aye.' Opposed say 'no.'

The Chair is in doubt. We're going to try that one more time just so I can be clear. We're voting on the adoption of the Financial Report excluding Resolution No. 1. All those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.'

...'Aye' from the floor. Those opposed 'no.'

...'No' from the floor.

Motion carried. The Financial Report is adopted.

Now we go for Resolution No. 1. Mr. Chairman.

...Committee Chairman Danilson reads the following:

Resolution No. 1: Increase In National Per Capita Dues of The American Legion
Origin: National Executive Committee
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Finance

WHEREAS, The National per capita dues remained constant at $9.00 since January 10, 1994, although our nation has experienced a cumulative inflation rate of 34.22% during that time, and inflation continues to erode the value of the dollar; and

WHEREAS, In 1993, when the last dues increase was adopted, it was anticipated the increase would last the National Organization until 2004; and

WHEREAS, The average annual increase for products such as paper, postage and printing has been around 6%; and

WHEREAS, The National Organization closed its 2005 financial records showing a $14,821 deficit; and

WHEREAS, The National Organization's approved deficit 2006 budget is $433,060; and

WHEREAS, Comparing the National Organization's financial records from March 31, 2005, to March 31, 2006, it shows a surplus of almost $2,000,000 LESS; and

WHEREAS, The National Organization, by practicing prudent fiscal management,

including increasing outside income, reduction of staff, increase surplus in National Emblem Sales and The American Legion Magazine and improving our product bedding process, was unable to absorb rising costs through 2006, but will no longer be able to do so; and

WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee of The American Legion, upon recommendation of the National Finance Commission, did at its regular meeting held in Indianapolis, Indiana on May 10-11, 2006 express its opinion that without a dues increase for the year 2007 the National Organization will be forced to curtail its traditional and long-standing programs, and did adopt a resolution recommending an increase in the national per capita dues for the year 2007; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That the National per capita dues for the calendar year 2007 be fixed in the amount of $13.50, provided that any 2007 dues paid at the old rate of $9.00 shall be accepted if remitted by the Departments to the National Organization by close of business January 10, 2007, which is the mid-winter 80% target date.

Mr. Commander, I move for approval of this Resolution.

NATL COMDR BOCK: You've heard the motion to adopt the resolution. Is there a second.

...Second from the floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Hearing a second, I call for discussion.

MICROPHONE NO. 3: Discussion Mr. Commander.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Microphone No. 3.

DELEGATE LENNOX, (CA): Al Lennox, California, Delegate to this convention. At the 88th Department Convention in California, California voted vigorously to oppose this $4.50 per capita increase. It was unanimous in its voting. The proposed $4.50 increase per capita has potentially catastrophic repercussions on Departments, Posts, and members who are financially compromised.

At the convention, we asked several questions: Why now? Why mid-year? And why so much? We believe in California that the National Organization has failed to justify such a large increase. As we speak, according to the financial records provided by the National Organization to me, this organization has assets in excess of $74 million. It has assets that are unrestricted in excess of $55 million. The assumptions that were explained to me were that they were basing their new figures for fiscal year 2006 on 2.6 million membership. We believe that that is conservative in nature. We believe membership will be substantially higher. We're already seeing positive results from the DMS Plus program.

There was also the discussion of the reduction in programs. We do not feel that that is necessarily germane to a $4.50 increase. We are aware of restricted funds that are utilized for Children & Youth, Boys State, Baseball, etc. We are also aware that a lion's share of the expenses of these programs are borne by the Departments and the local Posts.

Now, a $1.00 increase would net the National Organization $2.6 million a year. A $2.00 increase $5.2 million a year. A $3.00 increase $7.8 million a year. In 2005, the National Organization had a $15,000 deficit. This year they are projecting a $1 million deficit. We understand the need not to create deficits. We do not understand the need for a $4.50 per capita increase which would generate $11,700,000 a year especially when we firmly believe this will impact membership across the board, and it will impact ways and means programs across our country.

Saying that, I would like to move that the National Organization accept a $2.00 per capita increase to go into effect fiscal year 2007-2008.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: The motion is out of order. There's a motion on the floor, sir.

DELEGATE LENNOX (CA): Excuse me, Mr. Commander, I'm making an amendment to the original motion.

...Very good from the floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: That's in the form of an amendment. Is that amendment in writing? It must be presented to the Chair according to the Rules of the Convention at the time it is being made.

DELEGATE LENNOX (CA): No, sir, you have me.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Okay. Then the amendment is out of order.

DELEGATE LENNOX (CA): Thank you, sir. In my closing statement then, I would just like to urge all Departments in this great organization, that California has its Children & Youth programs. We love them dearly and we're not going to let them go anywhere. But I would like you to please consider what this $4.50 per capita increase is going to do to those Posts that are fragilely financially situated, and those members that cannot afford the increase. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your consideration.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Thank you. Is there any other discussion? The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

DELEGATE DUCKWORTH (WI): Teddy Duckworth, Department Delegation Chairman, Department of Wisconsin. I'd like to recognize Delegate John Schurrer, Past Department Commander.

PDC SCHURRER (WI): Thank you, Past Department Commander Duckworth. I stand in opposition to any delay in effectuating the dues increase as was recommended by not only this Convention, but also by the National Executive Committee upon receiving the reports from the National Finance Commission at their recent meetings in Indianapolis, and also from the National Treasurer.

I want to remind you of one thing, and it was remembered by my good friend, Past National Commander. My son left some years ago for Vietnam, in February 1968. And he stood in the room telling me his story about the Marine Corps and how it was important to him that he reenlist after a four year term in the Corps. He said it was important to him as an American to fight for America, because the President of the United States called for those young men and women to serve. I told him, "Son, do you realize what you're getting into when you go into a situation like that?" My son said to me, "Dad, you fight for America your way, and I'm going to fight for America my way."

I'm 88-years old with a 50 year membership in The American Legion this year. I didn't come to this convention to hear a division of this house over one point one tenth mill, or one point cent per day for a dues increase based on the methodical. I came here as a veteran of World War II, as many of you have, to defend the propositions of The American Legion, at all costs, all costs, regardless of it affecting my pension or not. The youth of America are looking to The American Legion, not for a divided house. They are looking for the unity of this convention. We should go out as comrades in arms whether you're 88-years old, 82-years old, or just barely 21.

I beseech you to lay aside your differences. Stand up proud and tall, not only for The American Legion, stand not only tall for the young people who are serving us around the world, but stand tall for America because America needs now more than ever a solid organization like The American Legion to pursue the mandates of the President of the United States and those who are serving, our men and women around the world.

Mr. Commander, I ask that all other discussions be laid aside. It's not my word that's going to count, I'm going to leave with a check that covers me until I'm 100. I hope that you, each and every one of you, will lay aside those differences and join me and a lot of others to say God speed to The American Legion and God speed for this solvency of this great country. *(Applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: Thank you. Is there any further discussion? Microphone No. 1.

PNC CONLEY (PA): Ron Conley, Delegate to this 88th Convention. There's probably nothing more I can say than what John's already said. I'm sure he's moved

everybody in this convention hall as he as moved me.

But the gentleman from California was trying to state some facts, facts that were wrong, facts that were not right. He saw a crystal ball of DMS. California, as well as Pennsylvania, haven't done their job of maintaining the DMS members that the National Organization has brought in. They've been going out the back door as fast as National is bringing them in the front.

...Boos from the floor.

They haven't done their job in the Posts, the Districts and the County in maintaining the renewals of members within the Posts. We have lost some 500,000 members in this organization since 1993. In the state of Pennsylvania, in 15 years, we've lost almost 100,000 members. We wouldn't be standing here today if everybody did their job in renewals and retention, going out and signing up new members, those young veterans who are eligible, 26 million members eligible for The American Legion. But we haven't been able to go out and sign them up. Some departments are only maintaining 12 percent of their eligible veterans signing up in their organization.

They talked about the National Organization and maintaining restricted funds. By law, we can't touch some of that money. Since 1994, we have cut back on the employees in the National Organization going from 301 employees to 260. They are cutting back on travel expenses even though the cost of taking airplanes and moving in the automobile across this country to maintain our programs as an organization and getting our word out into the communities, defending this country, defending the moral rights as was stated in this convention. We have tried to maintain our responsibility of accounting for every penny that has been brought into the National Organization. We have cut cost in the magazine even though it's gone up. Utilities have gone up as it's gone up everywhere in this nation, some 72 percent in the National Organization. Insurance for our employees have gone up some 150 percent.

He talks about we only need $1.00. Well, we are going to do a $1.00 this year, then we're going to have to do a $1.00 next year. In 1993, we did a dues increase of $5.00, and we were projecting that it would last us for 10 years. But it lasted for 13 because of the Finance Commission's responsibility, as well as the NEC.

This raise is needed today and not to cover just one year. Another projection of 10 years will carry this organization through and maintain the programs.

I hope every delegate here stands up even though it's difficult in financial times to reach in your pocket. It's one drink at that bar across the street, or it's one pack of cigarettes in your pocket. I hope everybody here votes to support this National Organization. It's not you against us, *we are one and all*, and it's our responsibility to take care of this organization. I wholly support this dues increase for the National Organization. *(Applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: Is there any further discussion? Hearing no further discussion, I call on the Chair for the final vote.

COMM CHRMN DANILSON: Thank you, Mr. Commander, I just have a few comments. Why a dues increase? Per capita dues have been constant at $9.00 since January 10, 1994, despite an inflation rate of 32 percent. If you look at the Consumer Price Index, at that rate a $3.50 increase which we did in that year, would be $4.71 today. We're asking for $4.50.

During this period National, Departments and Posts have managed resources prudently, yet, all have been challenged. Why did our dues increase last 13 years? Prudent management by the National Executive Committee, the National Finance Commission, National Commissions and the National Headquarters staff. Since 1994, vertical integration and sound management have actually led to a reduction in the number of Headquarter's staff from 301 to 258 today.

Why now? Inflation has been eroding the value of each dollar at a rate of 2.6 percent per year. The loss of 500,000 members since the last dues increase has resulted in $4.5 million less in revenue in 2006 than in 1993. Investment income on investments is

down 10 percent. Less members means less reserves, less interest earned.

These and other financial impacts has resulted in a National budget deficit as I have explained.

In summary, the dues increase is reasonable. The time is right. We are recommending an amount of $4.50 with an effective date of January 10, 2007. It is projected to last 10 years at the current rate of inflation. The facts are on the table. Justification has been reviewed by the Finance Commission and the NEC. The decision is yours.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, we're ready to call for the vote if the motion is approved. Resolution No. 1. All those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.'

…'Aye' from the floor.

Those oppose 'no.'

…'No' from the floor.

Motion carried. *(Applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: Delegates, as you are aware, there are groups assembling in Salt Lake City as I speak, with the intention of protesting against the War on Terror and our President. Resolution No. 169, Support for the War on Terror, was passed one year ago at our Annual Convention in Honolulu. Over the past 12 months the Legion family has stood firmly with our troops and have shown support for our President and the War on Terror. We respect the First Amendment rights of American people to express their opinions. Likewise, we must exercise our right to publicly disagree with those who speak out against the war.

To this end, I am asking each Department to provide three delegates to meet out front of the Salt Palace at 11:00 a.m. tomorrow morning. Once we posse up, we will board buses and take a short ride over to Liberty Park to attend the Operation Give Support Our Troops rally. I need those delegates identified by close of business today. The rally should last no more than 90 minutes, but that's all the time that we need to make our voices heard.

Also, as a show of support for our troops, I want us to gather right out in front of the Convention Center tomorrow morning at 8:30 a.m. for our own rally. This will be an opportunity for the media to hear the collective voices of The American Legion. Tomorrow, thanks to you, America will here both sides of the story.

I call on the National Adjutant Robert Spanogle for administrative announcements.

Announcements: Robert W. Spanogle
National Adjutant

Mr. Commander, there are no administrative announcements for today.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Legionnaires, please join me in a salute to the Flag of the United States of America. Hand salute. Ready, two!

…At this time the delegates stood and rendered a right-hand salute to the Colors.

The time is about 3:09 p.m. The Convention will stand in recess until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

…At 3:09 p.m., the Convention recessed to reconvene the following day, Wednesday, August 30, 2006 at 9:00 a.m.

PROCEEDINGS
SECOND DAY

Wednesday, August 30, 2006

...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 second day of the 88th Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were conducted.

Call to Order
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

NATL COMDR BOCK: Before we begin our program, please join me in a round of applause for my long time friend, Peter Ole.

The convention will come to order. The Delegates will stand, face the flag of our country and render the proper salute by the number. One! Ready Two!

...At this time the Delegates stood and saluted the Colors.

For the invocation, I call on National Chaplain Bishop Steven E. Wright, of Layton, Utah.

Invocation
Bishop Steven E. Wright, Utah, National Chaplain

Our beloved Father in Heaven, we come together on this beautiful morning and thank Thee again for another day of life, another day when we may serve. We thank Thee for Thy goodness to us. Now, Father, we ask Thy blessings to be upon not only the proceedings of this convention this day, but wilt Thou be with Legionnaires everywhere, where they may be serving in whatever capacity this day.

We thank Thee for this great land of liberty, even a choice land blessed by Thee. May we remember that Thou hast chosen this land to do good and may we serve with Thee. We remember those who mourn. We especially ask Thy blessings to be with the Galvez family today as they will pay their last respects to their son as they lay him to rest.

We are grateful for those who serve. We thank Thee for the lives of those who have sacrificed their all and for their families. Bless us now as a Legion and as Americans that we will be unified behind our leaders. We humbly pray offering a moment of silence to offer our own personal benedictions. Amen.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Please join me in paying respect to our flag by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

NATL COMDR BOCK: The Convention is now in session.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Quick announcement. Three buses will be loading on the south side of the Salt Palace at 10:40 a.m. this morning for the three delegates from each delegation going to the Liberty Park Operation Give rally. They are specially marked and one of them is handicapped-accessible. The buses will return here at the end of the rally at approximately 1:00 p.m.

The American Legion's established partnership with Children's Miracle Network (CMN), seeks to enhance its efforts to provide quality health services to children. CMN is associated with 170 hospitals that treat children with all types of afflictions; rendering treatment based on need and not just on the ability to pay.

One hundred percent of all of the contributions go directly to children's hospitals to

provide health care for children whose parents can't afford to pay. It helps to purchase up-to-date equipment, conduct life-saving research and implement outreach programs. Children's Miracle Network hospitals treat over 17 million children each year with all types of conditions, including cancer, heart and muscular disease, birth defects, Aids, and accidents injuries, just to name a few.

We are honored to have with us today a man who has led the effort to transition the Children's Miracle Network into one of the most efficient charitable entities in North America. Please join me in welcoming the CEO of the Children's Miracle Network, Mr. Jim Hall.

Address: Jim Hall, CEO
Children's Miracle Network

I thank The American Legion for inviting me to speak today. I want to acknowledge National Commander Bock, National Adjutant Robert Spanogle, the Commander of the State of Utah Richard Fisher, the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary, Mrs. Carl Van Kirk, the National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion, and I hope I pronounce his last name correct, Earl Ruttkofsky. I also acknowledge the local and national leaders and all of you the members of The American Legion.

A few weeks ago I was in Philadelphia and visited Independence Hall. While I was standing in the room where our forefathers settled their differences and laid out the foundation of our nation, I reflected on today and the remarks that I might make. Like our forefathers the men and women of The American Legion represent a group of people of varied backgrounds and beliefs who come together for one purpose; to ensure the future of this nation and, more specifically, the future of our children and of our children's children.

The military service and dedication of the American Legionnaires are well documented. Today, I would like to shine some light on the service that is a little less well known. Since its beginning, The American Legion has taken on many charitable endeavors to improve the future of our nation's children, programs like the Boys and Girls State, the Boys and Girls Nation, American Legion Baseball, Boy Scouts, The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, that's just to name a few.

I also had a chance last night at the banquet to sit next to another organization I believe that is supported called the Angel Flight Network. It's a terrific organization. Today, I'd like to specifically highlight The American Legion's long standing commitment to the Children's Miracle Network.

Children's Miracle Network is dedicated to helping kids by raising funds for over 170 children's hospitals across North America. These hospitals ensure the future of our nation's children by providing the finest care in the world based on need and not the ability to pay. During the past eight years of support, The American Legion has raised an amazing amount of more than $19 million to help these hospitals protect the future of our country by saving the lives of children everyday.

In 2005 alone, the Legion's fundraising efforts equaled $4.2 million. I think that deserves a round of applause. That incredible support helps more than 17 million children each year. One of the children touched by your efforts is here with us today. You're in for a real treat. I'm proud to introduce to you Tennison Mather. He's the 14-year old son of Rodney and Terri Lynn Mather of Murray, Utah. When Tennison was eight-years old he was diagnosed with Burkitt's B-Cell Lymphoma. The next few months of his life were spent in and out of Primary Children's Hospital here in Salt Lake City, Utah. At a young age Tennison knows what it's like to struggle through and beat the odds. He has a positive attitude and he's really funny. His great sense of humor has sustained him through the trials that many of us can't even comprehend.

In 2002, Tennison represented all of the children treated in Utah as the Children's Miracle Network's Champion. With 49 other children, he visited Washington, DC and then went on to Orlando, Florida where he visited Walt Disney World. He sang with

country music star Jessica Andrews. I learned today that he actually sat in the Oval Office and in the President's chair. I asked him if he carved his name in the desk, but he said he didn't do that. Please welcome and join me in introducing, a real hero, Tennison Mather.

Address: Tennison Mather

Hi! I'm up here wondering what I have to say that will even interest you. But, I'm thinking we might have a few things in common. One thing is we've both been through major life changing events.

I've been through a battle of life and death. So have many of you. I've learned about courage in the face of impossible odds; I know you have, too. We've both fought battles on different fields, but we both learned some of the same lessons.

Did you learn that nothing's more important than family and friends? Did you learn that all you've got to stand on is what's inside? Did you learn that you can lose how you look? You can lose your hair, you lose your body parts. But no one can take away your faith and courage.

My mom and dad were with me when they told me I had cancer. I didn't know what that was because I was only eight-years old. But when my mom and dad cried so I knew it was bad. My diagnosis was a rare form of Leukemia called Burkitt's B-Cell Lymphoma. My treatment was nine months long in the hospital receiving chemo-meds around the clock. I was one sick dude. I made lots of friends in the hospital that were fighting for their lives as well. I know what real heroes are. It's anyone and everyone who has courage.

Our situation was like this: my parents lost their jobs because they stayed in the hospital with me for so long, so we didn't have any insurance or money to pay for my treatments. Primary Children's Hospital told my parents that they would take care of me and get my treatments even though my parents couldn't pay.

Here's the important part. Primary could do that because organizations like The American Legion supports Children's Miracle Network and help raise money to get very sick kids the treatment they need. I have to admire this group of men and women who sacrifice everything they have to defend freedom. And if that wasn't enough, you come home and spend your time and energy helping very ill children get through the fight of their lives. You guys rock.

To finish up, I want to tell you I know what it's like to watch a friend die. I know some of you do, too. I am aware that I could have died at any time, and that the people I talk to today could die before we get to talk again. I know life is fragile and the future is uncertain. That is why I live each moment to the extreme. And I'll bet you have been aware of some of the same thoughts. I'm thinking maybe that's why you, The American Legion, choose to do all this good in the world. I am proud to call you my friends. I am also proud to be an American. We have a lot in common, wouldn't you say?

I have a lot of family that have served in the military and have military careers. I visit the grave of my great great uncle who died in World War I. Many of my uncles fought and two great grandfathers fought in World War II, including the Battle of the Bulge, and a great uncle in Vietnam. A cousin of my mom's is a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Marines. Many of my parent's cousins are on active duty and in the reserves. I am proud of them and their service.

When I represent Primary Children's Hospital at the national taping of Children's Miracle Network, I had an opportunity to visit the nation's Capitol and Arlington Cemetery. We drove a very long time through rows and rows of graves. I couldn't believe there were so many. It made me really appreciate my freedom. I pay tribute to them and to you today for saving my life, literally.

Please keep up the good work. There are still a lot of sick kids out there who need your help. May God's angels be with you now and always. And God bless America.

MR. HALL: Tennison, I was hoping that maybe we could introduce you a little bit closer to some of the people and ask a few questions, is that ok?

TENNISON MATHER: Yeah, no problem.

MR. HALL: I heard you state that you live each moment to the extreme. So, what are you doing with your time lately?

TENNISON MATHER: Well, in the winters I snowboard, and summers I skateboard and I do as much as I can in each moment to just hangout and stuff like that.

MR HALL: That's great. And did you start school already?

TENNISON MATHER: Yes, I did. I'm in eighth grade and it's a good place to be.

MR. HALL: Are you ready for high school?

TENNISON MATHER: Well, no. *(Laughter.)*

MR. HALL: The better question, are your parents ready for you to go to high school?

TENNISON MATHER: Well, I think they were sad that my sister already left. She got married in June. That was an experience. Everybody was running around.

MR. HALL: So, speaking of sisters and marriage, any girlfriends?

TENNISON MATHER: Uh, quite a few. *(Laughter.)*

MR. HALL: Quite a few?

TENNISON MATHER: They all want me, you know. *(Laughter.)*

MR. HALL: Well, we are in Utah. *(Laughter.)*

TENNISON MATHER: That's what you think.

MR. HALL: Now, one last question. Who's your favorite hero?

TENNISON MATHER: I'd have to say all of you guys for what you guys do. *(Applause).*

MR. HALL: That's great. Well, I think you know this line, but you're my hero. I'm honored that I get to share the stage with you today. I would just ask ladies and gentlemen how about one last round of applause for Tennison. *(Applause.)*

Every year there are 17 million kids just like Tennison who need our help who are treated at the local children's hospitals in many parts of North America.

I personally thank The American Legion family for their dedicated and heartfelt support of Children's Miracle Network. It's an honor to be here. Let's work together to make the coming year the best year for the Legion family yet and for the 17 million kids that our hospitals treat each year.

NATL COMDR BOCK: In 2011, along the Potomac in the heart of the Washington National Capitol Region, something momentous will happen. The National Museum of the United States Army will open its doors. All American soldiers will finally have what they have never had before, a home of their own, the one place they will want their family and friends and every American citizen to learn about, connect with, and share the achievements of the United States Army. Through the Army Museum, the American people will gain a greater awareness of the part that the Army played in shaping their heritage.

We have with us today two special guests representing the Army Museum. One retired from the Army as a three star general in 1977 with over 32 years active service. He's the author of "We Were Soldiers Once… and Young," which made the *New York Times* bestseller list for 17 weeks. Our other guest is the co-author of that book. He was a UPI correspondent during the Vietnam War. Legionnaires, please welcome Lt. General Hal Moore and Jo Galloway.

Address: Lt. General Hal Moore and Joe Galloway
National Museum of the United States Army

LT GEN MOORE: Joe and I want to take a few minutes this morning to talk to you about soldiers and the Army's plans to honor their selfless sacrifice and personal service in a very unique and meaningful way. You may not realize this, but our country is the

only major world power, and the U.S. Army is the only one of our military services which does not have a national museum, or a national monument to honor its soldiers and army veterans.

For far too long, the army has lacked an appropriate central place to tell both its story and the soldiers' stories which exemplify the indomitable spirit, which has so clearly outlined the American character since 1775. Now, this is all going to change. It's now time, high time, that the Army's story is told and it's time to say 'thank you' to 14 generations of American soldiers whose leadership, guidance, character, and selfless sacrifice have forged and safeguarded our nation for over two centuries. They have answered the call to duty and we will forever remain in their debt.

MR. GALLOWAY: For over 230 years, from Concorde's Bridge to Baghdad, the United States Army has been on the front lines of the fight to preserve and protect American freedom and democracy. Millions of American soldiers have fought in 11 wars and 178 campaigns. They've participated in countless peacekeeping and nation building missions at home and abroad. As General Moore said, their stories of personal sacrifice and service have, for the most part, gone unacknowledged and untold.

That simple but important fact, along with a genuine love of soldiers, is what originally drove General Moore and me to tell the stories of those who fought so valiantly and those who died so bravely during the savage battles of the Ia Drang valley in our book, *We Were Soldiers Once...and Young*. We're now at work on a sequel to that book and, once again, we're going to be telling soldiers' stories.

LT GEN MOORE: While we're working on that book of soldiers' stories, the Army is working on plans for building the National Museum of the U.S. Army at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia, to tell its story in an innovative and important way; through the eyes and in the words of soldiers past, present and future.

At last year's convention, you passed The American Legion Resolution No. 85, recognizing the need for the museum. This year, Joe and I are here to tell you about it and one of its most important components, the Registry of the American Soldier.

This museum, a long overdue tribute, will preserve a legacy; the rich history of the U.S. Army. And it will provide a million visitors annually with an appreciation of the Army's contribution to the nation, to America. It's going to present the Army in its total context placing the American soldier and the army veteran in its rightful position as an historical cornerstone on which our country was built and has grown and prospered.

It will be built at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia just south of Washington, DC, and 20 minutes or so from important monuments that many of you are already familiar with through personal visits: the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the World War II Memorial, and the Vietnam Memorial Wall. Specifically, the museum will be just about 10 minutes from historic Mt. Vernon the home of George Washington the Army's first Commander in Chief. The projected date for the groundbreaking is 2009, and the opening is currently scheduled for June 14, 2013 in celebration of the Army's 238th Birthday.

All American soldiers and army veterans whether they served in the active army, the army reserve, or the Army National Guard will finally have what they've never had before, a home of their own. This museum will be the only place and the one place that they will want their families, friends and every American citizen to visit to learn more about and to connect with and share in the achievements of the United States Army.

MR. GALLOWAY: The National Army Museum will illustrate how the Army's history is intricately interwoven through all aspects of the American experience. The Army is a reflection of the American people and its history is a vital part of the American story. To understand ourselves, our country and our culture, we can learn much from our Army and its soldiers past and present. Their history is our history told from a unique and remarkable perspective that is at times triumphant, at times terrible. The museum's clearly defined mission is to expand public understanding of the army, and that will result in a blend of the state-of-art exhibits and a wide range of exciting events and educational programs. By cultivating an appreciation for army history and army values on a national scale, the museum will give the American people a unique opportunity to

connect with the army story.

Based on candid and recorded accounts of men and women who have worn the army uniform, visitors will learn that the foremost characteristics of American soldier, service, sacrifice, duty, initiative, ingenuity, resilience, honor and courage, actually represent the most distinguishing features of our national character.

LT. GEN MOORE: We're here to tell you that the National Army Museum will be far more than just a museum with display cases and miniature dioramas. It will be a total experience. It will tell the small personal stories of combat heroism. It will relate the epoch descriptions of our great battles. It will reveal little known facts about the army's contributions to science, medicine, exploration and the American quality of life. It will show the evolution of the U.S. Army as part of and contributing to America's social and cultural growth.

MR. GALLOWAY: A cadre of professionally trained interpreters will bring to life the experiences of soldiers through enactments. The presentations using historically accurate uniforms, props, and language—and I wonder about that part of it—will provide visitors a sense of the human reality that makes up history. It will educate and enlighten, as well as surprise and impress. It will teach, fascinate and entertain. It will engage the imagination and curiosity of visitors, answers probing questions and stimulating a desire to learn more.

LT. GEN MOORE: The museum will use the most modern technology, simulations, display techniques and interactive methods. Visitors will experience what it's like to drive an Abrams M-1 main battle tank; to fly an Apache Helicopter at the nape of the earth; to load a musket; experience a jungle medi-vac; and see through night vision goggles. These are the kinds of hands-on experiences that the museum will feature.

While the stress and exhilaration of battle, the wonder of exploration, or the tedium of garrison duty remain fairly constant through time, the principle variables are the soldiers and the quality of their leaders and their training and equipment.

Now, we're all veterans and only we know the business of war and peace like no others. To paraphrase Joe Galloway's words from the prologue of our book, understanding the life of soldiers takes an understanding of what we wore, how we lived, how we talked, how we acted, and how we smelled. Also, how we were well trained and led, and who we fought, and who we helped and why.

MR. GALLOWAY: As the capstone of over 120 branch and regional and other museums in the army museum system, the National Army Museum's 30 galleries will showcase selected materials from army collections. These holdings include over 750,000 artifacts and 15,000 original combat drawings and paintings, as well as original film footage, weapons, equipment and documents of great historical significance. What visitors will see will span time from the pre-revolutionary colonial militia period to the modern army today, which is fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. Besides the main exhibit building and its 30 gallery exhibits, the museum complex will include a parade ground, vehicle and tactical demonstration area, amphitheater, and a memorial garden to honor all who have fallen defending our freedom.

LT. GEN MOORE: There's one other very important component of the National Army Museum that we want to tell you about. That is the Registry of the American Soldier. Not only do we want to tell you about it, we want you to take advantage of it if you have not already. The Registry is an essential historical link between those who have served and the American public. It's currently managed by the Army Historical Foundation and it is accessible now online. Eventually, it will be permanently enshrined at the National Army Museum where it will be a focal point for visitors.

The Registry is your opportunity to tell your story of your army service in your own words. You all have a story to tell and we want you to tell it in your words. Your recollections and your personal experiences will bring army history to life and make it memorable for future generations.

MR. GALLOWAY: So far, about 25,000 currently serving soldiers and army veterans have entered their names, ranks, hometowns, and service history onto the

Registry. Enrollment is free and Gen. Moore and I hope you will take the time during the convention to visit the Army Historical Foundation's booth in the exhibition area to enroll. It takes just a few minutes of your time. You can also, while you're there, enroll any relative or friend living or deceased, who has had army service at anytime.

LT. GEN MOORE: In closing, Joe Galloway and I are very proud and honored to be advocates for the National Army Museum. We're here this morning to promote museum awareness on behalf of the Army Historical Foundation, the private non-profit organization that the Secretary of the Army has designated to spearhead the capital campaign for the museum. The Army is planning, managing and providing staff for the project, and providing the land for the museum. The foundation has the task of raising the remaining $200 million from the private sector. This project is an important and very long overdue tribute to the army and its current members and former members.

All of you here are veterans and many of you were soldiers. Regardless of your service affiliation, help us build awareness of this worthy project. Go back and talk it up with members of your state Departments and your Posts. Tell members of your community about it. Tell fellow army veterans about the museum and the registry. Help create an atmosphere of excitement and an aura of esteem and respect for the soldiers who have served our country. Please do all you can to help the Army Historical Foundation to build the National Army Museum.

MR. GALLOWAY: Thank you for your service to our country and for sharing our belief that the men and women of the world's most respected and capable ground force, the United States Army, deserve a world-class museum dedicated to their service and their sacrifice. At the moment, the National Army Museum is a vision and also a challenge. With your support, it will become a reality that we can all be proud to call our own.

God bless the country. God bless all our soldiers, Marines, sailors, airmen, Coast Guard serving in 120 countries around this world keeping things a little quieter and a little safer than they might otherwise be.

NATL COMDR BOCK: As you know, the President of the United States will be here tomorrow to address our Annual Convention. Security will be very tight and as good Legionnaires, we know the drill. Tomorrow morning beginning at 6:30 a.m., you will only be able to enter the building through the south entrance, that's where the buses let you off. Magnetometers will be setup outside Exhibit Halls A and B at 7:00 a.m. You will have to pass through these to get into the convention hall. Don't bring anything that you don't have to. That includes bottles of water, metal items, or excessive baggage, merchandise or souvenirs. Again, use the south entrance tomorrow morning.

Our next guest represents an organization that shares our dedication to maintain and strengthen America's core values. The Sons of the American Revolution is an historical, educational and patriotic nonprofit United States 501(c)3 corporation that seeks to maintain and extend the institutions of America's freedom, enhance the appreciation for true patriotism and respect for our national symbols, and preserving the value of American citizenship.

We have with us today a man who has dedicated his life to perpetuating the stories of patriotism, courage, sacrifice, tragedy and triumph of the men who achieved the independence of the American people. Please welcome the Chief Executive Officer of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, Mr. Nathan E. White.

Address: Nathan E. White, National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution

I am Nathan White, and I'm a 30-year paid-up-for-life member of the Harding Blain Post No. 321 in Plano, Texas. But, I'm here this morning as President General of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. I thank Commander Bock for the opportunity to bring greetings from our organization and to acquaint you attendees a

little bit more about our organization.

The SAR is a heredity organization composed of blood descendants of our first veterans, or others who provided support for the American Revolution, those who've laid the foundation for our country by challenging Great Britain, enlisting the support of allies, defeating the army and navy of the greatest nation of the world to bring freedom to our land and ultimately to us.

You may have heard of our sister organization the Daughters of the American Revolution. To say we are simply a hereditary organization would be like saying The American Legion is simply an organization whose members are made up of veterans of our armed forces.

We in the Legion are veterans, of course, but we do so much more. Our youth activities directed to leadership development, physical development and educational development are essential components of our organization. Our service in the interest of veterans and their families, of course, is legendary. In many ways, the Sons of the American Revolution and The American Legion are partners in patriotism. The recent Flag Amendment Alliance, the Blue Star Salute are just two examples of the cooperative effort by modern veterans and the descendants of our first veterans, many of whom are the same people, working together for patriotic causes.

One of our partnership efforts was for the purpose of passing a flag amendment through the congress. The recent attempt to gain the flag amendment was narrowly defeated. Of course, we all know that. But whenever it is passed, it will take several years to ratification and perhaps a few years after that for the congress to pass appropriate legislation.

What are we to do until then? My personal opinion is that the answer to flag burning is flag waving. Perhaps that and the action of the small west Texas town that passed an ordnance to the effect that anyone assaulting a flag burner would be fined not more that $2.00. (*Applause.*) I believe that flag wavers greatly exceed flag burners. I'm sure you've witnessed the patriotism of tremendous crowds on the 4th of July, parades, and of the throngs at baseball games across the land removing their caps and singing the National Anthem, the patriotism that reacts with anger to the antics of a Roseanne Barr or the Dixie Chicks.

The Blue Star Salute is a partnership between local SAR and American Legion Posts, and I hope that partnership will expand in the coming years. The SAR, through its veterans committee and chapter programs seek to support veterans in hospitals and in homes. We share a common goal to educate the public through patriotic education.

All of you I'm sure are familiar with the story in the Old Testament Book of Genesis of Joseph, son of Jacob, and of the coat of many colors fame. Joseph was his father's favorite and his brothers were jealous. Joseph's brothers stole his coat, soak it in blood and reported him to his father as dead. They sold him into slavery. He was taken into Egypt where he eventually gained favor with the king or pharaoh when he translated the king's dream. He rose in the king's favor until he became governor, perhaps the equivalent of maybe today's Prime Minister. He was instrumental in laying a foundation for prosperity and government in Egypt. He invited his brothers and his people into Egypt to enjoy the fruits of the land. Then you turn the page. In the book of *Exodus* we read these words. "Now, there arose a new king over Egypt which knew not Joseph." The new king took an oppressive stance toward the Jews and, of course, you know the rest of the story of the exodus, when the Jews escaped.

Now, what is the relevance of that story to us? In our country, of course, where we have a govemment of the people, there is no king. Each new generation is the equivalent of a new king. Our founding fathers and our patriotic ancestors have given us a land of opportunity, the foundation of prosperity, perhaps analogous to Joseph in the story. If we extrapolate, we could say, and there came a new generation which knew not of the founders and patriots and of those who fought to defend this country over the last 200 years.

Our job, both the SAR and The American Legion, is to see that does not happen.

Fortunately, we have many partners, authors who are writing books about the Revolution and the bravery of modern heroes. And people are buying them. The *History Channel* is broadcasting programs about the Revolution and military service and people are watching. Patriotic holidays draw great crowds of flag wavers who are bringing their children along.

We are often disappointed with the support from the public school system, and we need to elect more school trustees and others of influence to effect a change to improve patriotic education. And of course, both the Legion and the SAR have our own programs of patriotic education.

The late Ronald Reagan said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction." We don't pass it along to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was like to live in the United States where we were free. The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution looks forward to continued partnership with The American Legion, to protect that freedom and hand it on to our children and our children's children.

I would like to make a presentation to National Commander Bock. Assisting me is Lyman Brenner, the 1st Vice Commander for the Department of Delaware, also Past President of the Delaware Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, and Chairman of our American Legion Liaison Committee and our partners in patriotic service programs. Let me read this:

The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. To Thomas L. Bock, National Commander of The American Legion, is hereby awarded the Distinguished Patriot Award for a lifetime of devoted conspicuous patriotic service to the American people, and for extraordinary commitment to freedom and democracy. (*Applause.*)

NATL COMDR BOCK: Thank you.

The Southern Block had a breakfast this morning and seem to have been very busy, because as the results of that gathering, they just presented us with a check of $5,405 for the Legacy Scholarship Fund. (*Applause.*) Wow, that brings our total to about $171,065. That is incredible and makes you fill good.

I don't dance, don't sing but I tell you, I've met the President of the United States three times. This flashing over here kind of reminded me of that. When I met the President the second time, it was in the White House inside the Oval Office. You know, it's easier to get into the Oval Office than it is to get through TSA over here at the airport. *(Laughter.)* Oh yeah, here's me at the airport. You know, half naked with this wand going all over my body. I walked up to the White House showed them my driver's license and they let me in. Unbelievable. But the Commander-in-Chief opens the door to the Oval Office. He says, "Commander, come on in, what do you think? Welcome to the Oval Office." I said "Your furniture is kinda of old." *(Laughter.)* And he said, "Yeah I know, but there's nothing I can do about that. Sit down. We're going to have a photo opt." Just like this, reminds me of that you know.

So, we sit down and we're starting to look pretty, we've got a couch over here for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jim Nicholson's sitting there. And a couch over here where our Executive Director, John Sommers, who was with me sat there. And the President and I sat there, and somebody opened the door and about 20 photographers came running in the room with their cameras flashing lights making eyes start to water. Some started to turn red. And about 10 seconds later somebody said, "Get out of here," and they're gone.

Honest to goodness, I leaned over to the President of the United States of America, and says, "Mr. President, I apologize, I'm sorry about that. It happens to me everywhere I go." *(Laughter.)* Yeah, he thought they were there to take his picture. (*Laughter.*) We all knew better than that. I'll tell you.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs is a principle advocate for veterans in the United States government, ensuring that they receive the care, support, recognition and dignity

they deserve for their service to our country. He also directs the Department of Veterans Affairs, which is responsible for our nationwide systems of healthcare services, benefit programs and national cemeteries for the American veterans and their dependents. A 1961 graduate of West Point, he served on active duty as a Ranger, qualified Army officer and as a paratrooper. He spent another 22 years in the Army Reserve, retiring with the rank of colonel. Join me in welcoming the Secretary of Veteran Affairs, the Honorable James Nicholson.

Address: The Hon. R. James Nicholson
Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs

Thank you for the great job you've done as the National Commander. I've seen a lot of him in the last year, and I'm telling you that he has really represented you well.

My congratulations to the leading candidate, leading contender to be the new National Commander, Paul Morin, and my hopes of working closely with you as well if you end up being elected. And I know about these elections, you should never take them for granted.

I continue to enjoy working with the great staff that you have led by John [Sommer] and Bob [Spanogle] and the team that are there. My greetings to all of you and my fellow veterans, distinguished guests.

I'm really proud and feel privileged to address the largest service organization in the world. For almost 90 years now, the Legion has exemplified the quiet virtues and the dynamic strengths that represent the very best of what it means to be an American: patriotism, leadership, and compassion.

Since World War I and your founding at [the American Club] in Paris, The American Legion has grown in size and stature, but remains singularly committed to its founding precept, which is service to veterans, and service to our communities of veterans across our nation. We at the VA consider ourselves blessed to be the recipient of your support. Your support in our medical centers and across all our programs.

I just finished speaking, as you may know, to the Auxiliary. I commended Carol Van Kirk and her team for the fact that we achieved something we committed to almost a year ago, which was to put the program that we have for talented veterans that we do each year to get that on national television. That's a project of the Auxiliary of The American Legion, and this year for the first time, that is going to be on national television. Another of those many things that you do.

I had an introduction early in my life to The American Legion. I grew up in a real rural part of—I guess you can't say rural part of Iowa; it's all rural. I grew up in a small town and at the next town, which was bigger, they had an American Legion Baseball Team. I was able by hitchhiking back and forth to get there and to play on that baseball team and discovered that I had a bit of talent for baseball. I loved it and I can say, and I mean this, that it helped me get into West Point, because I got their attention for my baseball acumen. And so I've been forever grateful to The American Legion and I continue to be that today.

By bringing programs like that, and Boys State and Boys Nation, into the neighborhoods like ours in rural and distant places in this country, you find people out there that realize their own abilities and the vistas that are available for them. I hope that you feel tremendously satisfied about that part of the work that you do as well. And your work on legislative proposals in the congress is unparalleled. Your community work echos the civic tradition that goes to the heart of the American experience.

It was one of our founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson, who said once that he believed the greatest honor of a man is in doing good for his fellow man. Thanks to you, the words of this national icon resonate today with as much power, as much passion, as much purpose as they did when he said that two centuries ago. Your contributions give credence to the belief that President Washington once stated, which is that the true measure of a nation is the manner by which it treats its defenders, and by that standard,

America has no peer either.

My attendance here this morning also affirms the fact that The American Legion and we at the VA are bounded by a sense of unity of purpose, a commitment of dedication to the same people, our veterans, and their families. So, it's with that mutual interest and spirit of partnership that I want to briefly give you a report on the state of your VA.

The overall condition of the VA is terrific; it's strong, it's robust; we're looking ahead; the future is bright. We're moving forward in fulfilling the President's promise to honor our commitment to veterans. And a budget as you well know, and these gentlemen really know, is a gauge, is a measure of that commitment to our veterans. Using that, I now tell you that our budget for 2007 will be of historic proportion. It will be over *$80 billion. (Applause.)* It would be the largest increase in discretionary funding ever requested and granted by the congress for the VA.

Since President Bush came into office, spending for health care in the VA has increased by 70 percent. Our first priority continues to be our service-connected disabled veterans, veterans with no other health care options, and those who have specialized needs such as ventilators, wheelchairs, spinal cord injury veterans. Those are our priority, but another of our priorities are those that are returning from the combat zone from Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

There are many good news stories about how we're doing in this job in fulfilling our obligation to the veterans and these priorities. Time precludes me telling you all of them, but I do want to mention some of them.

As I said, I grew up in rural Iowa and we had a lot of expressions back there, some of which I can't repeat here this morning; ladies in the audience. But one that we had was: 'it ain't braggin' if it's true.' What I'm going to tell you is not to be construed as bragging because it is true, but it is the utterances of a proud Secretary, and I can talk about it because I didn't make it that way. I didn't do this in 19 months, so, I'm standing on the shoulders of a very dedicated committed workforce at the VA.

It ranges from electronic medical records to patient safety to telemedicine. We, the VA medical system, has become almost universally recognized in this country as not only the biggest integrated health care provider but the best. I can back that up. (Applause.)

Maybe one of the very important sources for this evaluation is the *Journal of American Medicine*, which said that the VA health system is the model for America. Since most of you are sitting down, I will risk telling you that even the *New York Times* said recently that the VA system is the best in the country and should be emulated by others. *NBC Nightly News*, *ABC Nightly News* and, just recently, and one I'm very proud of as well, is *Business Week*. In an issue of about six weeks ago, its cover said, "Best U.S. Hospital System." You open to page 50, there's a six page article in there about the VA hospital system.

Harvard University more recently hosted a wonderful banquet for us at the Washington Hilton Hotel to give the VA its annual prestigious Innovations in Government Award. There were over a thousand entities contesting for that award and they gave it to the VA for our perfection of the electronic medical records system, something that is really good to be proud of but most importantly, good because of the safety, the efficiency, that it provides in our care system.

There's another thing I want to brag about, the people at the VA. That's the heroic way that many of them conducted themselves. I say many because they weren't all there, but those who were, conducted themselves during Hurricane Katrina, which was commemorated yesterday, as you know. But you may remember that Katrina hit the Gulf Coast and it blew away, literally, our hospital in Gulfport, like it was made out of toothpicks; obliterated it.

The hospital in New Orleans was not blown away. The storm turned, but when the levees breached it filled the hospital lower levels with water. We had several hundred people up above: patients and care-givers. The setting was this: the workers in the

hospital could look out and see their houses, some of them, but all they could see were the roofs and the chimneys because they were inundated with water. They had no idea of the disposition of their spouses or their children. But they stayed in that hospital which was without electricity, water, sewer. They had drinking water, not much food for five days, and I made a decision. We had to evacuate that hospital. We got people to commandeer five-ton trucks and get them down from Georgia into the hospital out to an air head where we had commandeered C-130s; we medi-vaced them out of there. Those care-givers stayed right with those patients not knowing where their own families were, and knowing the condition of their own houses. It was just an extraordinary act of heroism and commitment to mission in contemporary America today. Every chance I get, I thank them and praise them publicly because it really was extraordinary.

Another thing that's noteworthy is that while we didn't lose one patient, not one, they carried some patients, 90 of them, on ventilators downstairs. Some of them weighed over 300 pounds. We didn't lose any patients and we didn't lose any medical records. Over 40,000 veterans were involved in that operation. Contrast that with the civilian sector where over 1 million medical records were lost. Just a tremendous achievement by our people at the VA.

Let me also give you a brief report on research. As you probably know, the VA is one of the leading drivers in medical research in the United States. Our budget for research next year will be in the neighborhood of $1.7 billion. You probably know, or I hope you know, that the VA developed the pacemaker and the CAT scan. The first liver transplant was at the VA. Three VA doctors have won Noble Prizes.

Today, we have announced a research project that we have done. It looks like there is a cure, an antidote for shingles. I don't know if any of you out there have had shingles, I hope not. I had a business partner once who had it in his face and it was so painful that he used to say, "I think I'm going to die from this." And then some days he would say, "I hope I do," it was so painful. It's a virus, and through the testing of 40,000 veterans, 40,000—20,000 on the medicine, 20,000 placebos—we are now really quite confident in thinking that we have made a breakthrough in the treatment of shingles. Another contribution to veterans and to the entire society of our country by the VA.

Our professionals at the VA are really a committed group of people. I'm very proud of them. The underlying goal is to provide the very best health care achievable for our veteran patients. President Bush supports us strongly in this goal, not only by his support of our budget request, but he recently issued an Executive Order just a few days ago to promote the quality and efficiency of health care throughout the federal establishment, using us as the model, which has also made us proud.

In the arena of veterans' benefits, we continue to have waiting times for claims adjudications that do not satisfy us. We have a plan to bring those down. I will tell you that the number of claims continues to increase substantially. I was in a claims office in San Diego earlier this week and they are getting in the neighborhood of 100 more claims a day than they were getting a year ago.

Last year we paid 3.4 million of different veterans disability compensation from the VBA for a total of $32 billion. The GI Bill continues to do well. We have over half a million students getting educational benefits. Recently, in Washington, we had a ceremony where we had the eighteen millionth borrower of a loan to buy a house with no down payment, who is a young sergeant who had just returned from Iraq recently. Returned, by the way, minus an eye and the use of one of his hands. He has a lovely wife and two children and was able to buy a home there in Kyle, Texas using the VA loan benefit. It continues to be a very popular program.

And finally, the third major leg of our overall mission, that of providing a dignified shrine-like setting for those who choose to be buried in their final repose as veterans, is doing well also. Today, in America 1,800 veterans will pass away. Eighteen hundred passed away yesterday and 1,800 will tomorrow. Most of them are World War II and Korean veterans. This means that we have to be there with capacity to serve those who choose to be buried in our shrine-like settings. This year we will play taps in our

cemeteries for 107,000 veterans. We are now conducting the largest expansion of our system since the Civil War.

Another thing I want to report to you is in the arena of our priority in taking care of these combatants returning from the combatant theater. Two weeks ago I was in Iraq and met with the commanders; was briefed by Gen. Casey; hosted at lunch by President Talabani; met with a lot of doctors; met with a lot of troops; visited the hospitals in Baghdad, Kuwait City, and Balad and I learned a lot.

I came home rejuvenated, reinvigorated by the spirit and the morale of our young people serving us over there. We used to have another expression in the army, which I won't say literally, but we used to say you can't fool the troops. And you can't and you still can't. It's the troops over there as the outward expression of the policy of our government that are bringing freedom to over 50 million people and self-determination in Iraq and Afghanistan; who are out there everyday putting in new water systems and sewer systems; opening libraries and seeing the expressions on the faces of people in communities who have a new freedom and a new hope for their life. They are not fooled because they are doing it and their morale is sky-high. In fact, they were deploying back a brigade to Alaska that had about completed its year when things sort of sprang up in Baghdad and they diverted them for four months. But some of them had returned to Alaska and Gen. Casey told me that those people who had already gotten home petitioned to go back and be with their unit.

The point is, that in observing this, as I was there to do primarily the continuum of health care from the time a person is injured through the evacuation system on to Germany and back to one of our general hospitals and then to the VA, all of which can take place to Walter Reed in 36 hours, and then into one of our poly-trauma centers in a matter of weeks.

But the overriding point here, and it becomes so clear to you if you go over there, is we are a country at war. We're at war in Iraq and we're at war in Afghanistan. Those are defined borders. But we are at war throughout the world, because there is an enemy out there that goes on television regularly in that part of the world and is quoted elsewhere as saying that they are committed to bringing down our way of life, depriving us of our freedom. And they manifest that. They did on 9/11; they did with the *USS Cole*; they do it regularly, not just in Iraq, not just in Afghanistan. But by going there and not sitting back here waiting passively for these people to continue to fulfill their vow to bring us down, we're disrupting them out there where they live and organize and breed and propound this hate.

This is an extremely critical time in the history of our country and it's extremely important that the people of this country, in spite of what they see in the media, which is too often only the bad news and the unfortunate and destructive part of war, is that people keep their resolve and support our policy, which is to go at them and take it to them to protect the homeland and protect the freedom. That's exactly what our President is doing and he deserves our support. *(Applause.)*

Now, I've bragged and talked about all the great things that are going on at the VA. I want to close with candor about one of our big challenges. As you know, challenges are also opportunities. As you're well aware I'm sure, we had an employee who took a laptop and a hard drive home. It was stolen in a random burglary and the data of over 26 million veterans was on that little hard drive which is, if you can see this, [indicating] it's smaller than my wallet. In fact, on that hard drive today you could put the entire population of the United States, over 300 million people.

What's the point of that? The point is that we had a tragic happening and, through good work from law enforcement people and the prayers of a lot of people, we got it back. The FBI says that it hasn't been compromised. We've engaged a very high tech company, nevertheless, to monitor that bank of data to see if there becomes any inkling that it was, nevertheless, compromised and then we will take action.

What it really revealed is that we need to overhaul the way that we deal with data at the VA. I dare say that probably every other federal establishment and most in the

civilian sector should as well, because management has not kept up with technology. When you can put that much data into that little compressed space, you have to be careful to whom you give access for that data. You have to know something about them. *(Applause.)* The VA employee who took this stuff home meant no harm by doing it. He was working on a project that fascinated him. He really wanted to be helpful. But he was careless. But he, who had worked at the VA for 34 years, had not had a background investigation in 32 years. So, we didn't know anything about him. We don't know much about any of the people that have access to this information. Unfortunately, there is a big new burgeoning criminal element out there that wants this kind of data and will pay good money for it because they want to commit identity theft.

We're in a major overhaul at the VA on information technology and data security. It involves a lot of things more than time here provides me to tell you, but know that that is underway. We're going to know about the people to whom we give information; we're going to encrypt information that's flowing out to people who work at home as tele-commuters. This program is going to be tightly managed.

Our goal, I've stated this publicly, I feel it, I'm committed to it and it's achievable, is to turn the VA into the gold standard for information technology and data protection just as we have turned it into the gold standard for electronic medical records about which I told you earlier. We can, we will and we must do that. Our veterans deserve it.

I want to close by saying what I did when I started. Your support, your partnership, your oversight is very important to us as is your advice and counsel. We don't always agree, but that doesn't make it less important because it's always from your point of view, thought out, it's considered, it's careful, it's mature. You are extremely well-led. I've enjoyed enormously working with your team. Your VA is totally dedicated to supporting your interests, because they're totally coincident with our interest, which is taking care of those who have served and sacrificed for us for this freedom that we have, and which is under attack today.

Be assured that our partnership with The American Legion and your Auxiliary is vitally important to us. Your presence in our VA family gives us a unique perspective in the work we do. You also bring a special kind of compassion to that work which inspires all of us.

Thank you for all that you're doing. May God bless The American Legion, and may He always bless the United States of America. *(Standing applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: The Secretary is a member of The American Legion in Iowa.

Presentation: The Honorable Lane Evans
U.S. House of Representatives

Congressman Lane Evans is the ranking minority member of the House of Veterans Affairs Committee and is our comrade. He's a true friend to all veterans and their families. To show our gratitude for all that he has done for veterans over the years, we want to present him with an appreciation award. However, due to health reasons, Mr. Evans could not be here with us today. Please keep him in your hearts and your prayers. I ask the Delegation from Illinois to come and accept an award for us and deliver it to Congressman Evans.

ANNOUNCER: Congressman Lane Evans of Illinois has been a member of the U.S. House of Representatives since 1983. As the ranking Democratic member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, Congressman Evans has been a true leader and advocate for America's veterans.

He served as a Marine during the Vietnam War and has been ever faithful to the needs of his brothers and sisters in and out of uniform since then. He spent a successful effort to pass Agent Orange compensation for those veterans and the children of veterans born with spina bifida as a result of their parents' exposure. Mr. Evans has also taken the

lead in Congress to speak out about problems experienced by Persian Gulf veterans, and seeking benefits and full disclosure about exposure during their service. He has worked to expand services to women veterans, and has worked tireless to recognize the needs of America's homeless veterans. As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, Congressman Evans has worked to bring common sense priorities to defense spending and strengthen the military's conventional readiness.

Mr. Evans has been a member of The American Legion Post 46 in Moline, Illinois for 25 years. He was recently presented with a Life Membership to the Post. Congressman Evans will retire at the end of his current term for health reasons, but his legacy will be held for generations. The American Legion shall strive to remain ever faithful to his legacy.

The award reads: In special recognition of the Honorable Lane Evans, United States House of Representatives, representing Illinois 17th Congressional District, for his long and distinguished service to America, beginning with his service in the U.S. Marine Corps.

During his 24 years of distinguished service on Capitol Hill, he fought constant battles on behalf of America's veterans, this country's active duty forces, and their families. After landmark legislation he introduced to benefit veterans exposed to Agent Orange became law in 1997, he was responsible for legislation enacted six years later to benefit the children of Agent Orange exposed veterans.

The American Legion applauds and deeply appreciates his longtime commitment to the welfare of America's veterans and their families. Presented in Salt Lake City, Utah, at the 88th National Convention, August 30, 2006.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Commander Gonzalez, please take that back and present it to the congressman on behalf of The American Legion.

DEPT COMDR GONZALEZ: To be a little repetitious to what you have already heard and seen, I want to tell you Congressman Evans is a good friend. I've known him for many years. As you saw on the video, Congressman Evans in the early 1970s joined The American Legion. He joined the United States Marine Corps where he served honorably, returned home to Moline, and from there his journey took him to the United States Congress out in Washington, DC. Many of you have visited his office in Washington, DC during your conference. His door was always open.

Now Congressman Evans has moved to Moline and is no longer in Washington, DC. He continues to serve America and to serve The American Legion and all of its veterans, and he will for sometime to come. On his behalf, I thank you for this very kind award. When we return home from our convention, this will be presented to Congressman Lane Evans.

NATL COMDR BOCK: I feel like I'm a public service announcer. As you know, the President of the United States will be here tomorrow to address our Annual Convention. Security will be very tight. And as good Legionnaires we know the drill.

Tomorrow morning, beginning at 6:30 a.m., you will only be able to enter the building through the south entrance. That's where the buses left you off. Magnetometers will be set up outside Halls A and B at 7:00 a.m. You will have to pass through these to get into the convention floor. Don't bring anything with you that you don't have to. That includes bottles of water, metal items or excessive baggage, merchandise or souvenirs.

National Commander's Report to Convention
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

What an incredible year for The American Legion. We have done it all!

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you as your National Commander. I thank you especially for this terrific team of National Vice Commanders you gave us, and the entire slate of officers: Jim Hall from New Jersey; Bill Coffey from Michigan; Sebastian

Roll from North Dakota; Mike Harris from Virginia; and T.J. [Trevino] from New Mexico.

Chaplain Steve Wright has done a terrific job for us. Johnny Keel, you're incredible as a historian. You've got a whole stack of pictures. And Jim Parker, [Sgt-At-Arms], my good friend from Colorado, long time Teddy bear. They have done some great leadership for us. *(Applause.)*

Off course, behind every great slate of officers is an incredible professional staff that we have working for The American Legion, led by our National Adjutant, Robert Spanogle. Twenty-five years, the longest serving National Adjutant in the history of The American Legion. *(Applause.)* He's got a great team: Dan Wheeler; John Sommer; Steve Robertson; Joe March; Wade Habshey; Ramona Joyce; John Raughter; Steve Brooks; Ron Brooks; Phil Onderdonk; just to name a few. Then there is the secretarial staff with Nancy [Vaughn], Linda [Demaree] and Jennifer [Norton]. Peggy Judd has retired and replaced by Jennifer. We've got Mary [Rooney] and Wanda [Tallakson]. And, of, course Marti Wooden kept me on the road all the time; changing our travel arrangements.

I don't want to forget the guy who kept pulling my rope all year. You saw him all over the place. The guy that would just walk up to me and stand beside me, and I knew exactly it was time to go somewhere else, Doug Wooddell, probably the National Commander's Aide of all time. Thank you.

I wrote down here the Blackberry. I'm going to have to give that up. The chain on your hip that keeps buzzing every time you're trying to talk to somebody, or it's 4:00 a.m. that says it's time to be somewhere. Those 6:00 flights. You have to be at the airport at 4:00 to catch a 6:00 flight, if you ask imagine that.

My family. What an incredible support system. We have Christy, Steve and my granddaughter Dominique, my son, Adam, Captain Bock, and Kendra, Elaine's brother, Ken Marshall. He actually lives in Tennessee even though he has a Colorado hat. Thank you for being there. And the lady who was married to the guy that got me in this outfit, the guy who drafted me in The American Legion, John Marshall, and my mother-in-law.

There's so many people who have sacrificed for this year. But there is one lady who has paid the real price. She's had to be home as I've traveled. The longest trip we had on the road was 93 days straight from January through the middle of April. And you know what? The bills kept coming in. Someone had to keep paying them; someone had to make sure everything was taken care of on the home front. Then, of course, when I stopped by …, no, she didn't do my laundry! I had to do that myself. *(Laughter.)* Although she did accuse me of using several laundry drops.

This month in August, I actually had two days at home in a row. Elaine rolled over the second morning, looked at me and says, "You know, it takes more than two nights in this bed to become a resident." *(Laughter.)* To the First Lady of The American Legion, my wife, Elaine, thank you. (*Standing applause.*)

We traveled 50 states, some of them we saw more than once. Nebraska! For crying out loud, we were sitting in the van, and they got me to travel 1,550 miles and we didn't even cross the state line. Holy cow! We went up to Minnesota. We hit 1,100 miles and made a wrong turn, crossed the bridge, ended up in North Dakota. They got disqualified. *(Laughter.)*

Up in Delaware, went to Dover Downs to see the initial race of the car. Of course, it hit the wall before we got there, and the backup car didn't quite make it. But I tell you what, we had a great time. They put me right on the starting line down there where they make all that racket. I could get excited about NASCAR. I tell you, they were gracious hosts up there.

We saw many VA hospitals, talking to the people who take care of our heroes in the poly-trauma centers and VA hospitals across this country.

Visited Kansas, and recognized the Patriot Guard. The American Legion Riders formed that group to protect the families of our heroes from the invasion of this phoney church group out there that seems to want to demonstrate and use our heroes' funerals to do that. The Patriot Guard, we're so proud of them. *(Applause.)* Those riders are

incredible.

Once every 20 years The American Legion has the opportunity to host Veterans Day ceremonies in Washington, DC. And being at Arlington National Cemetery with the Vice President of the United States of America was a real thrill. As a matter of fact, we were there up on stage. I was host so I got to deliver my speech first. I got three applause interruptions. Not bad. The Vice President got two. *(Laughter.)* But for one of those, he was talking about a World War I veteran that was 106-years old, so, I kind of figured that really wasn't his. *(Laughter.)*

But when we closed that special ceremony standing up there on stage, I was with Secretary Nicholson, and next to me was the Vice President of the United States. I was standing on his right. We closed the ceremony by singing God Bless America. The entire audience stood up. I leaned over to the Vice President and I said, "Mr. Vice President, we hold hands when we sing this song." He looked at me and he looked down at my hand, and then he took it. Then he reached over to Secretary Nicholson, and we stood on that stage standing proudly singing God Bless America. *(Applause.)*

That's what you do. And when it was over, he leaned over and looked at me and said, "Thank you for doing that." I said, "No problem, sir. That's what we believe in. We love our country."

Pearl Harbor Day. After our trip to the Far East, visiting Korea, Taiwan, Okinawa, and the Philippines, we stopped by Pearl Harbor and visited the Punch Bowl and had a special day there. Actually at the Pearl Harbor Celebration, I met a World War II Japanese Zero pilot who actually attacked Pearl Harbor. I had a photo op with him. He was a rather small guy. He didn't speak English, I didn't speak Japanese. So, we don't know what we said. *(Laughter.)*

We visited our heroes at Bethesda Naval Hospital and Walter Reed, being able to see firsthand the treatment that they're getting coming back to America. They have an incredible success rate in this global war on terrorism. In Iraq, if we get a soldier that's injured, 96 percent of the time they survive. And within 24 hours they are out of the country, and within 48 hours they're back in America.

It happened when I was visiting in Iraq on that Monday morning, there was an IED event. We had a sergeant that got a head injury; was shipped out; sent home. That was on Monday. The following Thursday I was in Bethesda Naval Hospital. I got to meet that sergeant. After his surgery, we were sitting there talking; doing great. We were waiting for his wife to arrive. They're doing a great job. The care givers over there are really taking care of our heroes.

Went to San Diego Naval Hospital. We just traveled to reach out to The American Legion Family, to reach our to our troops, to make sure that America is standing together.

Thirteen foreign countries. I told you Korea, the Philippines, Okinawa. We spent Thanksgiving Day at Kadena Air Force Base [Japan]. What an experience that was. We got to serve Thanksgiving dinner to the troops. I showed up out there and said to the general, "General, where's your mess hall?" He says, "We don't have a mess all. This is an Air Force base. We have a dining facility." *(Laughter.)* That's pretty nice. Big screen TV, table cloths and the Internet Cafe, and ice sculptures. Oh, yeah. Join the Air Force.

We were serving the meal to the troops as they were coming through line, and the airmen, of course, had their trays and took a little bit of this and a little bit of that, you know, whatever. They knew they could come back for seconds.

They brought in a bus load of Marines. They walked in there, their eyes got this big. Holy cow. They said, "We ain't got nothing like this. If they ain't going through that line, just give me all of it. Pile it on, man." They thought it was their last meal or something. *(Laughter.)* They're doing great. We're so proud.

Over in Europe we went to Ramstein Air Force Base [Germany] and had a fun time trying to get down to Bosnia. It seems there's an Air Force Base and it was an Army plane that was going to take us down there. We showed up, and Bill Marshall was there, the NEC from the Department of France. He walked up to the counter and said, "The

Commander is going to go to Bosnia today." They said, "No, he's not. There is no flights to Bosnia today." He said, "Commander, go sit down." He took me to this little room and had a cup of coffee and was messing around, and Bill was going to talk to them.

A little bit later somebody walks into this room and says, "Is there some retired two star general in this room or something?" He says, "We need to help him out. He doesn't want to miss his plane to Bosnia." *(Laughter.)* Thanks, Bill. We got on that plane all right. This is kind of interesting. While we were gone, the ladies were going to go to Munich from Ramstein. The best way to travel in Europe is by train. You get into a train and it's marvelous because they run on time. Yeah.

A little Air Force Lieutenant took my wife and Doug's wife, Julie, over to the train station to make sure they would get on the train to go to Munich that day. So, the Lieutenant jumps on the train just to make sure it's the right train, and about that time the doors close and it started pulling out. Elaine and Julie standing on the side of the tracks watching this train go away. They could see the Lieutenant running through the train waving his hands and everything. He had their tickets on the train. Of course, the Lieutenant wasn't supposed to be on it. *(Laughter.)* It took about an hour to get back. They were so nervous about that. But Elaine said. "Just forget it. We're not going anywhere. We're going to wait until Tom and Doug get back." We got back the next day. The plane landed at Ramstein Air Force Base. All of a sudden there's officers lining up out there to greet this airplane. I said, "Huh, must be a general in town." *(Laughter.)*

We went to the hospital in Landstuhl to see the troops. That was incredible. It's every injured soldier, sailor, airman, and Marine that you talk to. They said the same thing, "We got to get back to our unit." I talked to them. Only 30 percent of the patients up in Landstuhl are actually war injuries from combat. The other 70 percent are other things. I was talking to one guy that had his foot in a cast. I said, "Oh, man, what was that? A land mine?" He said, "No, I stepped into a hole playing football." *(Laughter.)*

Then he said, "I've got to get back to my troops." They all said the same thing, "I've got to get back to my unit." I said, "Why? You're injured. You've been shot. You need to go home." He said, "No, you don't understand. We train as a unit; we deploy as a unit; we fight as a unit; we come home as a unit." That's the pride of the soldiers who we've got out there. *(Applause.)* They're doing one heck of a job.

I got to go to Iraq in February. We were planning a visit to get The American Legion over there into the country. That was still in the process and when DoD for some reason said, "Hey, I think we want the principals of The American Legion, VFW, DAV, AMVETS and American GI Forum who would be the Commanders to go over.

So, never turn down an opportunity. We adjusted our schedules, jumped on the plane and flew direct from New York JFK all the way into Kuwait City on Kuwait Air Lines. And you need to know both Kuwait and Iraq are dry countries *(Laughter.)* I'm not talking about the sand. After a twelve and a half hour flight, they serve coffee, tea, juice, water, soda—it's a dry country. *(Laughter.)* Landed in Kuwait City and the next day we go out to the flight line to get on a C-130 to travel fly into Baghdad. We walk out to the plane and they hand me this stuff to put on. I was in the Air Force; a helmet, body armor weighed about 4,000 pounds. I put in on. It had velcro. I had extra large. It was tight. Check the pictures. Got on the plane because you've got to wear this stuff as you're flying over Iraq. We landed in Baghdad in the green zone. We climb off the C-130. As we're getting off, there's the flight crew. Good looking airmen who were flying the plane standing there. I looked at them and said, "Hey, wait a minute, my body armor weighs 4,000 pounds and is thick. Yours is only that thick [indicating]." He says, "Sorry, sir, we've got the good stuff." *(Laughter.)*

But that's all right. We got to travel inside the green zone and got to go the hospitals. We got up to Kirkuk and Taji; we got to go to Balad, an interesting place. It's a really big base. That's where Adam [Bock] was stationed. Of course, he was on the Army side. I visited the Air Force side.

That's where they fly those Predators, those unmanned flying vehicles that carry 500 pound bombs, missiles and also surveillance equipment. They take off from Balad,

get them up in the air and they fly them. Once they get up in the air, they fly 12-14 hour missions. Once they are in the air, they transfer control back to Texas and actually fly missions out of Texas. I understand they want flight pay for doing that. *(Laughter.)* And probably will get it! After they fly the missions they come back and land them back in Balad.

We were ready to leave. We got in our C-130. No, actually, we were leaving there to fly up to Kirkuk. We had to wait because this plane with no pilot had the runway so we let them go. We then flew up into Kirkuk. I had a message. We met with the city council members of the Kirkuk, Iraq, sat around the table. There was three members of the city council. One spoke perfect English, a young lady. There was a man who spoke broken English, and one that needed an interpreter. We sat there for a good half hour, talking back and forth to find out what was happening with the citizens of Iraq.

They told us that their number one concern was developing their police force, then, fixing their infrastructure and getting their schools working again as their priorities. When we got done, the young lady came over to me and asked to please take a message back to America. Now when I speak to an audience, including Legion family members or public, whenever I have the opportunity, I always share this message. I want to share it with you direct from the city council of Kirkuk. It's a three part message.

Part number one: thank you, America and the coalition forces for securing our freedom. We're very happy that you have done that. Number two: please don't leave too soon. It's a big job and it's not over yet. But most importantly, number three: please be patient with us. We've never had a democracy. We've never been able to create our own government and rule ourselves. We're going to make some mistakes. We're doing our best. Be patient with us. That's direct from the citizens of Kirkuk. *(Applause.)*

I've met a lot of people, the President of the United States three times, the Vice President twice, and nearly every member of the President's cabinet at least once, discussing critical American veteran issues. Met members of Congress. When we testified in September before the Joint House Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, it was a great event. We had a written testimony, 30 minute oration and an hour of give-and-take, talking about budget issues and critical veterans' issues affecting America. The American Legion was there in force, a couple hundred of us there. And afterwards, we started visiting our congressmen and senators. Actually, in two and a half days, Steve Robertson took Doug and I and we visited 38 congressional offices in two and a half days. That's a lot of traveling. Yeah, Doug wore out a pair of shoes. Did you get those replaced yet Doug?

Now, we have the Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee who says he doesn't want to hear from us. They don't want a joint testimony with the House Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. The next Commander will have the opportunity to testify before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, but the House Committee wants to do something different. They think they need to make the veterans' organization more proactive earlier on in the process of affecting the budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On September 20, he's going to parade 16 veterans' organizations in front of his committee. The American Legion will participate in a panel of four and be given five to ten minutes to deliver our testimony. He says, "I'm going to double your opportunities to present before my committee because you can testify five to ten minutes in the Fall and five to ten minutes in February." I said, "That's not right."

I told you we testified for an hour and a half before the Joint House Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. We made a difference. We testified in September for the 2007 budget *way* ahead of the President; *way* ahead of the Congress before any deals were cut; before any bargains were made; before even the President made his proposed budget; so we could impact the budget before it happened. And now, he wants to shove us to five to ten minutes in September, five to ten minutes in February, and tells us we're doubling our opportunities. Veterans are being shut out of Congress. That's wrong and The American Legion is not going to stand for it. *(Applause.)*

On May 1, I called together the leaders: the Commander in Chief of the VFW, the National Commander of the AMVETS and the National Commander of the DAV, and we sat together in our Washington office. The four largest veterans organizations sat together to talk about this issue. We wrote a joint letter and hand-delivered it to the Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee and also faxed it into his office that day. Then we proceeded to deliver it to every member of congress so they knew our position.

He accused us of going around him, that he never got the letter the following Friday. We hand delivered it to his office on Monday. I thought maybe he ought to show up at his office once in awhile and check his mail. *(Laughter.)* We were there and he come back at us. *(Applause.)* He come back at us and called it some political trick. No, it's not a political trick. It's veterans addressing their government.

We met face-to-face with him in his office, the four Commanders sitting across the table talking with the Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. We met with him for an hour to talk about the testimony. All four organizations have been shut out. We said, "Sir, please reconsider this." He says, "Why should I?" I said, "First of all, we provide you tons of information. We've got the System Worth Saving study. That's an ongoing study we've been doing for four years. We've been to every VA facility in America including Alaska and Hawaii. We know what's going on. We know what it takes to run the VA, what it costs to take care of that. We've got boots on the ground." He says, "You know, you're right." He wheeled around in his chair and picked up a book good six, seven inches thick and he sat that on the table. He said, "Yes, that's the valuable information that you veterans' organizations bring to my committee." I said, "Great, then let's reinstate the testimony." He says, "I've considered your input, I've weighed your options and made my decision." He's changing the testimony. We asked him four times to please reconsider our testimonies. It's critical that the veterans be heard in Congress.

I apologize to you because I did not get up and leave at that very particular time. The last time he was asked it was by Jim Mueller, Commander in Chief of the VFW, when he says "Congressman, will you reconsider our request for the testimony?" His response was, "Shh, let's talk about something else." I apologize because at that moment I didn't stand up and walk out. I should have. *(Applause.)* I should have. I waited 10 minutes for the end of the meeting, then we all walked out. I tell you, we're not going to give up. It's critical that the veterans of this country be heard before Congress and The American Legion will be their voice. We'll find a way. *(Applause.)*

The National Emergency Fund got a shot last August right after convention when Katrina and Rita devastated the Gulf Coast. What devastation! I was down there. I saw the tragedy. I saw the missing buildings. I was standing on a cement floor that used to be an American Legion home. It was a pile of rubble; there was nothing there. They told me they had a 600-pound safe in that building. They found it five miles down the coast. Those safes don't float. Incredible force! A lot of destruction! We saw that. We knew that we needed to help our membership. So, the National Emergency Fund was prepared. The normal process, of course, is to fill out the form, take it to your Post, send it to your Department. They will send it up to National who will mail you a check. Great procedure and it works well over the years, but we had some flaws. We had some Legion Posts that were missing. The Department of Mississippi was closed. We didn't have mailing addresses to send checks because houses were gone.

We got together and asked, "What can we do?" We set up a system of electronic transfers. We allowed members to call in on a toll free 800 number or use the internet to register for their grants. Once they were approved, we electronically sent them right into their credit card accounts or the hotels they happen to be staying in to survive. We had money going to our members before FEMA knew the wind quit blowing. *(Laughter and applause.)*

We had about $2.2 million of grants going to Legion family members and American Legion Posts. But we only started the fund with $1.6 million in the fund. If you do the

math, it looks pretty tight. But I made an appeal to Legionnaires across this great land. I said let's raise a buck a head, a dollar a member, to see if we can't raise some money to keep that fund going. What gorgeous lovely Legion family members we have with big hearts. We raised over $2.3 million for the National Emergency Fund. I'm proud to say we have more money in the fund now than we did a year ago. That's because of the great hearts and the care of veterans helping veterans. That's what The American Legion is all about.

I had the opportunity to go into the Pentagon and sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Defense to create a new program called Heroes To Hometowns. It's a stride to helping our heroes who are severely injured from this global war on terrorism as they come home. They're treated at Walter Reed and Bethesda and DoD hospitals, transferred into the VA to get that care and then for them to come home. There's that missing link to make sure that they're assimilated back into our communities.

The American Legion has an office in the Pentagon. It's called the Heroes To Hometowns. We're there to identify these severely injured so we can get it out to our local American Legion Posts so they can be there to help them provide the modifications for the vehicles, the ramp for their houses, the babysitting services or anything else they need to help them come home. Veterans helping veterans, that's what The American Legion family does and that's going to be a wonderful program going forward, Heroes To Hometowns. We're the only veterans' organization, I might add, that has a desk in the Pentagon right in the severely injured unit. It's fully staffed everyday by a Legion staff member. We're the only veterans' organization that has ever been able to do that.

Well, let's not wrap the year up yet. This morning there were 54,000 seconds and counting. And we're going to use every one of them. I'm proud to say I attended each and every Americanism program this year. I was at the National High School Oratorical Contest. For baseball, I attended a state tournament, a regional tournament and actually went to the World Series, with the intent of throwing out the first ball at the World Series. Had a rain delay, so I didn't get to do that. But that's all right. When I did it at the state and the regional tournaments, it didn't make the plate. I was standing on the grass, fortunately, the other night and was able to get one across the plate from the pitcher's mound. I felt real good about that, threw that one out.

But we were there for Boys Nation to meet our young men in Washington, DC. Aren't they wonderful? You heard one of them in the opening session. They're sharp. I tell you, I was proud to be there for that program. I was there in Colorado Springs as they had the National Finals of The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Competition. We were there for our young people.

We supported the CFA efforts. We were on Capitol Hill for the final march to try and get that passed. And I'm telling you, that's a victory, not a defeat. We are that close [indicating]; we're making progress. If you're going to change the Constitution of the United States of America, you better be prepared for a long fight. It should not be easy to amend the Constitution. But we're close. Only 17 years into the process and we're only one vote away of passing that amendment back to the states so we, the people, can decide if we want to defend our flag. We're going to win that victory. *(Applause.)*

We stood strong against organizations like the ACLU. We stand with our Boy Scouts of America; stand up to protect our veterans' memorials; stand up to protect our pledge, our flag; our religious symbols and America's traditional values. The American Legion will be there leading the fight to pass the Public Expression of Religion Act. It will pass and we're going to win it. *(Applause.)*

When we do, when the money suddenly goes away from all the taxpayers' dollars going in to fund organizations like the ACLU to attack American values, you'll see the significant of the cause will decrease. It's a tough battle, someone's got to do it. Someone's got to standup against people who want to destroy World War I memorials in the middle of the Mojave Desert; who believe that children reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in an elementary school are violating the Constitution of the United States;

who think that the Korean War memorial in San Diego with a 29-foot tall cross needs to be torn down because it's on public land, a tribute to our heroes protecting our freedoms. Yet one man or one person goes by and is offended by that religious symbol, that cross, and takes it to court to destroy that.

I wrote a letter to the President of the United States. I said we must convert that to federal land so we can protect that war memorial. Guess what, they did it? The House and the Senate both passed legislation and the President signed it. We won that battle. *(Applause.)* It's going to be there and we will continue to standup for American values day after day because The American Legion stands for God and country, and we know what we stand for and we're going to make it work. *(Applause.)*

I've got so much I can talk about. Goodness, this is incredible. Who wrote this? [indicating to his speech]. Oh, I did. *(Laughter.)*

We ended the travels this year with the motorcycle ride. It was a tough ride as I told you yesterday. Nineteen hundred miles from Indianapolis, all the way to Salt Lake City, a hundred motorcycle riders heading down the highway looking proud, flags waving, grimacing against the wind, the rain, the sleet, the hail, snow, the tornados and all the stuff that they could have experienced but they didn't. *(Laughter.)*

I saw our Executive Director John Sommer on a motorcycle. His motorcycle has no windshield. He has no face shield. He wears glasses. He looked beat up. We passed him one time and there's John, I could just see him grimacing. I knew he couldn't see the road; he was just following the sound of those motorcycles ahead of him. Our National Adjutant even rode a motorcycle. Did they have fun?! I got to stand next to one for a photo opt. They allowed me to stand next to a Harley Davidson. They did make me keep my hands in my pocket.

The motor-home worked fine. We were able to overcome the air-conditioning issues, able to overcome the microwave and the satellite. Wow, we have $171,000 already for the Legacy Scholarship Fund, and it still growing. Yes, we can be proud. We brought national acclaim to The American Legion Riders. They have done great things, but now they have a home, they have a cause, to take care of the children of our soldiers killed in this global war on terrorism.

We stopped in Craig, Colorado and dedicated an American Legion Post. They named it after one of our heroes who was killed in Iraq. His family was there and it was touching. I talked to his wife. She had her two young boys there, about 3 to 4 years old, cute. She said her biggest concern she had was for the education of her two boys to make sure that she could afford to get them to go to college. I put my arm around her and said, "Sherry, don't worry The American Legion Riders have just paid their full ride tuition. *It's done."*

I can't tell you all this. You're going to have to set me down sometime and we'll go through some of the pictures and experiences we've had. What a wonderful time we've had this year.

We started off this year struggling with our membership. Our membership program was dramatically behind. We did not understand why. We did a study to find out. It didn't tell us a whole lot we didn't know, but it did tell us that national defense is really important to our members. So, we're keeping that on the front burner. Taking care of our veterans is critical, as well as our children and our Americanism programs.

But we will have more members in 2006 than we had in 2005 because of the DMS Plus Program. More than 196,000 brand new members joined The American Legion because they received a letter in the mail and they read what we're doing standing up for America. One hundred ninety-six thousand brand new members and 48 percent were Vietnam era veterans joining our ranks for the very first time because they saw us standing up for our troops.

We have 26 departments with DMS Plus and ended up with more members in 2006 than they had in 2005. We've stopped the slide. Past National Commander Ray Smith attempted in it in his year and he was successful. We are too, we did it. We've got the excitement. We've got the momentum. We're starting to move forward. This is exciting,

isn't it? The world's largest veterans' organization is growing and growing and we're going to keep it up in 2007.

You always know when it's time to start moving. [shuffling papers]. What could this be? August 30, 2006, Douglas W. Wooddell, Aide to the National Commander.

> Dear Commander Thomas L. Bock: It is with deep regret that I must inform you that my final day of service to you and this great organization will be at 12:00 noon, 31 August 2006. Or at such time as the new Commander is elected and his new aide appointed. It has been a great honor to serve this last year, but as I have never been fired from a job before, I must resign. *(Laughter and applause.)*

I'll keep it. I get the hint. You know, that's what we were doing on the campaign trail wasn't it? I got to take my own photographs. I was fortunate to have the world's greatest National Commander's Aide this year and he was able to take the pictures. Now, I guess I'm back in the saddle.

We started this year as a Rounder. Remember Honolulu, Hawaii? We did it and were Rounders this year. We took care of our veterans. We took care of our children under our great Americanism programs, and we stood for a strong national defense. But I promise you, I will never look like that Rounder again. However, The American Legion has a new icon that we need to be looking at, no longer a cowboy. The Rounder was a heck of an idea because we've rounded out and we did everything. Looks like I'm going to be a bum or something. *(Laughter.)* We have a new icon in this organization and need to make sure that we fully support that and enjoin with them because it's The American Legion, Sons of the American Legion, and American Legion Auxiliary that are coming together to take care of our children. I need to let you know that I don't have a motorcycle so I could never be one of them. But they look something like this, they wear these wonderful—*(Applause)* Oh, yeah, we're getting there. Wait until you see this great patch—[indicating to patch] *(Applause.)* I guess maybe I could qualify as a Rider, huh? *(Laughter.)* But they don't always look this sharp!

But sometimes after a long day's ride you have to be a rider or be along on a ride to really appreciate this right? Right, John [Sommer]? If I ever get a motorcycle, this is what I want to look like. *(Laughter and applause.)* Who the heck's idea was this?

But if we will get our focus the way the Legion Riders have, and we focus on the great American Legion programs, and we standup for our veterans, we take care of our children, we keep our Americanism programs growing and we stand for a strong national defense, even these guys will hang around.

Thank you for the incredible opportunity to serve you as your National Commander. God bless you. *(Standing applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: Now, while I go get cleaned up, I'd like to call on Past National Commander Tom Cadmus of Michigan to present the Plaque of Appreciation to the city of Honolulu, Hawaii for hosting my favorite convention, the 2005 National Convention in Honolulu. Commander Cadmus, come on down!

Presentation: Plaque to the City of Honolulu, Hawaii
for the 2005 National Convention
Thomas P. Cadmus, Michigan, Past National Commander

That's a tough act to follow. I, too, congratulate you on a successful year.

But my purpose here today is to reminisce just a little bit. You were counting the seconds all year long and I can't believe a year has past since I had my convention in Honolulu, Hawaii.

There's a lot of things as you become National Commander and a lot of things you do in your year, but you reminisce over your convention. There were some great things there but two things stick out in my mind. One was the participation of the parade by the residents and the people of that parade and two, the adoption of Resolution 169, when I

got a phone call from Air Force One. These were two highlights I'll never forget and can only thank the city of Honolulu for hosting this.

I'd like to make this presentation of the plaque to the city of Honolulu for hosting the 2005 National Convention and accepting this plaque is Andrew W. Johnson, National Executive Committeeman from Honolulu.

NEC JOHNSON: Aloha! It is with great pleasure to accept this plaque on the behalf of the city county of Honolulu and the Department of Hawaii.

I take this opportunity to recognize those who made this possible. First are the people of Honolulu and the State of Hawaii with their hospitality and Aloha; the members of the Department of Hawaii and Auxiliary, which put in the hard work and time to make the event successful; Dick Holmes, Jennifer Zellers, and the national staff, who without their expertise and guidance we would have been dead in the water.

Orlan T. Taylor, former Department Commander, Hawaii NECman and Western Region Vice Commander was instrumental in getting the bid to this convention. Unfortunately, because of bad health, Orlan cannot be with us today.

But really, we want to thank you, the Legionnaires, your family and friends who spent your hard earned money to join us. Your participation made the convention the success that it was. We hope that you come again to enjoy our hospitality. For those who were not satisfied, please come again and we will try to make it better the second time around.

NATL COMDR BOCK: First of all, I'd like to thank *Fox News* for covering our convention.

The Chair recognizes Randall Mitchell, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Membership and Post Activities for the purposes of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters
(Section III of Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters)
Randall Mitchell, Tennessee, Chairman

Forty-one members of the Credentials and Internal Affairs Committee Section III (Membership), considered six resolutions, all of which originated with Departments of The American Legion. Three were rejected and three were referred to the standing committee.

Hank Robards (IL) nominated Randall Mitchell (TN), seconded by Don Schulenberg (OK) as Chairman. Motion carried. John Pellegrini (MT) nominated Norma Walker (SC), seconded by Al Ford (MI) as Secretary. Motion carried.

Al Ford (MI) made a motion that the Chairman and Secretary be authorized to sign the Committee report of the Committee and that the Chairman and Secretary be authorized to make technical corrections to the report reported out of the Committee to insure proper wording and form without changing the substance of meaning. The motion was seconded by Ken Mueller (TX). Motion carried.

Rejected

Resolution No. 59 (CO): Membership Recruiting Year Calendar
Resolution No. 195 (SC): DMS Plus Membership Program Changes
Resolution No. 197 (TX): Seating at National Convention Based on Membership and DMS

Referred to the Standing Commission on Internal Affairs

Resolution No. 58 (CO): E-mail Address Field On Membership Data Form
Resolution No. 284 (FR): Cancellation of Post Charter for Eifel Post GR 20
Resolution No. 285 (FR): Cancellation of Post Charter for Eifel Post GR 165

As a Delegate to this convention, I move for the adoption of this report.

...Second from the floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: You've heard the motion, I heard a second. Is there any discussion? Hearing none all those in favor give their sign by saying 'aye.' Opposed 'no.' Motion carried. The report of the Credentials and Internal Affairs Membership is adopted.

Presentation: Department Membership Awards
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander
Willard F. Coffey, Michigan, National Vice Commander

The Departments and individuals who will be joining me on the stage took membership to another level in 2006. Their hard work paid off. They have shown that during the year, without active growing American Legion programs, membership will lose strength and our voice will be weakened.

Membership is our strength and that strength has been made even stronger by their efforts. Partnerships with the United States Recruiting Command, <military.com>, The American Legion Riders, Team Johnson Racing, and active and reserved military components through the "Reconnect" program has expanded the opportunity for The American Legion to reach out to younger veterans and their families.

Couple that with our continued commitment of service to veterans, their families and our communities, and we can clearly see why The American Legion growth potential is truly unlimited. I know all of you and the 2.7 million American Legion members you represent feel as I do. America needs its values represented by The American Legion. We must be willing to get involved in local activities and be willing to ask eligible veterans to join. And we are doing just that.

This was a successful membership year for us. Twenty-six Departments had more members in 2006 than they had in the 2005 year by the end of July. It's an exciting time for us in membership. Our DMS Plus program is a tremendous success with over 196,000 new members this year. We are already almost 67,000 members ahead of where we were last year at that time, *and that's without DMS*.

This was a landmark year for us in membership and certain individuals played an important part in this year's membership success. They surpassed all expectations, upheld the standards of excellence and proved that raising the level of membership is possible.

It is my pleasure to make membership award presentations. Now, I will ask National Vice Commander Bill Coffey to assume the duties at the microphone.

...At this time National Vice Commander Bill Coffey assumed the duties at the microphone.

NATL VICE COMDR COFFEY: It is a pleasure, my fellow Legionnaires. During the past year, five Departments took their membership effort to an All-Time High. For each of those Commanders, their Membership Chairmen and their Adjutants, we have a ring or gift to recognize their accomplishments. In addition, a plaque is presented to the Department Commander for their Department efforts. I congratulate each of these Departments.

The First Department is Nevada. The presentation is to Commander Jack Ford, Membership Chairman Tony Vaughn, and Department Adjutant Lionel Motta. This is the Department's 8th, and I repeat, 8th consecutive All-Time High.

From the Department of Delaware, Commander Leonard Bunch, Membership Chairman Donald White, Jr., and Department Adjutant Ed Phillips. This is the Department's 7th again 7th consecutive All-Time High.

From the Department of Virginia, Commander Brett Reistad, Membership Chairman Ronald Miluszewski, now that's a good UPI Irishman right there, and Department Adjutant Dale Chapman.

From the Department of Arizona, Commander Larry Cox, Membership Chairman

Carol Hamburger and Department Adjutant John Aldecoa.

From the Department of Florida, Commander Lawrence White, Membership Chairman Arthur Makovsky and Department Adjutant John Newstreet.

To these Departments, please accept these awards as a token of our personal appreciation for your Department's membership efforts. My fellow Legionnaires, let's give each of these Departments a warm round of applause.

Before we proceed, I'd like to point out that Commander Bock hosted a reception on Monday for Departments who obtained 96 percent or better of their membership, through traditional efforts. They were given a shirt and watch recognizing their great membership year.

National Commander Bock introduced a program known as the "Bock Rounders" at the beginning of this year. The intent of the program was to encourage Departments to focus on renewals and new starts as a means to grow and maintain their membership. Since National Commander Bock being a "Rounder" of sort himself—now, this has no relationship or correlation to his belt— he issued a challenge to all Departments to be the top "Rounder" in their Regions at the beginning of the year. There was one winner from each Region, total of five, who had the highest traditional membership percentage as of the Delegate Strength Target Date. The 2006 recipients of the "Bock Rounders" are: For the Central Region Department of Wisconsin (94.409 %); the Midwest Region the Department of North Dakota (97.354%); the Western Region Department of Mexico (91.892%); the Southeast Region the Department of France (148.984%); the Northeast Region the Department of Maine (95.575%).

The percentages you heard are all traditional totals. I thank each of them for a job well done. Let's give them one more round of applause for their work and their efforts.

...At this time National Commander Bock resumed the Chair.

Presentation: National Emergency Fund Awards
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander
Sebastian T. Roll, North Dakota, National Vice Commander

The National Emergency Fund is perhaps one of the most visible ways we demonstrate our commitment of "Veterans Serving Veterans." At the start of my year as your National Commander, I issued a challenge. I asked every Department Commander to raise funds based on their 2005 delegate strength membership totals with the idea of raising $2.6 million for the NEF.

During the challenge year, The American Legion gave out just over $2.2 million in grant monies to Legion family members for the numerous disasters we experienced in 2005-2006, our largest year on record. We raised over $2.3 million, almost reaching the goal. But more importantly, we effectively covered all the monies given out. The generosity of my fellow Legionnaires never ceases to amaze me. It's great to know that when a Legion member needs help, the Legion family will step up and give without reservation. I think we all deserve a round of applause for that.

Those Department Commanders who met and exceeded the challenge received a great dinner here in Salt Lake City with me last Friday evening. [indicating to his stomach] I haven't been hungry since last August but we ate anyway. To enjoy such a treat, they had to be the top Department in their category determined by size. We had six Department Commanders who met the challenge and exceeded their goal to rise to the top.

Now I will present their plaques for being the highest per capita Department in their respective categories. Will National Vice Commander Seb Roll assume the duties of the podium for reading of the winners?

NATL VICE COMDR ROLL: Those Department Commanders who met and exceeded National Commander Bock's challenge are: Stanley Clark, Dept. of New York; Joseph M. Gugliuzza, Dept. of New Jersey; Robert A. Pollard, Dept. of Georgia; Lloyd H. Woods, Dept. of Maine; Jack L. Ford, Dept. of Nevada; Andrew W. Johnson, Dept. of

Hawaii.

Once again, congratulations to these six commanders who took on the National Emergency Fund as a special interest and ended up on top in their category.

There are a total of 17 other Departments who exceeded their challenge goal and it is our pleasure to make awards to these Departments. Each of the Departments achieving the goal are receiving certificates from the National Commander showing his appreciation in their fundraising efforts this past year. These Departments have met the challenge issued by National Commander Bock. It is with heartfelt gratitude that we present these certificates for the hard work and diligence of your members in raising money for the National Emergency Fund. We begin with the award to: Peggy Dettori, Alaska; Bucky Crouch, Arkansas; Leonard E. Bunch, Jr., Delaware; Paul H. Hasz, District of Columbia; David E. Sheridan, Idaho; Larry Swann, Iowa; Philip J. Surprenant, Maryland; James E. Brehio, Massachusetts; Charles Scott, Sr., Mississippi; Neil J. Neary, Montana. Next one is New Mexico and accepting is the Adjutant Tony Navarrete; Cary Allen McMasters, North Carolina. This one I know is right Wayne D. Satrom, North Dakota; William K. Balser, Ohio; Richard E. Walsh, Sr., South Carolina; Brett P. Reistad, Virginia; Terry E. Miller, Wyoming.

Congratulations! Thank you for your hard work. Please don't stop the fundraising efforts because we never know where "Mother Nature" will strike next. Fundraising for this program must be a continuous effort if we are to help our Legion family members in need.

Remember that each and every dollar donated to the National Emergency Fund stays in the National Emergency Fund.

...At this time National Commander Bock resumed the Chair.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Before we move forward this moming, I want to see if any of you have additional funds you want to present to the convention floor for the National Emergency Fund. Are there any other funds to be donated to the NEF, if so, please bring them forward now? I've still got a few hours left in office.

DEPT COMDR SMITH (NH): I have a check here in addition to what we've already given from the state of New Hampshire for $5,730.

PAST NATL VICE COMDR ROGER L. WILD (NE): On behalf of the 3,604 members of American Legion Post 3 in Lincoln, Nebraska, I present a check for $3,000.

IPDC PHIL ANDERSON (SD): On behalf of the Mount Rushmore state of South Dakota, it gives me extreme pleasure to present to you this check for $7,740, which puts South Dakota to 100 percent.

NEC SWISHER (OH): It's indeed a pleasure again for me to come up here and to represent the Department of Ohio, along with me my Past Commander, Bill Balser. We want to present to you another check today because we believe in The American Legion programs. We have a check for you in the amount of $60,000. I thank the great Department of Ohio because, as you all know, it takes everyone in the Department to raise these kind of funds. So, to the Department of Ohio thank you, stand up.

DEPT ADJ WATSON (PA): With the initial of what we already gave you, we have a check here for $40,220 from the Department of Pennsylvania. I want to congratulate our delegation for helping them receive this.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE We gave you before, $264,731.96, and we thought that was uneven. So, we're going to give you a donation of $20,000.04, making it $264,732.

PDC JACK FORD (NV): On behalf of the Department of Nevada, and special efforts by our Post 8 in Las Vegas, it is my honor to present to you a check for the National Emergency Relief Fund of $1,000.

DELEGATE MERV GUNDERSON (MT): Every year the state of Montana, Idaho and Nevada hold for one weekend a little event we call "Fun Days," It's a golf tournament and we raised this year for the NEF $1,611.

PDC TERRY MILLER (WY): On behalf of the Department of Wyoming, we found

a little bit more at home, I would like to present it to you, the amount of $335.

NEC RICHARD W. ANDERSON (CT): On behalf of the Department of Connecticut, we're small but we have a big heart. It is with great honor on my behalf, those with me and my delegation, to present to you this check for $2,700, bringing our total donation to $26,000.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Our mathematicians are quick. Says we've just received $143,400.04 for the National Emergency Fund. Incredible! What great hearts The American Legion has. It makes me feel proud.

Presentation: National Recruiter of the Year
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

The next award is to a man who set the standard for recruiting during this membership year. The National Recruiter of the Year gathered 283 new members to The American Legion fold. Please give a warm welcome to a dedicated Legionnaire, Frank H. Carr of Post 99 in The Department of Virginia.

...At this time National Vice Commander Roll assumes the Chair.

NATL VICE COMDR ROLL: Frank, this is but a small token of appreciation for the job you have done. Without a doubt you are one outstanding recruiter.

Commander Bock is presenting you with a Shadow Box, Engraved Brief Case and a Legion cap signifying your accomplishments in 2006, for earning the title of Recruiter of the Year for 2005-2006. Membership is critical to The American Legion. Remember without an active growing membership and the efforts from individuals like Frank Carr, the other distinguished awardees on stage and you, our programs will lose strength and our voice will be weakened. Our commitment of service to veterans, their families and communities will suffer.

Congratulations to those individuals and Departments we honored today. A new membership year is underway. Let's look forward to seeing another group of deserving volunteers on stage in Reno, Nevada next year. At this time I ask all of those membership award recipients to stand. Commander Bock, please join them in the middle of the first row so everyone can take photographs.

FRANK CARR: First I give honor to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that gave me the strength to do what I needed to do this year to recruit people. Also to Commander Bock, to the Virginia Department Commander Reistad, to my lovely wife Mattie for forgiving me for all the long hours I spent on the road recruiting; to all the Legionnaires out there who assisted, especially those workers in the Department of Virginia; and to those veterans and other active duty military people who allowed me to recruit them into this wonderful organization we call The American Legion. I truly thank them for that.

I've been asked many times over this year what was my secret for recruiting and what did it take to recruit? Each individual has their own style of recruiting. Mine is just to ask everybody. And I think that's where we miss out on recruiting as we go along our way. Sometimes we have people right in our neighborhoods who don't look like veterans, but I ask anyway and you'd be surprised. I even ask people who are senior citizens, junior citizens, children, everybody, because maybe their fathers or mothers have been in the service. The only secret I can give you is basically ask everybody and don't just take for granted that that person is not a military veteran because they just might. If not, they know somebody who has been in the service.

I truly thank The American Legion for the wonderful time they offered us this year, and hopefully next year we'll be able to do a repeat performance, if my wife allows me to be out of the house that much.

NATL VICE COMDR ROLL: Now, as they depart the stage and Commander Bock returns to the lectern, join me in a much deserved applause for these Legion leaders.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Just a reminder that tomorrow morning starting at 6:30 a.m. You will only be able to enter the building from the south entrance. That is where the buses let off. As you know, the President of the United States will be here tomorrow to address our annual convention. Security will be very tight. Magnetometers will be set up outside exhibit halls A & B. In other words, travel light tomorrow. Remember, please use the south doors to get access to the Salt Center tomorrow.

Mr. Adjutant.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: In addition to the Commander's remarks about the President's appearance tomorrow, I would like to ask all Department Adjutants, Delegation Secretaries, to meet in the back of Halls A&B where they pick up the morning reports at the recess of today's session. This is important because we'll need to reset some of the convention seating. If your Department Adjutant or Secretary is not here, maybe out to lunch—they're never out to lunch, they're always here. Remind him or her when they get back that they are to meet in the back of Halls A&B at the recess of today's convention session.

NATL COMDR BOCK: The Chair recognizes the Chairman of the Economics Commission, Jim Koutz from Indiana.

Report: Convention Committees on Employment and Veterans Preference and Other Economic Matters
James E. Koutz, Indiana, Chairman

At 9:00 a.m. on August 27, 2006, a total of 79 delegates assigned to the Convention Committees on Employment and Veterans Preference and on Other Economic Matters convened in Room 257 of the Salt Palace Convention Center to consider 71 resolutions assigned to the committees for action. James Koutz of Indiana was elected general chairman and David Desmond of North Carolina was appointed general secretary. Albert Robotti of New Jersey was elected chairman of the Convention Committee on Employment and Veterans Preference, and Richard Zulch of Ohio was appointed secretary. William Christoffersen of Utah was elected chairman of the Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters, and Ken Connors of New Jersey was appointed secretary.

In response to a call by the National Adjutant, a screening committee consisting of James Koutz (IN), Bill Christoffersen (UT), Al Robotti (NJ), Richard Zulch (OH), and Dennis Tipsword (IL) met at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, August 24, 2006, in Canyon Room I of the Hilton Salt Lake City Hotel to make recommendations to the Convention Committees on Economics. The report of the screening committee was presented to the convention committees and was adopted.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to authorize the chairman and secretary to sign the committee report on behalf of the committee. A motion was made, seconded and approved to allow the chairman and secretary to make technical corrections to the report without changing the meaning. The meeting was recessed at 12:15p.m. subject to recall by the chair.

Approved

Resolution No. 16: Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program
Origin: Utah
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The United States Government has recognized that employment of veterans is a national responsibility and the alleviating unemployment or

underemployment of honorably discharged veterans is a national priority; and

WHEREAS, Unemployment rates of individuals recently separated from military service is unacceptable because America's employers have been lax in hiring those ex-service members; and

WHEREAS, The Work Opportunity Tax Credit program created by Congress encourages employers to hire targeted applicants but present program language is too restrictive and fails to include many veterans who are receiving food stamps, welfare or seeking job vocational rehabilitation when requesting employment; and

WHEREAS, Expansion of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program to include those and other categories of separated members of the uniformed services will in the long run promote recruitment and retention of members in all branches of the military services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion request Congress make changes in legislation relating to the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program to include:

1. **All members of the military who have served active duty and/or still on active duty for training who have served more that 180 days since September of 2001;**
2. **Any veteran who has served on active duty for more than 180 days and meets the criteria for low income applicants;**
3. **A disabled veteran who has completed or is enrolled in a rehabilitative service program funded by a state or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.**

Resolution No. 17: Allow Military Retirees To Apply For Positions In Federal Law Enforcement After Age 37

Origin: Utah

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

(As amended)

WHEREAS, Public Law 101-509 makes it mandatory for all federal law enforcement personnel to retire by age 57 thus requiring an applicant to be no older than 37 when applying for a law enforcement position within the federal government; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense spends billions of dollars annually to train men and women in law enforcement of which thousands of career personnel completing their initial 20 years of service are eligible for retirement at the age of 38-40 at time of separation; and

WHEREAS, Under existing law it is impossible for a 20-year military retiree to obtain a career in federal law enforcement because of age restrictions even though they are more than qualified for federal employment with their job expertise, security clearance credentials, allegiance to their country, and other qualifications; and

WHEREAS, Providing employment opportunities for transitional career military personnel is a reinvestment of defense training dollars that would help preserve scarce recruiting and training funds currently in critical demand while providing a stable source of manpower to help fulfill the federal government's 188,000-person law enforcement personnel needs; and

WHEREAS, Providing an employment age waiver based on military experience would allow fully trained and experienced career military law enforcement officers to utilize their skills for the federal government and save taxpayer dollars; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge Congress to amend Public Law 101-509 to include age waivers or other means to allow those who have served honorably in the military as law enforcement officers

to continue their professional careers in federal law enforcement positions after retirement.

Resolution No. 20: Oppose DVOP/LVER Personnel To Work On Public Assistance Related Programs

Origin: Utah

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

(As amended)

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service administers programs to assist veterans with their employment and training needs; and

WHEREAS, Many state employment agencies are utilizing DVOP/LVER personnel to work on public assistance related programs including food stamps; and

WHEREAS, This diverts the DVOP/LVER personnel from their prime mission which is to assist veterans with their employment and training needs; and

WHEREAS, That time would be better utilized assisting veterans with their employment and training needs or providing them with veterans benefit information; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans are not aware of their veterans benefits and could benefit from information on veterans benefits in addition to assistance with employment and training; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion will go on record opposing the utilization of DVOP/LVER to work with, or process public assistance programs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Congress reinforce the mandate of the program to assist veterans with their employment and training needs and whenever possible provide veterans benefit information as a part of their service to the veteran customers.

Resolution No. 23: Reaffirm Support For The Transition Assistance Program

Origin: Vermont

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, At the end of the Cold War the Department of Defense (DoD) dramatically downsized its personnel strength; and

WHEREAS, In an attempt to assist separating service members in making a successful transition back into the civilian workforce, Congress enacted Public Law (P.L.) 101-510; and

WHEREAS, P.L. 101-510 authorized the creation of the Transition Assistance Program; and

WHEREAS, TAP provides separating service members with three days of comprehensive training with emphasis on such topics as networking, how to conduct a job search, resume writing, career decision-making, interview techniques, as well as current occupational and labor market conditions; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Labor's (DOL's) Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) provides professional veterans' employment personnel, Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs), to participate in the TAP program; and

WHEREAS, Placing veterans in suitable employment sooner, the country benefits from increased income tax revenue and reduced unemployment compensation payments thus greatly offsetting the cost of TAP training; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion reaffirms its strong support of the Transition Assistance Program; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Defense require all separating, active-duty service members, including those from Reserve and National Guard units, be

given an opportunity to participate in Transition Assistance Program training not more than 180 days prior to their separation or retirement from the armed forces.

Resolution No. 24: Reaffirm Support For Service Members Occupational Conversion And Training Act (SMOCTA)
Origin: Vermont
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 296 (MA))

WHEREAS, In 1992, Congress enacted the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA), which became Public Law (P.L.) 102-484; and

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

WHEREAS, SMOCTA helped eligible veterans enter the civilian workforce through training in a stable and permanent position that involved significant training; and

WHEREAS, VA made monthly payments to employers who employed and trained eligible veterans in these jobs, and made a final lump sum payment when the trainee had completed the training program and was employed for four months; and

WHEREAS, These payments aided employers in defraying the necessary costs of training; and

WHEREAS, To be eligible for participation in the SMOCTA program, the veteran must meet at least one of the following criteria: (a) have a primary or secondary military occupational specialty that the Department of Defense (DoD) has determined is not readily transferable to the civilian work force; or (b) be entitled to compensation (or would be entitled to compensation but for the receipt of military retired pay) for a VA service-connected disability rate of 30 percent or more; or (c) be unemployed and have been unemployed for at least eight of the last 15 work weeks before filing an application; and

WHEREAS, Veterans eligible for job training under SMOCTA were precisely those individuals who need the most assistance in making a successful transition to the civilian workforce; and

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

WHEREAS, DoD provided funding for SMOCTA, while VA and DOL are responsible for administering the program; and

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

WHEREAS, SMOCTA was the only Federal job training program available strictly for veterans; and

WHEREAS, SMOCTA was the only Federal job training program specifically designed and available for use by State veterans' employment personnel to assist veterans with barriers to employment; and

WHEREAS, SMOCTA offered financial incentives for employers to hire SMOCTA-eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, SMOCTA was officially terminated on July 26, 2001; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion supports legislation to reauthorize the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act program; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek adequate funding for Service members Occupational Conversion and Training Act.

Resolution No. 40: Extension Of The President's National Hire Veterans Committee
Origin: Nebraska
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)
(As amended)

WHEREAS, P.L. 107-288 created the President's National Hire Veterans Committee in an effort to increase the awareness of the business community of the value and potential of hiring veterans; and

WHEREAS, Hiring veterans is good for business, good for the country, and the right thing to do for those women and men who have served this great nation; and

WHEREAS, The continuation of this committee will ensure that a national campaign coupled with regional and state activity continues to promote hiring of veterans by companies that offer quality jobs to veterans separating from our nation's military; and

WHEREAS, P.L. 107-288 stipulates that this committee will cease to exist at the end of December of 2005; and

WHEREAS, The current number of men and women now eligible for veteran status and exiting military service continues to increase as a result of our involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan who will be adversely impacted if this committee is allowed to expire; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion express our support for continuation/extension of the President's National Hire Veterans Committee and that we seek adequate funding.

Resolution No. 42: Support Legislation For Activated Reservists
Origin: Nebraska
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The American Legion, the largest veterans organization, has members serving in the U.S. Armed Forces throughout the world today; and

WHEREAS, Many of those members serving in the military today are Reservists and National Guard personnel who have been activated and deployed for an undefined period of time, fighting and supporting the war on terrorism (Operation Enduring Freedom) from the Philippines to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, while their families deal with the challenges of separation, mental and financial hardships, as well as the responsibility of preserving the overall well being of the Guard and Reserve service members' children and other dependents; and

WHEREAS, Many of these Guard and Reserve service members who have been called up to active duty will experience compounded hardships due to changes to health care benefits and significant losses in income (difference in pay) due to the fact that many Guard and Reserve service members' current income can be two or three times more than their active duty pay and because of this the service member will incur additional debt or be forced to sell their existing homes or liquidate other assets to meet their existing obligations while activated; and

WHEREAS, Without creative and common sense solutions to allow our Guard and Reserve service members to stay financially whole during these unprecedented and open-ended deployments, the U.S. armed forces will see a significant departure of many skilled, highly trained and professional service members from the various Reserve and National Guard units; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge local, state and federal bodies to enact legislation to provide income insurance to citizen soldiers and sailors during deployments; tax credits to employers who hire and

support their deployed Guard and Reserve employees with continuation of their medical benefits and pay while deployed, and couple these initiatives with support and commitment for all affected parties.

Resolution No. 43: Add Active Reservists To Those Eligible For Certain Job Training Service
Origin: Nebraska
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)
(As amended)

WHEREAS, The demands of National Security in the 21st Century are placing greater emphasis on the Reserve members of our Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, The activation of Reserve Units can be expected to increase, thereby creating employment hardships for reservists; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge Congress to amend Title 38, US Code, Chapter 41, Section 4101(5) to add Subsection (D) to the list of "Eligible Persons" for Job Counseling, Training, and Placement Service for Veterans, to include members in good standing of an Active Reserve and Guard Units of the Armed Forces of the United States who have completed basic and advanced Duty for Training (ACDUTRA) and have been awarded a Military Occupation Specialty.

Resolution No. 45: Hire A Veteran Week
Origin: Nebraska
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

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

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

WHEREAS, There is presently no national "Hire a Veteran Week" program; and

WHEREAS, By having a Federally recognized national "Hire a Veteran Week," the President or Congress would publicly encourage the hiring of veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion supports Congress establishing "Hire a Veteran Week" during the week of Veterans' Day in the month of November each year; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the President of the United States issue an executive order declaring "Hire a Veteran Week" during the week of Veterans' Day in the month of November each year.

Resolution No. 47: Support Job Protection For Service Connected Veterans Requiring Visits At VA Facilities
Origin: Nebraska
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and 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 Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge Congress 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 condition that is being treated by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution No. 200: Support Priority Of Service For Veterans In All State Employment

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Priority of service is a practice prescribed by the Department of Labor (DOL) as a means of fulfilling the mandate of Title 38, United States Code (USC) to provide veterans with the maximum of employment and training opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Priority of service is defined and practiced as "the provision of services to veterans before the provision of such services to non-veterans"; and

WHEREAS, DOL has moved toward a One-Stop Center operation in each state; and

WHEREAS, Priority of service to veterans, as outlined by law (Title 38, USC, and 20 CFR), will be satisfied with the Federally funded service provider, so that each eligible veteran is afforded the full array of services in order to obtain meaningful employment; and

WHEREAS, The full array of services include, but are not limited to, job search workshops; labor market information; resume development; interviewing techniques; classroom training; support services; job restructuring; job referrals; vocational training; career counseling; job placement; employer information; case management; skills enhancement; selective placement; job development; child care information; temporary housing assistance; transportation assistance and discharge upgrade assistance; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the majority of these services are provided by the SESA's staff, to include the Veterans' Employment and Training Services' ("VETS") employment professionals—Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and the Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs); and

WHEREAS, The Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor has admitted in correspondence to The American Legion that although PL 107-288 requires veterans priority services in all DOL programs, ETA has not monitored the performance nor do they have a way of tracking the performance; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention, assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion reaffirms support for priority of service for veterans, as outlined in Title 38, United States Code; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That any agency provided Federal funding to provide veterans' employment and training services must adhere to priority of service, and develop reporting systems that track priority services to veterans as provided and outlined in Title 38, USC; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists and Local

Veterans Employment Representatives continue to provide veterans' employment and training services within every State; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That all Department of Labor One-Stop Centers work with the Veterans' Employment and Training service to ensure the operations of the One-Stop Centers meet or exceed the federally mandated priority of service for eligible veterans.

Resolution No. 201: Support Improvements In The Reporting Programs Of The Veterans' Employment And Training Service

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

(Consolidated with Resolution No. 208 (TX))

WHEREAS, The Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) is an agency within the Department of Labor (DOL) dedicated to providing America's veterans with quality employment and training services; and

WHEREAS, The Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) is responsible for ensuring that the agency continues to meet its mission; and

WHEREAS, The ASVET is committed to taking aggressive actions to improve the quality, timeliness, and accessibility to veterans' employment and training services within every State; and

WHEREAS, VETS' programs must meet the needs of veterans facing employment barriers; and

WHEREAS, Members of The American Legion continue to work closely with LVERs and DVOPs, the ASVET cannot accurately capture necessary local, state wide and national data to adequately assess performance outcomes or hold the various states accountable for providing priority services to veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31 2006, That The American Legion strongly support improvements in the reporting programs available to and administered by Veterans' Employment and Training Service; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, The American Legion petition the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training to establish clear up to date real time performance standards and a means of collecting data to properly measure performance at the local, state, and national level.

Resolution No. 203: Require VETS To Hire Veterans

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) administers employment assistance and employment protection programs serving veterans, members of Armed Forces Reserve Components and eligible persons as defined in and pursuant to Chapters 41, 42 and 43 of Title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 107-288 amended 38 USC, Chapter 41 to allow for the appointment of non-veterans to positions of Regional Administrators, Directors in the States Assistant Directors in the States and "other professional staff assigned to the States"; and

WHEREAS, These VETS staff located in Regional offices and those serving in the state routinely and extensively interact with State Workforce Agencies' staffs, members of Active and Reserve military components and Veterans Service Organizations, all of whom are veteran or military affiliated; and

WHEREAS, These VETS staff would be unable to fully participate in, nor have the full confidence and credibility with the Veterans Service Organizations; and

WHEREAS, These VETS staff would not have the credibility of the shared active military service or transition experience from active duty, for which VETS has the responsibility for program delivery leadership; and

WHEREAS, For more than 25 years, the VETS staff have, by Title 38, USC, Chapter 41, been required to be veterans; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion finds it inconceivable that Congress would not find "Veterans serving Veterans" to be the most appropriate manner of delivering these critical services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion seek and support legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code, to require Veterans Employment and Training Service Regional Administrators, State Directors and Assistant State Directors and "other professional staff" under VETS to be veterans of the Armed Services.

Resolution No. 204: Support Improvements Of Veterans' Employment And Training Service (VETS) Performance Standards

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

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

WHEREAS, The Government Accountability Office (GAO) publicly 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 State Employment Service Agencies 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 Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, 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. 206: Oppose The Transfer Of Veterans' Employment And Training Service To The Department Of Veterans Affairs

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Throughout the nearly two hundred and twenty-year history of The United States, the men and women of this nation have served in the Armed Forces in the interest of the collective body of states, united under a central Federal Government, "to provide for the common defense"; and

WHEREAS, These men and women served the United States under the constitutional authority vested in, and by direction of the President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, In Section 3401, Title 38, United States Code (USC) Congress expressed its purpose in enacting the Uniformed Service Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), "to encourage non-career service in the uniformed services by eliminating or minimizing the disadvantage to civilian careers and

employment which can result from such service"; and

WHEREAS, It has been the finding of numerous surveys and studies that, for a variety of reasons, the vast majority of disabled veterans of the Armed Forces of The United States are disadvantaged in pursuing civilian employment and careers; and

WHEREAS, It is altogether fitting and proper that such programs of employment assistance for veterans be provided by direction of, and subject to oversight by, Congress to ensure that all veterans/disabled veterans are afforded such services in a uniform manner following completion of their service and return to the several states; and

WHEREAS, P.L. 107-288 has eliminated the requirement that DOL/VETS review all workforce centers annually and this has minimized Federal oversight of the programs since the ASVET has drastically cut funds allocated for this activity and established a policy that only 10 percent of the centers operated under Title 38 will be reviewed; and

WHEREAS, P.L. 107-288 has removed the job description of the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) from Title 38, USC, and given the States the ability to establish the duties and responsibilities, thus weakening the VETS programs across the country by eliminating the language that required these staff position provide services only to veterans; and

WHEREAS, VETS works closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation Program to assist enrolled veterans in job search efforts throughout their rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, The present administration continues to recommend transferring VETS from DOL to VA; and

WHEREAS, DOL has expertise in job placement; job development, vocational counseling, vocational testing, job search training, and any other area of employment services; and

WHEREAS, VA has very little experience in job placement, job development, vocational counseling, vocational testing, job search training, and any other area of employment services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention, assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion opposes all legislative or administrative efforts to transfer Veterans' Employment and Training Service from Department of Labor to Department of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution No. 207: Oppose Consolidation Of Employment Service Program And Veterans Employment Program Into The WIA Programs

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The employment programs now operated under the Wagner-Peyser Act require that dedicated funds be used for a national labor exchange program and these programs have proved extremely effective in providing services to veterans by requiring staff assigned to these be merit system staff hereby excluding political influence in the funding and operation of these programs; and

WHEREAS, The current staffing requirements under Wagner-Peyser Act also extends to the positions of the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program staff and the Local Veterans Employment Representative Staff requiring them to also be merit system employees; and

WHEREAS, The WIA Reauthorization Act, which contains language that will consolidate the Employment Service funds and programs into the Workforce Investment Programs, has passed The United States House of Representatives and has been referred to the Senate; and

WHEREAS, This consolidation of funds and programs will effectively eliminate any accountability for labor exchange funds and programs thereby eliminating the few remaining Employment Service positions and possibly the LVER/DVOP staff positions and dissolving the veterans employment programs; and

WHEREAS, HR 27 also had an amendment known as WIA PLUS 4, which included language that specifically gave the governors of the states the option to consolidate the Veterans' Employment and Training Service Programs with four other program funds; and

WHEREAS, This blending of funds will result in accountability for veterans programs and staff identified specifically for providing mediated services to veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention, assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion oppose any legislation that seeks to block grant or blend the Employment Service Programs or funds or the Veterans Employment Programs or funds into the Workforce Investment Act programs or give the governors of the various states the option to combine funds identified for services to veterans.

Resolution No. 209: Oppose Any Weakening Of The Disabled Veterans Outreach Program And Local Veterans Employment Representative Programs

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Throughout the nearly two hundred and twenty-year history of The United States, the men and women of this nation have served in the armed forces in the interest of the collective body of states, united under a central federal government, "to provide for the common defense"; and

WHEREAS, These men and women served The United States under the constitutional authority vested in, and by direction of, the President of The United States; and

WHEREAS, It has been the finding of numerous surveys and studies that, for a variety of reasons, the vast majority of veterans of the armed forces of The United States are disadvantaged in pursuing civilian employment and careers, and that veterans helping veterans has proven to be extremely effective; and

WHEREAS, It is altogether fitting and proper that such programs of employment assistance for veterans be provided by direction of, and subject to oversight by, the Congress of The United States to ensure that all veterans who served The United States in uniform in time of war and peace are afforded such services in a uniform manner following completion of their service and return to the several states; and

WHEREAS, PL 107-288 has revised Title 38 to eliminate the requirement that DVOP/LVER staff be veterans and serve only veterans and to reduce the direction and control of such employment assistance programs while relinquishing the direction of veterans services to the discretion of the governors of the several States and/or contracting of such services to for-profit organizations; and

WHEREAS, PL 107-288 also eliminates the requirement that DVOP/LVER staff be assigned based on veteran intake and veteran population, and creates half time DVOP positions, thereby eliminating positions available to serve veterans or allowing positions to be assigned at the discretion of the individual state workforce agency, which may or may not adequately assign positions; and

WHEREAS, Such devolution of program responsibility will then be based on each state's elected officials' whim and may result in either limited services or such variations in employment assistance provided disabled veterans as to make a mockery of the expressions of the Congress found in Title 38 USC; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention, assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion seek national legislation that will require LVER and DVOP staff be veterans and serve only veterans, and that the assignment of these positions to local one stop centers be based on veteran populations.

COMM CHRMN KOUTZ: I now call on Al Robotti of New Jersey to continue reading the report.

Resolution No. 210: Restore Oversight Of Veterans' Employment And Training Service (VETS) Programs

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Throughout the nearly two hundred and twenty-year history of The United States, the men and women of this nation have served in the armed forces in the interest of the collective body of states, united under a central federal government, "to provide for the common defense"; and

WHEREAS, In Section 4301, Title 38, United States Code (USC), Congress expressed its purpose in enacting the Unifonmed Service Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), "to encourage non-career service in the uniformed services by eliminating or minimizing the disadvantage to civilian careers and employment which can result from such service"; and

WHEREAS, It has been the finding of numerous surveys and studies that, for a variety of reasons, the vast majority of disabled veterans of the armed forces and disadvantaged in pursuing civilian employment and careers; and

WHEREAS, It is altogether fitting and proper that such programs of employment assistance for veterans be provided by direction of, and subject to oversight by, Congress to ensure that all veterans/disabled veterans are afforded such services in a uniform manner following completion of their service and return to the several states; and

WHEREAS, PL 107-288 has eliminated the requirement that DOL/VETS review all workforce centers annually and this has minimized Federal oversight of the programs since the ASVET has drastically cut funds allocated for this activity and established a policy that only 10 percent of the centers operated under Title 38 will be reviewed; and

WHEREAS, PL 107-288 has removed the job descriptions of the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVERs) from Title 38 USC, and given the States the ability to establish the duties and responsibilities, thus weakening the VETS programs across the country by eliminating the language that required these staff positions provided services only to veterans; and

WHEREAS, The passage of PL 107-288 also removed the Federally mandated manning formulas for assigning DVOPs and LVERs and this has allowed each State to determine the number of veterans' employment personnel in each State, and the assignment of more than one half time DVOP and/or LVER to one office, while eliminating positions in offices that need veterans' staff by virtue of veterans intake; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support legislation that will restore language to Chapter 41, Title 38 that will require that veteran staff serve only veterans, require that half time DVOP/LVER positions be assigned only after approval of the DVET, and that the Secretary of Labor be required to monitor all career centers that have veteran staff assigned; and, be it further

RESOLVED, The American Legion also support legislation that restores the duties and responsibilities of the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist and Local Veterans Employment Representative; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports Department of Labor's Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training being given jurisdiction to review all Department of Labor employment and training programs in order to insure that all programs provide priority services to veterans.

Resolution No. 212: Support The National Veterans' Training Institute

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

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

WHEREAS, NVTI has provided several thousand training sessions for State Employment Security Agency staff, Veterans' Employment and Training Service staff and Department of Defense staff; and

WHEREAS, NVTI provides standardized training for veterans' advocates providing employment and training services; and

WHEREAS, NVTI's positive impact on the quality of services, provides veterans with well-trained vocational specialists across the country; and

WHEREAS, NVTI's annual budget continues to be flat-lined; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion reaffirms continued support of full funding of the National Veterans' Training Institute.

Resolution No. 213: Urge State Employment Security Agencies To Report Veterans' Wages At Placement

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

(As amended)

WHEREAS, Employment Services for veterans vary greatly from one area of the country to the next; and

WHEREAS, This uneven quality of employment services to unemployed veterans ranges from a veterans placement rate (veterans placed in jobs divided by veterans applicants) of an estimated low of six percent (6%) to a high of over twenty-five percent (25%), even among economically comparable areas; and

WHEREAS, Provisions of the "GI Bill" (codified at Chapter 41, Title 38, US Code) clearly require the highest quality of employment assistance for all veterans who use the public employment service; and

WHEREAS, Possibly the single best key to the quality of job placement is wage received at placement, but the US Department of Labor deleted this reporting requirement, relative to veterans only, a number of years ago; and

WHEREAS, The job-related characteristics of veteran state employment service applicants, such as attained education, are ordinarily superior to other applicants, but the fact that veterans' wages at placement are an unknown quantity, prevents comparison with other applicants, as well as comparison with the veteran's prior wage which could be recorded in the "Work History" section or other portion of the Job Service application; and

WHEREAS, The US Department of Labor (DOL) claims that there is a prohibitively high cost of future reporting on this single data item, wages of placed veterans, in spite of numerous data items already reported on veterans, as recorded in DOL report 9002; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention, assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge the State Employment Security Agencies to report separately on veterans' wages at placement; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, The American Legion urge the Congress and the Department of Labor to arrange for such reporting by state and nationwide, through federal law or executive action.

Resolution No. 231: Adequate Funding For The Local Veterans Employment

Representatives And Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists
Origin: North Dakota
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 202 (TX) and Resolution No. 292 (MA))

WHEREAS, For decades, the Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) have been the cornerstone of employment services for veterans throughout the United States Employment Service system; and

WHEREAS, The LVERs are primarily responsible for giving direction and functional supervision to the veterans program, and to facilitate intensive services to veterans in the Local Employment Service offices; and

WHEREAS, The DVOPS are primarily responsible for providing comprehensive employment services to disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, chapter 41, United States Code, requires that the amount of funds made available shall be necessary to support job counseling, training, and placement services for veterans; and

WHEREAS, The funds made available have not been sufficient to support the appropriate level of LVERs and DVOPS in every state; and

WHEREAS, Sufficient funding is critical to the delivery of employment services to veterans in this time of military reductions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, assembled in National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That we approve and do hereby request the federal government to provide adequate funding for the Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists.

Resolution No. 232: Oppose The Job Loss Of Veterans With The Proposed Outsourcing Of Federal Jobs In The Federal Government
Origin: North Dakota
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 205 (TX))

WHEREAS, Veterans and disabled veterans have honorably served their country; and

WHEREAS, Veterans and disabled veterans have provided many years of faithful service working for the United States Government; and

WHEREAS, Veterans and disabled veterans will lose all their employment rights and benefits due to the proposed outsourcing of federal jobs to the private sector; and

WHEREAS, This proposed outsourcing will put thousands of veterans and disabled veterans in the unemployment lines without the protection of Reduction in Force policies; and

WHEREAS, There will be no veterans preference when these unemployed veterans and disabled veterans apply for the same jobs that they previously held; and

WHEREAS, Years of experience will be lost; and

WHEREAS, There are no current studies that support the cost savings proposed by outsourcing of Federal jobs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That we approve and do go on record opposing the outsourcing of all Federal Jobs held by veterans and disabled veterans without the protection of Reduction in Force policies and veterans preference.

Resolution No. 233: Employment And Training Administration To Develop A Data Collection System To Monitor Veterans' Priority Of Service
Origin: North Dakota

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

(Consolidated with Resolution No. 215 (TX))

WHEREAS, On November 2, 2002, President Bush signed the "Jobs for Veterans Act" (Public Law 107-288); and

WHEREAS, Section 2(a) of the Act 38 U.S.C. 4215(a) creates a priority of service for veterans (and some spouses); and

WHEREAS, Twenty U.S. Department of Labor funded workforce programs are covered by this "Jobs For Veterans Act"; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of Labor is required to develop an annual report to Congress beginning in PY 2003 on whether veterans are receiving priority of service; and

WHEREAS, The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) under the U.S. Department of Labor does not currently have a data collection system that would report on whether veterans are receiving priority of service in all Department of Labor programs; and

WHEREAS, Veterans may not be receiving priority of service as directed under Public Law 107-288; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That we go on record requesting that ETA develop a data collection system that would report on whether veterans are receiving priority of service in all Department of Labor programs and to report the findings to Congress as instructed.

Resolution No. 234: Support Veterans' Preference In Public Employment

Origin: North Dakota

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

(Consolidated with Resolution No. 297 (MA))

WHEREAS, The American Legion has strongly supported federal, state and local veterans' preference laws; and

WHEREAS, Attempts are being made to weaken, dilute, and circumvent existing veterans' preference laws; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That we go on record as supporting the strongest veterans preference laws as possible at all levels of government and opposing any attempt to weaken such laws.

Resolution No. 293: Support Staffing Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERS), As Required By Law

Origin: Massachusetts

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

(Consolidated with Res. 211 (TX))

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

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

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

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

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion petition the Secretary of Labor to adhere to the requirements of Title 38, Chapter 41, Section 2004 and assign Local Veterans Employment Representative positions on the basis required by law.

Resolution No. 368: Employment Of Veterans In Government Workforce

Origin: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, A grateful nation has thanked those who bore the burdens of battle by providing certain rights and benefits, one of which has been a small advantage when seeking federal, state and local government employment; and

WHEREAS, Absence from a highly competitive job market creates an unfair disadvantage on veterans when competing with their non-veteran peers for employment in federal, state and local government; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion strongly urges the strengthening of veterans preference in federal, state, and local government and oppose any efforts to reduce or circumvent veterans preference.

Resolution No. 376: Veterans Hiring Preference From Employers With Federal Contracts Or Grants

Origin: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The employment of veterans should be one of the highest priorities of the federal government; and

WHEREAS, Veterans do not receive hiring preference from employers that receive grants and contracts from the federal government; and

WHEREAS, Veterans do not receive preference from employers that receive contracts on federally assisted projects while other target groups do receive special hiring consideration; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion seeks to ensure that veterans receive employment preference from employers who receive grants and contracts from the federal government and employment preference from employers that receive funding on all federally assisted projects.

Resolution No. 377: Support The Development Of Veterans On-The-Job Training Opportunities

Origin: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, In years past there have been special employment initiatives for employment of veterans; and

WHEREAS, One was the Servicemembers Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA), and the other was the Veteran's Job Training Act (VJTA); and

WHEREAS, These programs were designed to provide financial incentives for employers to hire certain categories of veterans and have expired; and

WHEREAS, These were highly successful programs because employers were able to defray some costs associated with training these veterans; and

WHEREAS, There have been numerous changes to the Montgomery G.I. Bill (MGIB) making it easier for veterans to obtain higher education and even a license or certification; and

WHEREAS, The MGIB can be a useful tool to help employers defray the costs of training of veterans by developing an on-the-job training (OJT) program thereby benefiting both the veteran and employer; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support the development of an outreach program to veterans and employers to develop on-the-job training (OJT) programs for eligible veterans; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support the development of joint projects to enhance OJT opportunities for eligible veterans through the Montgomery GI Bill.

Resolution No. 378: Support Tax Credits For Certain Employers

Origin: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

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

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

WHEREAS, Currently another 80,000 reserve components are supporting Operation Enduring Freedom; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, 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. 380: Support Recognition Of Military Service And Pay When Calculating Starting Federal Civilian Salaries

Origin: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, The Office of Personnel Management's interpretation of Section 531.203 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations does not allow the use of military pay rates to determine the rate of basic pay that may be paid to an individual upon appointment to a civil service position; and

WHEREAS, The interpretation of this law places an undue financial hardship on former member of the Armed Forces and penalizes the individual for serving in the military defending our country and provides an advantage to non veterans seeking higher starting salary when entering into federal employment; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion seek and support legislation that requires Federal agencies to take an employee's military experience and military pay history into consideration when computing that employee's starting civilian salary.

Resolution No. 381: Credit Service Of Military Retirees Towards Federal Employment Benefits

Origin: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)

WHEREAS, Title 5, United States Code (USC) allows honorably discharged military veterans entering federal employment to apply all military service to the accrual of annual leave; and

WHEREAS, Title 5, USC restricts retired military veterans who enter federal employment to apply only certain "qualifying periods" of military service to their accrual of annual leave; and

WHEREAS, Retired military veterans are no less veterans than non-retired veterans, and by virtue of their longevity have applied their knowledge and experience to greater benefit our Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, While retired/retainer pay is awarded to retirees for several reasons, it is not awarded as compensation for accepting less than those who gave lesser service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion seeks legislation to amend Title 5, United States Code, to allow military retirees entering federal service to credit all military service to accrual of annual leave.

Referral to Standing Commission on Economics

Resolution No. 44 (NE): Amend Veterans Employment Opportunities Act, 1998

Resolution No. 46 (NE): Support Disabled Veterans As Priority Under Americans With Disabilities Act

Rejected

Resolution No. 198 (TX): Eliminate the Regional Offices of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service

...Committee on Other Economic Matters Chairman Christoffersen presented the following:

Committee on Other Economic Matters

Approved

Resolution No. 10: Veterans Entrepreneur Training Program
Origin: Utah
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, In 1989 The American Legion Department of Utah received a grant for $91,447.00 from the US Small Business Administration to be used to fund entrepreneurial training for veterans desiring to implement and own a small business venture; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion program was designed to encourage and motivate veterans to explore their management and organizing abilities required in formulating sound business plans and help in obtaining needed financing for successful implementation of a business; and

WHEREAS, Cooperation with The American Legion and the US Small Business Administration with local entities that entail schools with Small Business Development Centers, Chambers of Commerce, business owners, State Industrial Development Departments, private consulting support systems, lending institutions, and instruction and information from existing and retired business owners can contribute to The American Legion programs following three fold objectives:

1. To reach out to as many veterans as possible to explore their business interests;
2. To select a reasonable number of veterans to participate based on entrepreneurial potential and application of business successful criteria;
3. To provide selected veterans with education programs, support workshops and counseling to assist in forming sound business plans; and

WHEREAS, Classes should be held at educational establishments during evening or weekend hours and should include the veteran entrepreneur's spouse or partner whenever possible having proved to be an unequivocal asset to the veteran's success; and

WHEREAS, Due to older age individuals separating from active military, plus activation of Guard and Reserve units who have immediate family obligations that interrupt a service person's business or employment while deployed can completely change their future professions when returning could necessitate a training program to fit their changed needs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion request the Small Business Administration and the Congress make funding available to reinstate the Veteran's Entrepreneur Training program grants to help those who are in need to return to productive civilian professions.

Resolution No. 15: Support Reinstatement Of Funding For Veterans Upward Bound
Origin: Utah
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, The present Congressional budget allocations for education impairs and is devastating to some veterans and their educational interests because funding for Veterans Upward Bound has been eliminated; and

WHEREAS, For the past twenty years the Veterans Upward Bound program has served thousands of veterans in counseling, assisting, and tutoring them free of charge to help them to succeed in postsecondary education; and

WHEREAS, The program has proven to be very successful in accomplishing its mandate from the Department of Education to assist veterans to become honorable graduates at the postsecondary level; and

WHEREAS, The graduation rate for veterans utilizing Veterans Upward Bound far exceeds the graduation rate of colleges and universities and if funding is not set apart during the appropriations process, the accomplishments that Veterans Upward Bound has done in promoting educational goals for our military veterans the program will end with the 2006–2007 budget year; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion National Office insist that the President and Congress reinstate funding for the Veterans Upward Bound education programs for now and future years.

Resolution No. 39: Exemption Of Federal Tax On Savings Bonds For Wartime Veterans

Origin: Nebraska

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, Wartime veterans have continually incurred financial loss as a result of service to their country because there is no federal program of substance to partially or fully compensate them for said loss; and

WHEREAS, Partial restoration of this loss can be accomplished without a federal appropriation; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That congressional committees with jurisdiction be petitioned to provide honorably discharged wartime veterans an exemption from federal income tax when cashing U.S. Savings Bonds they own or later purchase; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That provisions for the exemption—one for each bond—may be passed on only to immediate family members; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the type and place of duty shall have no bearing on eligibility and that said federal income tax exemption shall apply to all future issues of the Treasury classified as a U.S. Savings Bond.

Resolution No. 41: Provide Payment Of Death Benefit If Montgomery GI Bill Is Not Used

Origin: Nebraska

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, The Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) program, under Title 38, United States Code, Chapter 30, was established in 1984; and

WHEREAS, In addition to completing the minimum active duty service requirement, eligibility for MGIB education assistance benefits requires the withholding of $1200 from an individual's base pay; and

WHEREAS, Following discharge or retirement, the veteran has ten years within which to use their education benefits; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion supported the enactment of PL 100-689, which authorizes VA to pay a Chapter 30 death benefit in the amount of $1200, if an individual who is entitled to MGIB benefits is unable to use his or her benefits due to death while on active duty or within one year of leaving active duty; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion seek legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code, Section 3017, to provide for payment of the $1200 death benefit during the 10 year eligibility period in the event of a catastrophic disability or death, not the result of the veteran's willful misconduct.

Resolution No. 48: Delimiting Date For Using The GI Bill

Origin: Nebraska

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, The intent of the Veterans G.I. Bill for education is primarily to assist veterans in retraining so that they may find productive jobs; and

WHEREAS, The delimiting date for using these benefits is ten years from

separation from active-duty, which encourages recently separated veterans to complete formal education in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, The current job market requires highly trained individuals from accredited institutions; and

WHEREAS, There continues to be instability within the workforce due to technological advances that could make a vocation obsolete thus requiring retraining, well after the 10-year delimiting date; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support retaining the ten-year delimiting period for veterans to use Montgomery GI Bill educational benefits; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs provide a waiver to any eligible veteran beyond the ten-year limit on a case-by-case basis.

Resolution No. 127: Reaffirm Support Of The Small Business Administration's Office Of Veterans' Business Development
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters
(Consolidated with Resolutions. 126 (MD), 159 (ME), 160 (ME), and 289 (MA))

WHEREAS, Small business assistance to veterans who have honorably served this country is a traditional veterans' benefit that dates back to the passage of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944; and

WHEREAS, There is increasing demand among veterans for assistance in creating and operating veteran-owned small businesses; and

WHEREAS, Successful veteran-owned small businesses are good for the economy in the local community, state, and nation; and

WHEREAS, Estimates are that the Small Business Administration's Office of Veterans' Business Development needs $5 million in FY 2005, $10 million in FY 2006, and $15 million in FY 2007 to enable it to implement a nationwide community based entrepreneurial assistance program to veterans and self employed members of the reserves and National Guard; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support increased funding for the efforts of the Small Business Administration's Office of Veterans' Business Development in its initiatives to provide enhanced outreach and specific community based assistance to veterans and self employed members of the Reserves and National Guard; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation that would permit the Office of Veterans' Business Development to enter into contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements to further its outreach goals and develop a nationwide community based service delivery system specifically for veterans and members of reserve components of the United States military.

Resolution No. 129: Support The Small Business Loan Program In VA
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters
(As amended and consolidated with Resolution No. 162 (ME) and Resolution No. 295 (MA))

WHEREAS, Small business is the backbone of the American economy and employs over one-half of the nation's work force; and

WHEREAS, Reliable sources have estimated that 20 percent of all small businesses are owned and operated by veterans; and

WHEREAS, Because of the status of the economy over the past few years, many thousands of workers have lost their jobs through no fault of their own and have been unsuccessful in finding new employment; and

WHEREAS, One way of combating this serious unemployment problem is for the government to create new job opportunities and encourage veterans to start new small businesses; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans who want to become entrepreneurs either do not qualify for the direct or guaranteed loan through the Small Business Administration (SBA), or do not apply for such loans because they don't understand the process or can't maneuver through the red tape involved in obtaining a SBA loan; and

WHEREAS, Congress passed legislation in the early 1980s that amended Chapter 37 of Title 38, United States Code, to establish a pilot Veterans' Small Business Loan Program that was to be administered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA), but was never funded and was allowed to sunset on September 30, 1986; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans who want to become entrepreneurs could realize their dreams of going into business if the VA's Small Business Loan Program is authorized as it will help to cushion the impact of the downsizing of the military by creating a million new jobs over the next five years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, on August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion seek legislation to reauthorize and fund a VA Small Business Loan Program for disabled, Vietnam-era and post Vietnam-era Veterans.

Resolution No. 158: Veterans Small Business Opportunities
Origin: Maine
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters
(As amended and consolidated with Resolution No. 125 (MD))

WHEREAS, Small business ownership and entrepreneurship are the backbone of the American economy and foundation for democracy; and

WHEREAS, Veterans, through their service, have cultivated experiences, skills, and self-discipline that make them well suited for self-employment; and

WHEREAS, Congress enacted the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-50) to assist veteran and service-disabled veteran owned businesses by creating the National Veterans Business Development Corporation; and

WHEREAS, The National Veterans Business Development Corporation has engaged in providing entrepreneurial education, services and advocacy to promote and foster successful veteran entrepreneurship within the veteran business community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support the continuing initiatives of the National Veterans Business Development Corporation to increase small business opportunities to veterans.

Resolution No. 161: Federal Procurements And Contracts For Veteran Owned Businesses
Origin: Maine
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 128 (MD) and Resolution No. 291 (MA))

WHEREAS, Small business assistance to all veterans who have honorably served our country is a veteran's benefit that dates back to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944; and

WHEREAS, Benefits to all veterans have always included assistance in creating and operating veteran-owned small business; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion seek and support legislation to require a 5 percent goal, with set-aside and sole source authority, for federal procurements and contracts for businesses-owned and

operated by service-disabled veterans and businesses owned and controlled by veterans, including those small businesses owned by reserve component members who have been or may be called to active duty, or may be affected by base closing and reduction in our military forces.

Resolution No. 241: Raise Ceiling On VA Home Loans For Two Legally Married Eligible Veterans
Origin: Illinois
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters
(As amended)

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, It is the sincere desire of The American Legion to see all veterans realize the American dream of owning their own home; and

WHEREAS, Real estate prices for homes in certain parts of the country far exceed the maximum VA loan amount of $417,000; and

WHEREAS, Two veterans of the opposite sex, married to each other and each having entitlement in their own right to $417,000, are limited to the ceiling of $417,000 if they purchase a home together; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That the American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to change the ceiling on a VA loan to $834,000 in those situations where two eligible veterans of the opposite sex are married to each other and purchase a home together.

Resolution No. 246: Veterans To Pay Existing Education Loans With Montgomery GI Bill Benefits
Origin: Illinois
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Economics (Employment and Veterans Preference)
(As amended)

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of wartime veterans created by an act of the United States Congress in 1919; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's membership is composed of veterans of all wars; and

WHEREAS, Veterans returning from Iraq with partial physical disabilities that keep them from holding full time employment are not able to have their student loan debt reduced or discharged; and

WHEREAS, The rule holds that a veteran must have a 100% disability rating from the VA in order for student loan discharge to occur; and

WHEREAS, The Montgomery GI Bill does not allow for disabled veteran to use such funds to repay student loans; and

WHEREAS, If the veteran is unable to work because of service-connected injuries, the veteran is still liable to the U.S. Department of Education, to pay his student loans each month; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Education does not freeze the loan in order that penalties and interest stop accruing, until such time the veteran is able to return to full time employment; and

WHEREAS, If the veteran receives "veteran's disability payments" the U.S. Department of Education will attempt to garnish the disability payments; and

WHEREAS, There is an inconsistency between the U.S. Department of Education policies and the "Service Members Relief Act;" and

WHEREAS, Many veterans are not given interest reductions (to 6%) on student loan payments to which they are entitled, which means that many veterans must pay interest and penalties while in a combat zone; and

WHEREAS, Because of the aforementioned policies of the U.S. Department of Education, many disabled veterans will find that their loans are placed in default by the U.S. Department of Education, and repercussions include that the government will garnish any monies or assets held by the veteran; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion fully supports existing legislation and case law that prohibit the Department of Education from including disability payments in determining the ability (income) of service-connected disabled veterans to repay student loans; and The American Legion fully supports giving veterans the right to use the Montgomery GI Bill to pay existing student loan debts; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion fully supports changes to the Montgomery GI Bill and the law in general in order that veterans who have completed higher education at the time of military activation, may use such military, government, education benefits to repay existing student loans; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes that the Department of Education must abide by the Service Members Relief Act to include that penalties and interest do not accrue while the veteran is activated or when the veteran has returned to US and is now a disabled veteran; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion will make all efforts to convince state and federal lawmakers that consistent interpretation of the aforementioned existing laws is needed; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion will make all efforts to convince state and federal lawmakers that service-connected disabled veterans not be charged interest and penalties by the Department of Education or its designee; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion will make all efforts to convince state and federal lawmakers that activated veterans should not be charged interest and penalties for students loans while serving in an activated capacity.

Resolution No. 369: Reimbursement For Correspondence And Distance Learning Courses

Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, Approximately 1.5 million veterans have chosen to study via correspondence training since 1970; and

WHEREAS, The current GI Bill does not meet the needs of many eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, During the early 1970s veterans were reimbursed for 90% of the cost of their tuition; and

WHEREAS, Today veterans enrolled in correspondence courses are reimbursed only 55% of their total course tuition; and

WHEREAS, The average total cost of an accredited correspondence course is just over $1,000, making it the most cost effective method of education today; and

WHEREAS, Correspondence training is often the only educational opportunity available to veterans who are homebound, hospitalized, incarcerated or living in a rural area where no colleges or schools are within reach; and

WHEREAS, Accredited correspondence institutions offer valuable, salable vocational and professional skills in such in-demand fields as computer programming, health care topics, management, electronics technology, and hundreds of other jobs that will help our nation's deserving veterans get better jobs faster and with up-to-date training delivered with convenience and flexible learning techniques such as Internet-based education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in

Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion strongly supports an effort to amend Title 38 to restore the reimbursement rate for correspondence and distance learning training to 90% of tuition.

Resolution No. 370: Amend The Internal Revenue Code For Qualified Veterans Definition
Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 309 (OR))

WHEREAS, The States of Oregon, Alaska, Wisconsin, California and Texas have established veterans' home loan programs; and

WHEREAS, The States of Oregon, Alaska, Wisconsin, California and Texas have authority in the Federal Tax Code to issue Qualified Veteran Mortgage Bonds to finance their respective veteran home loan programs; and

WHEREAS, Veterans' eligibility under current federal tax law restricts the eligibility to Veterans who served on active duty prior to January 1, 1977; and

WHEREAS, The Directors of Veterans Affairs of the States of Oregon, Alaska, Wisconsin, California and Texas desire to extend their respective veteran home loan programs to include the men and women of the United States of America dispatched to participate in the conflicts in Somalia, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Southwest Asia (Persian Gulf), Bosnia and other hostile areas; and

WHEREAS, Veterans of these aforementioned conflicts should receive benefits consistent with the benefits available to veterans of previous armed conflicts; and

WHEREAS, Those veterans have been qualified for eligibility into Congressionally chartered veterans organizations by prior acts of the Congress of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That the Congress of the United States be urged to amend Paragraph 4 of Section 143(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to read: "Qualified Veteran. — For the purpose of this subsection the term 'Qualified Veteran' means any Veteran who meets such requirements as may be imposed by the state law pursuant to which qualified Veterans' mortgage bonds are issued."

...At this time Chairman Koutz presented the following:

Resolution No. 371: Housing Preference For Low-Income Veterans In The Department Of Housing And Urban Development
Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, There are currently millions of elderly and low-income veterans and veterans' families; and

WHEREAS, Because many of those veterans are living on fixed incomes, it is often difficult if not impossible for them to provide adequate housing for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) operates affordable housing programs for senior citizens; and

WHEREAS, Many needy and deserving veterans are unable to participate in those housing programs because of long waiting lists; and

WHEREAS, A large percentage of those occupying HUD housing are legal and illegal aliens who have never served this country's armed forces; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion supports any legislative or administrative initiative that will give preference to American veterans and their families in obtaining housing through the programs of the

Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Resolution No. 372: Support Major Enhancements For The Montgomery GI Bill
Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, The American Legion first drafted the GI Bill of Rights, which was enacted by Congress in 1944; and

WHEREAS, The nation now has a Total Force military policy that requires the operational integration and deployment of active-duty, National Guard and Reserve forces; and

WHEREAS, All members of the Total Force endure the same hardships and sacrifices, including National Guard and Reserve personnel who contribute to every operational mission and deployment; and

WHEREAS, Although the MGIB for active-duty has received significant improvements, the MGIB for the Selected Reserve has failed to keep pace with the new role played by its beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, Currently, MGIB-SR beneficiaries receive the same benefit whether Federalized or not; and

WHEREAS, However, Selected Reservists called to active duty could receive no MGIB benefits if their service is at the end of their contract; and

WHEREAS, There is a clear difference in the financial benefits between MGIB and MGIB-SR beneficiaries serving in harm's way; and

WHEREAS, The original purposes of the GI bill are sound and supportable; and

WHEREAS, Many Selective Reserve members have significant readjustment challenges upon discharge from active-duty service; and

WHEREAS, Readjustment benefits for Selective Reserve members are minimal at best; and

WHEREAS, The current structure and management of the MGIB by the Departments of Defense and Veterans' Affairs causes administrative confusion and inequitable allocation of benefits; and

WHEREAS, A grateful nation should honor the service of all members of the Total Force GI Bill that is compatible with the nation's Total Force military policy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That Congress should move Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) from Title 10, the United States Code (USC) to Title 38 USC; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the annual appropriations for the MGIB and the MGIB-SR become one annual appropriation within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA has administrative authority for both the MGIB and the MGIB-SR; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Defense be authorized to continue its practice to offer Recruitment and Retention incentives, such as college funds, enlistment bonuses, re-enlistment bonuses, and loan repayments; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That MGIB-SR benefits remain available for use up to ten years following separation from the Select Reserve; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That VA creates a MGIB-SR participant reimbursement rate adjusted for time spent on Federalization activation, State activation, and normal service for a period not to exceed 36 months.

Resolution No. 373: Support Licensure And Certification Of Active-Duty Service Personnel
Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense (DoD) provides some of the best vocational training in the nation for its military personnel; and

WHEREAS, DoD establishes, measures and evaluates performance standards for every occupation with the armed forces; and

WHEREAS, There are many occupational career fields in the armed forces can easily translate to a civilian counterpart; and

WHEREAS, There are many occupations in the civilian workforce that require a license or certification; and

WHEREAS, In the armed forces, these unique occupations are performed to approved military standards that may meet or exceed the civilian license or certification criteria; and

WHEREAS, Upon separation, many former military personnel, certified as proficient in their military occupational career, are not licensed or certified to perform the comparable job in the civilian workforce, thus hindering chances for immediate civilian employment and delaying career advancement; and

WHEREAS, This situation creates an artificial barrier to employment upon separation from military service; and

WHEREAS, A study by the Presidential Commission on Servicemembers' and Veterans' Transition Assistance identified a total of 105 military professions where civilian credentialing is required; and

WHEREAS, The Montgomery GI Bill was authorized to pay up to $2,000 for the cost of each credentialing examination for eligible service members; and

WHEREAS, The Montgomery GI Bill is not authorized to pay for civilian licenses or to pay for necessary preparatory course work for the credentialing examinations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support efforts to eliminate employment barriers that impede the transfer of military job skills to the civilian labor market; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Defense take appropriate steps to ensure that service members be trained, tested, evaluated and issued any licensure or certification that may be required in the civilian workforce; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support making the Montgomery GI Bill eligibility available to pay for all necessary civilian license and certification examination requirements, including necessary preparatory courses; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support efforts to increase the civilian labor market's acceptance of the occupational training provided by the military.

Resolution No. 374: Funding For Homeless Programs
Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States has passed legislation to fund the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care for Homeless Veterans program, the Homeless Domiciliary Care Program and the Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) rehabilitation program; and

WHEREAS, Some of these programs have been in partnership with veterans service organizations and other non-profit organizations; and

WHEREAS, There are estimates ranging from 250,000 to one million veterans who are homeless; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has been an active partner with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs with the Health Care for Homeless Veterans and CWT programs; and

WHEREAS, These programs have proved to be successful in rehabilitation of the

veteran in helping him/her to become a productive citizen again; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion renew its commitment to assisting homeless veterans and their families; and, be it further

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

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek and support any legislative or administrative proposal that will provide medical, rehabilitative and employment assistance to homeless veterans and their families; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion shall call on the Congress of the United States to keep the Health Care for Homeless Veterans program, the Homeless Domiciliary program and the Compensated Work Therapy Rehabilitation program funded separately from general United States Department of Veterans Affairs funding.

Resolution No. 375: Homestead Privilege To Veterans
Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

WHEREAS, Since the Revolutionary War America has honored her veterans by granting them homestead acreage because of their service to our country; and

WHEREAS, Congress is considering granting Alaskan Native Vietnam veterans limited rights to obtain public land allotment; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are the most homeless group of the population that ever existed in our country; and

WHEREAS, Our federal government has ample public lands available to grant veterans homestead lots; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That Congress be petitioned to open up homestead privileges to United States military veterans on a priority basis.

Resolution No. 379: Home Loan Guaranty Program
Origin: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Other Economic Matters

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

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

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

WHEREAS, To date the DVA has guaranteed over 18 million loans to eligible veterans and has, for the most part, maintained a default rate that compares very favorably with the default rate on private sector mortgages; and

WHEREAS, While 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 certain pilot programs; and

WHEREAS, In 1992 Congress authorized DVA to conduct a three-year pilot program which allowed VA to guarantee Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARMs); and

WHEREAS, During that three-year period the DVA's ARM program became very

popular and accounted for approximately 22 percent of all loans guaranteed by the DVA; and

WHEREAS, One of the attractive features of an ARM is that it allows the borrower to obtain a home loan with an interest rate below that of a normal fixed rate loan, thus allowing that person to select the financing option that best suits their needs; and

WHEREAS, Because the DVA's ARM program was underwritten much more conservatively than ARMs available in the conventional market, very few loans went into default; and

WHEREAS, Although the DVA and Congress were in favor of making the program permanent, the Congressional Budget Office blocked a permanent extension because it believed that the cost would be $36 million per year, even though the DVA had proven that it could run that program at a lower cost; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion reaffirm its strong support for the Department of Veterans Affairs' Loan Guaranty Service and its Programs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation to reinstate the Department of Veterans Affairs' Adjustable Rate Mortgage program; and, be it finally

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

Mr. Commander, as a delegate from the Department of Indiana, I move for the adoption of this report.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Do I hear a second?

…Second from floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: I've heard a second, any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed say 'no.' Motion carried. The report of the Economics Employment Veterans Preference and Other Economic Matters is adopted.

Presentation: Employer of the Year Awards for Hiring Veterans
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

Now it's time to extend special recognition to three employers for their outstanding record of making jobs available to veterans. That special recognition comes in the form of The American Legion Employer of the Year Award. We recognize three such organization as 2005 Employers of the Year. One award is for companies employing 50 or less people; another for companies employing 51 to 200 people; and the third for companies with more than 200 workers.

Each is nominated by a Post and advances through Department and National competition levels. The award in the 50 employees or less category goes to Robert J. Albert Printing Service of Clearwater, Florida. Accepting the award is Bill Sorrick, Department of Florida.

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Employer of Veterans, 2005. Presented to Robert J. Albert Printing Service for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at the 88th Annual National Convention, Salt Lake City, Utah, August 30, 2006.

NATL COMDR BOCK: The award in the 51 to 200 category goes to ITS Medical Systems, LLC of Duluth, Georgia. Accepting the award is Robert A. Carpenter, Project Manager and Albert H. Wesselmann, Chief Operating Officer.

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Employer of Veterans, 2005. Presented to ITS Medical Systems, LLC for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at the 88th Annual National Convention, Salt Lake City, Utah, August 30, 2006.

MR. ALBERT H. WESSELMANN: I'm Al and a Legionnaire too. We have almost 190 employees in our company; nearly two-thirds of them are either currently in the military as reservists or National Guardsmen, or they were formerly in the military. About a third of us are retirees. That doesn't mean we stopped working; it means we stopped working in the way we did before.

We still support soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines. We still take care of them. Our employees primarily train soldiers, sailors and Marines to take care of other sailors, soldiers and Marines who get injured. We train medics, and we're very proud of what we do and we're very proud of this award you gave to us.We trust that we can eam your confidence in the future, too, by doing a good job. Thank you.

NATL COMDR BOCK: The 2005 Employer of the Year Award in the 200 plus category goes to Alutiiq-Wackenhut Security Services at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Here to accept the award is Mike Goodwin, Regional Manager and Steve Kressin, Human Resources Director.

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Employer of Veterans, 2005. Presented to Alutiiq-Wackenhut Security Services for an exceptional record in the employment of veterans. Presented at the 88th Annual National Convention, Salt Lake City, Utah, August 30, 2006.

MR. STEVE KRESSIN: On behalf of Alutiiq and Wackenhut, I thank everyone here and everyone who was involved in our recognition. I thank Alutiiq and Wackenhut for giving me the opportunity to continue to put veterans to work and feel productive. Just like my predecessor, I hope that we can continue tradition.

NATL COMDR BOCK: On behalf of every veteran in America, I extend to you our congratulations and say those words to all workers loved to hear, thanks for a job well done. We're certain you will keep hiring veterans. Please tell other businesses about the reliability and the work ethic of veterans. Thank you and congratulations.

Presentation: American Legion Local Veterans Employee Representative of the Year Award
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

Another employment award that I'm honored to present goes to the top Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) in the nation. The award honors an individual who has done such a remarkable job of placing veterans in jobs that even their peers take notice.

The employment service award to the Local Veterans Employment Representative for 2005, goes to Walter A. Pollock, Jr., of Columbus, Georgia.

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion National Award for Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative of the year 2005. Presented to Walter A. Pollock, Jr., for your outstanding service to the veterans of the state of Georgia.

MR. WALTER A. POLLOCK, JR.: I am a member of Post 35, Columbus, Georgia and everybody should know Columbus, Georgia because we just won the Little League World Series against Japan. (*Applause.*) Yes! Ok.

It's not me who wins the award; it's the team that wins the award. Thanks to my

career center manager Mikell Fryer, for giving me the latitude and the ability to do my job and to the people that work with me. I have another LVER Desiree Roberson and I have four DVOPs: Ben Seger, Selus Brown, Vanderbilt King, and George Vann and these are the people that make up our team in our area.

I thank The American Legion for supporting the DVOP and LVER program and helping to make some of this I heard in your resolutions. I did not personally know that you supported Chapter 38 and the DVOP and LVERs.

Presentation: Disabled Veterans Outreach Program of the Year Award
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

The American Legion is also proud of the men and women who work on behalf of disabled veterans seeking employment. This year I'm happy to present the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program of the Year Award to Jerry Roehl of Boise, Idaho.

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion National Award Outstanding DVOP of the year 2005. Presented to Jerry Roehl, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist for your outstanding service to the veterans of the state of Idaho.

MR. JERRY ROEHL: It's a distinguished honor to stand in front of such a group of distinguished veterans. In 1971, I reenlisted in the Air Force. For Christmas, my brother gave me a membership to The American Legion in Foley, Minnesota. I've carried on that tradition of being a member every since, with a stop in Utah as a Post Commander at the age of 25. I support The American Legion and our veterans. This award is a distinct honor for me, my Department, and for all veterans in the state of Idaho.

Presentation: Employment Service Office of the Year
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

Continuing with our recognition of those who assist our fellow veterans in finding meaningful employment, it's time to honor the top employment service officer of the year.

The award goes to Escarosa Career Center Veterans' Programs of Pensacola, Florida. Accepting the award is Samuel L. Denson, Manager for the Alabama Career Center office.

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion National Award to the Outstanding Employment Service Office of the Year 2005, is presented to the Escarosa Career Center Veterans' Programs for outstanding service to the veterans of the state of Florida.

MR. SAMUEL L. DENSON: On behalf of the state of Florida, the staff of the Regional Workforce Board Escarosa, and the Escarosa Career Center, and the Legionnaires of Post 240 of Pensacola, Florida. We thank you for this award, an award for which we will forever honor and cherish by assisting veterans in gaining meaningful employment opportunities.

MS. THERESA HAYES: I'm a Local Veterans Employment Representative at the Pensacola office. It is my distinct honor to be here today to accept this award from a great organization like The American Legion. I've been involved in The American Legion since I was about 10 years old. My mom was the President of the Auxiliary, my dad was the Post Commander. I was involved with the Color Guard. I'm an Army veteran and now an appointment representative to service all veterans. I thank all of you for everything that you do for veterans, and thank you for your service.

Presentation: Homeless Veterans Outreach Award

Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

The charge of The American Legion is to provide service to veterans and their families. That service includes helping our homeless veterans as they try to reenter society as productive, self-supporting citizens. I thank God that we have agencies across America that initiate outreach programs to assist our homeless veterans.

I'm honored to present an award to one agency that goes above and beyond the call of duty to help our homeless veterans. Accepting the award is Kent Phelps, Chairman of the Homeless Veterans Task Force, Blackfoot, Idaho.

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion National 2005 Homeless Veterans Outreach Award is presented to The American Legion Family Department of Idaho for the year 2005, for exceptional efforts towards the elimination of homelessness among veterans in the state of Idaho. Presented at the 88th Annual National Convention Salt Lake City, August 30, 2006.

MR. KENT PHELPS: This is truly an honor for the state of Idaho. The Legion family plays the most important part in our homeless standdowns within Idaho. Our homeless veterans are somewhat transient, particularly when winter comes. So, I'd like to thank Florida and California for taking them in during the winter.

NATL COMDR BOCK: The Chair recognizes Joe Caouette of New Hampshire, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Americanism, for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Americanism
Joseph Caouette, New Hampshire, Chairman

Fifty-two members of your Convention Committee on Americanism met at 8:30 am on Sunday, August 27, 2006, in the Ballroom A, Hilton Salt Lake City Hotel City Center, to discuss matters of Americanism-related resolutions assigned to the committee.

The committee organized by electing Joseph E. Caouette, Jr. (NH), Chairman; Charles Gannon (MD), Vice Chairman; and Ralph Bozella (CO) as the Secretary.

The committee discussed 66 resolutions that were assigned to the group. The resolutions that were considered continue to reflect the desire by the Departments of The American Legion to address matters of patriotism and government, and to maintain strong general Americanism programs that compliment the organization and benefit the Nation.

A motion was made by James Brouillette (VT) and seconded by Ernest Paradis (ME) 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. The motion was approved.

Sixty-six resolutions were considered with 26 being approved, 30 approved and consolidated, seven referred to the standing Americanism Commission, two received and recorded, and one rejected.

Approved

Resolution No. 336: Internal Security Of The United States
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WEREAS, The American Legion has always recognized the importance of investigations that expose the truth about subversive activities that may harm or seek to destroy our constitutional government; and

WHEREAS, The Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of

Investigation, both security agencies of this Nation, perform functions essential to the maintenance of our national security; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion supports the thorough background investigation of all applicants for federal employment to expose possible links to subversive activities or membership in subversive organizations that contribute to the weakening of the internal security of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the President and the Congress of the United States to immediately take such action as may be appropriate and necessary to effectively fund and staff federal intelligence and security agencies at a level that will help protect us from foreign espionage, organized crime, terrorism and subversive activities; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the President and the Congress of the United States to approve legislation and take executive action as necessary to deny subversive individuals or groups the ability to infiltrate and subsequently destroy our government agencies and institutions through federal employment.

Resolution No. 338: Return Patriotic Holidays To Traditional Dates
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The dates of certain patriotic holidays have been changed from their original dates to create "three-day weekends"; and

WHEREAS, The time-honored traditional observances of these holidays has been eroded; and

WHEREAS, The majority of Americans view Memorial Day as a time for relaxation and leisure recreation rather than as a solemn occasion and a time to reflect and pay tribute to the American servicemen and women who sacrificed their lives in defense of our Nation; and

WHEREAS, By urging the ringing of bells in our communities for one minute on traditional Memorial Day, May 30, it will help Americans to realize that the true purpose of this day is to pay tribute to those who have given so much for their country; and

WHEREAS, Our hope for the future has been made possible because our servicemen and women have made sacrifices in order to secure freedom for America and the ringing of community bells is a fitting way to observe traditional Memorial Day in the years to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion calls upon the Congress of the United States to restore the official observance of Lincoln's Birthday to February 12, Washington's Birthday to February 22, Memorial Day to May 30 and Columbus Day to October 12 each year; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the passage of federal legislation that would result in an annual Presidential proclamation calling on all American institutions, public and private, to toll their bells for one minute, beginning at 11:00 a.m. on the traditional Memorial Day, May 30, in remembrance of the servicemen and women who died defending our Nation and our freedom.

Resolution No. 339: English Language Be Used In Naturalization Ceremonies
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 567, entitled, "Naturalization Ceremony," was passed by delegates to the 56th annual National Convention of The American Legion in 1974 and opposed any change in the Judicial Naturalization Ceremony for new United States citizens; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, naturalization ceremonies have been conducted in foreign languages; and

WHEREAS, Several resolutions have been passed by The American Legion which urged Congress and the various state legislatures to declare the English language as the official language of government in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Amendments to the Immigration and Naturalization Act makes the traditional naturalization ceremony conducted in a U.S. District Court optional and allows naturalization by mail, thereby removing an integral and indelible step in the naturalization process; and

WHEREAS, Legionnaires and Posts of The American Legion have traditionally participated in naturalization ceremonies as part of the Legion's Americanism program; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion encourages the Congress of the United States to repeal that portion of Title 8, USC, Sec. 1448, that makes the court ceremony optional for naturalization and reinstate language that makes a naturalization ceremony in a U. S. District Court a mandatory step in the process of acquiring U.S. citizenship; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges Congress, the U.S. Justice Department and the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services of the Department of Homeland Security to require that all Citizenship Naturalization Ceremonies be conducted in the English language.

Resolution No. 340: Illegal Aliens
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, Current law, as established within "The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986" (IRCA) has not achieved the results desired by The American Legion for addressing the many and varied problems created by illegal aliens; and

WHEREAS, A 1996 study by the Center for Immigration Studies estimated the cost of the IRCA amnesty after 10 years at $76.7 billion for the 2.7 million illegal aliens who received amnesty, which represents a government subsidy of $28,727 for each illegal alien; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) reported that more than 1.1 million illegal aliens were apprehended at our borders during 2005 and an estimated $1.7 billion worth of illegal drugs were seized; and

WHEREAS, Illegal aliens in the United States create serious economic problems which include increased welfare costs, adverse effects on the American labor market, and the expense of detecting, detaining, processing and deporting of apprehended illegals; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are displaced from employment by the employment of illegal aliens; and

WHEREAS, There must be a broad exchange of information and related action among those Executive Departments responsible for dealing with various aspects of immigration law and illegal aliens; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion wishes to reiterate its opposition to any type of amnesty ("legalization") program, that excuses and rewards the law-breaking illegal aliens; and

WHEREAS, On March 1, 2003, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service ceased to exist and its responsibilities were incorporated into the new Department of Homeland Security; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion supports strict enforcement of employer sanctions as called for in current employment laws that assess heavy penalties on employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Homeland Security be provided the

monies necessary to ensure both the thorough performance of its responsibilities and to ensure the security of the borders of the United States; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That aliens illegally in the U.S. should be denied Social Security benefits, unemployment compensation, and other types of public assistance; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourages the United States government to hold essential agency heads accountable in guaranteeing the desired communications and exchanges of technical information concerning the various aspects of the illegal alien issue.

Resolution No. 341: Immigration Reform
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The inability and/or unwillingness of certain government agencies to enforce immigration quotas, laws and policies has resulted in an influx of illegal immigrants into this country; and

WHEREAS, The former Immigration and Naturalization Service's (INS) Statistics Division reported that approximately six percent of the state and federal prison population is non-citizens and about 1.1 million apprehensions of illegal aliens occur each year along the southern border of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Many illegal aliens resort to document fraud to establish their employability, their residency and eligibility for this country's social services, often displacing U.S. workers; and

WHEREAS, The United States has no centralized database for determining eligibility for employment and social services by immigrants; and

WHEREAS, According to the National Academy of Sciences, each native household in the United States has to pay $166 to $266 a year to support those immigrant households; and

WHEREAS, The federal government has failed to mandate the enforcement of existing immigration laws; and

WHEREAS, On March 1, 2003, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service ceased to exist and its responsibilities were incorporated into the new Department of Homeland Security; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion is unalterably opposed to illegal immigration; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourages the Congress of the United States, state governments, the U.S. Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security to take necessary action to stop the massive flow of illegal immigration into this country by means that include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **Hire and train additional U.S. Border Patrol agents with employment preference afforded former members of the United States Armed Forces; and**
2. **Encourage the United States Congress to require the Department of Homeland Security to work with state and local law enforcement agencies to enforce immigration laws in this country; and**
3. **Require that all legal aliens carry U.S. Government issued identification documents that are made as secure as technology allows and that are verifiable by any employer or benefit agency through an easy-to-access central database; and**
4. **Petition the President of the United States and the Congress to enact measures to effectively halt the smuggling of illegal immigrants into this country; and**
5. **Grant law enforcement agencies at the local, state and federal levels the**

authority to work together to apprehend and incarcerate, where appropriate, illegal immigrants, especially those determined to have ties to terrorist groups and organizations; and

6. That, as appropriate, military resources be employed to assist in stopping the flow of illegal aliens into this country, and all of the resources of the United States of America be utilized to enforce the security of our country's borders; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion initiate an information campaign to alert its members, federal and state elected officials, and the general public of the massive influx into the country of illegal immigrants, the consequences of mass immigration and how it will affect the standards of living in these United States.

Resolution No. 342: Injured Or Disabled Non-Citizen Veterans Applying For Naturalization

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, During our Nation's call to arms in the preservation of our liberty, our Nation has been blessed with the services of individuals from many nations who cherish liberty; and

WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States has recognized that through service in our Armed Forces these servicemen have forged a bond with our Country; and

WHEREAS, Under the present Immigration and Nationality Act the non-citizen soldier is allowed to apply for naturalization only upon completion of three (3) years of active duty; and

WHEREAS, Some non-citizen servicemen were injured or became disabled while on active duty and were medically discharged from the Armed Forces for said injuries or medical conditions prior to the completion of three years of active duty service; and

WHEREAS, Admitting men and women with service-connected disabilities into the U.S. does not increase the taxpayer's obligation, since all U. S. veterans, without regard to their citizenship or residence, are currently entitled to both disability compensation and medical care from the Department of Veterans Affairs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support legislation that will amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to allow non-citizen veterans with less than three years of active duty and who were legally in the United States at the time of enlistment, to seek naturalization if they are injured or their injuries aggravated while on active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces, resulting in a discharge under honorable conditions.

Resolution No. 343: School Prayer

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, Americans have historically believed in seeking God's protection and guidance through prayer; and

WHEREAS, The value of expressing spiritual convictions through public prayer has been recognized as a firm basis on which to conduct public proceedings; and

WHEREAS, Supreme Court decisions during the early 1960s have had the effect of severely restricting the practice of any manner of public prayer even though these decisions simply addressed prescribed or compulsory prayer; and

WHEREAS, This restriction is most evident in our nation's public schools where a concurrent moral and spiritual decline is clearly manifested; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion reaffirms its support for an amendment to the Constitution of the United States that would permit voluntary prayer in public buildings, including public schools and at other

public gatherings; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress pass legislation to promote the concept of school prayer in order to ensure that our Nation's public school children have a daily opportunity to pray.

Resolution No. 344: Constitutional Amendment To Protect The Flag Of The United States

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion has campaigned diligently for the passage of an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to protect the symbol of our Nation, the Flag of the United States, from physical desecration; and

WHEREAS, Part of that campaign has included the founding of The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc., a coalition of civic, veteran, business and fraternal organizations which have come together to persuade Congress to propose a flag amendment; and

WHEREAS, The legislatures of all 50 states have indicated by memorial resolutions to the U.S. Congress that such an amendment to the U.S. Constitution is needed in view of the 1989 decision of the United States Supreme Court (Texas v. Johnson) that invalidated all flag protection laws; and

WHEREAS, Surveys have shown that over 80% of the American people support the passage of a flag amendment; and

WHEREAS, Since the time of the American Revolution millions of men and women have proudly defended our country under the "Stars & Stripes" and, as a last gesture of gratitude this emblem of our country is placed upon the coffin of veterans as a token of respect for services rendered to a grateful nation; and

WHEREAS, In the 109th Congress, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a proposed flag amendment, while the measure failed by one vote (66-34) in the U.S. Senate; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion continue to urge the Congress of the United States to propose and approve an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would allow the Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the Flag of the United States; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue its efforts through affiliation with The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc. to bring a successful conclusion to the grassroots campaign to amend the Constitution of the United States of America in order to return to the people their right to protect the Flag from acts of physical desecration.

Resolution No. 346: Conscientious Objectors Tax Diversion

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The Constitution of the United States of America provides for the common defense of all citizens; and

WHEREAS, The freedoms we enjoy and the security of our Nation that we desire rests on the individual determination of each of us to help preserve it; and

WHEREAS, Legislation has been introduced in Congress that would allow conscientious objectors to elect to have their taxes spent for non-military purposes; and

WHEREAS, Implementation of such a practice could affect military strength and national security; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges Congress to oppose legislation that would give conscientious objectors a voice in diverting monies from military spending.

Resolution No. 347: Oppose Changes To "Title V Of The Immigration And Nationality Act"

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, that includes Title V of the Immigration and Nationality Act, has proven to be a valuable tool in keeping terrorists from our shores; and

WHEREAS, A most vital section of this law allows for the gathering of secret evidence that identifies the person as a terrorist or links the person to a known terrorist organization or group; and

WHEREAS, Information obtained by the United States intelligence community on individuals identified as terrorists or having links to terrorist organizations were reportedly used in some INS administrative deportation hearings; and

WHEREAS, Title V of the Immigration and Nationality Act authorized the use of evidence, the source of which must remain secret and allowed for the use of this secret evidence in INS administrative deportation hearings; and

WHEREAS, Revealing the sources of the secret evidence would compromise intelligence gathering methods, operations, personnel and jeopardize national security; and

WHEREAS, Denial of this vital evidence in administrative deportation hearings could result in known terrorists remaining in the United States, posing a threat to our national security; and

WHEREAS, There is proposed legislation before Congress that would deny the opportunity to have this secret evidence presented at administrative deportation hearings; and

WHEREAS, On March 1, 2003, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service ceased to exist and its responsibilities were incorporated into the new Department of Homeland Security; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion opposes any change to "Title V of the Immigration and Nationality Act" (8 U.S.C. 1531-1537) that would require revealing the source(s) of secret evidence used in the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, administrative deportation hearings.

Resolution No. 348: Oppose Amnesty For Illegal Immigrants

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, Consideration is being given to granting amnesty to millions of illegal immigrants currently in the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, Any policy that leads to millions of illegal immigrants receiving legal permission to remain in the United States, whether such a policy is disguised in euphemistic language such as "legalization," "regularization," "a guest worker program," "earned status adjustment," or "earned access," is in fact an amnesty for having broken the laws of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Amnesty for illegal aliens will encourage still more people to immigrate illegally to this country and will further erode respect for the law; and

WHEREAS, The 1986 amnesty involving 2.7 million immigrants is estimated to have cost the American taxpayers $78 billion; and

WHEREAS, The amnesty proposals being contemplated today are much larger—encompassing some or all of the estimated nine to eleven million illegal immigrants living in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Because of existing "family reunification" policies that allow immigrants to bring extended family members to this country, an amnesty program could

make millions more people eligible to immigrate in the coming decade and at much greater cost than that of the amnesty granted in 1986; and

WHEREAS, Neither the Administration or Congress have explained how a massive amnesty program for illegal immigrants will benefit the American public; and

WHEREAS, Numerous authoritative studies have shown that mass immigration has harmed the interests of millions of Americans, including veterans, by undercutting wages and working conditions, overburdening local schools, public health care facilities and other vital social institutions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion opposes all legislation that would result in the granting of amnesty and legal residency, in any form or by any name, to millions of illegal immigrants currently in the United States; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourages the federal government to provide the needed resources to enforcement agencies tasked with curtailing illegal immigration in this country.

Resolution No. 349: Oppose Financial Aid For Illegal Alien Students
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, "The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986" (IRCA) has not achieved the results desired by The American Legion for addressing the many and varied problems created by the large number of illegal aliens in this country; and

WHEREAS, A 1996 analysis by the Center for Immigration Studies estimated the cost of the IRCA, after 10 years, at $76.7 billion for the 2.7 million illegal aliens granted amnesty representing a government (taxpayer) subsidy of $28,727 for each illegal alien; and

WHEREAS, Delegates to the Eighty-Sixth National Convention of The American Legion held in Nashville, Tennessee, August 31, Sept. 1, 2, 2004, adopted Resolution No. 422, that encouraged the Congress of the United States to restrict the eligibility of illegal aliens for publicly funded assistance; and

WHEREAS, Proposed legislation would cancel deportation orders against and grant permanent residency (amnesty) to illegal aliens under the age of 21, who have been in the United States for five consecutive years and who have been enrolled in a middle or secondary school in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Certain members of Congress have attempted to amend the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA), to allow illegal aliens to attend state universities at in-state tuition rates; and

WHEREAS, Such legislation would place American citizens at a comparative disadvantage by allowing illegal aliens to receive in-state tuition rates, federal education grants and financial assistance while American citizens have to pay higher out of state tuition rates if they are not residents of the state in which they attend a state institution of higher education; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that "rewarding" illegal aliens with amnesty and financial aid will increase the flow of illegal aliens into the United States increasing the financial burden on law-abiding taxpayers who would ultimately pay for these services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion opposes any legislation or executive order that would allow illegal aliens and others who are in this country illegally to receive in-state tuition rates, federal or other government education grants and or financial assistance to attend a college or university in the United States.

Resolution No. 350: Reform Of The Student Visa System

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, Participants in both the 1993 and 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center were reportedly in the United States on student visas; and

WHEREAS, There are more than 589,841 foreign students in the United States, according to the Institute of International Education; and

WHEREAS, There is no active tracking system for determining whether those admitted as foreign students actually arrive at their chosen schools, whether they change their courses to study military technology, or whether they drop out but fail to leave the country; and

WHEREAS, After the 1993 attack, Congress required the former Immigration and Naturalization Service to develop a means to keep records of foreign students, and, specifically, their whereabouts; and

WHEREAS, The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) was developed to provide tracking, monitoring, and access to accurate and current information on non-immigrant students and exchange visitors; and

WHEREAS, SEVIS was designed to enable schools and program sponsors to transmit electronic information and event notifications via the Internet to the monitoring agencies of the federal government throughout a student or exchange visitor's stay in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Many educators formerly opposed a similar program, but now support full implementation of the SEVIS program; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion encourages the Congress of the United States to mandate that the former INS Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) or a similar program to track foreign students continue and be aggressively administered by the responsible agency of the federal government; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That institutions of higher education failing to cooperate with the federal government in monitoring and tracking foreign students be ineligible to receive federal student loan monies benefitting foreign students.

Resolution No. 351: Immigration Policy For The 21st Century
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, In 1986, Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act giving amnesty to all illegal aliens who had successfully evaded justice for four years or more or were illegally working in agriculture; and

WHEREAS, As a result of the Immigration Reform and Control Act, 2.7 million illegal aliens were admitted as legal immigrants to the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Census Bureau has reported that there are at least 8.7 million illegal aliens residing in the United States; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that, of those 8.7 million illegal aliens, 60 percent entered the country illegally while 40 percent entered legally and stayed (illegally) past the expiration date of their temporary visa; and

WHEREAS, There have been improvements in border security to impede the 60 percent who enter illegally but there has been little improvement in identifying the 40 percent who overstay their visa; and

WHEREAS, In theory, illegal aliens cannot get jobs or welfare in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Because of document fraud illegal aliens are able to work and receive government benefits unquestioned; and

WHEREAS, Document fraud is possible because the United States has no centralized database for determining an eligibility for work or welfare; and

WHEREAS, The cost of displacing American workers, the cost of giving welfare to illegal aliens, and the cost of providing them general services is an estimated $15 billion annually; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That the Congress of the United States be encouraged to adopt an immigration policy for the 21st century that will eliminate social, economic and population problems caused by rampant illegal immigration; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion reiterates its support for measures that will:

- **Limit legal immigration and eliminate illegal immigration;**
- **Eliminate visa categories for adult offspring, siblings and the diversity visa program;**
- **Restrict the eligibility of illegal aliens for publicly-funded assistance;**
- **Implement a nationwide system for easily verifying authorization to work; and**
- **Provide necessary resources for effective border management and interior enforcement.**

Resolution No. 352: Amend The "Temporary Protected Status" Portion Of The Immigration Act Of 1990

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is a classification granted to eligible nationals of designated countries who are temporarily present in the United States when natural disaster or political turmoil in their country interferes with their plans to return; and

WHEREAS, A person from a designated country who is in the United States is eligible to be granted TPS only by establishing that the designated country was the applicant's last place of habitual residence; and

WHEREAS, TPS beneficiaries are granted work authorization during the TPS period and for any extensions of the designation; and

WHEREAS, TPS was created by the Immigration Act of 1990; and

WHEREAS, Anyone in the United States from the designated country is eligible for TPS, whether they entered the country in violation of our immigration law in order to find work or for other reasons, or violated the law by staying in the country and taking a job illegally, or were a bona fide visitor; and

WHEREAS, Currently seven countries are designated as TPS; and

WHEREAS, Conferring TPS status on persons illegally in the United States rewards them with a work permit that legitimizes their illegal activity; and

WHEREAS, Any person who can establish that they fear persecution if forced to return to their country of origin is eligible for asylum in the United States; and

WHEREAS, TPS allows aliens to live in the United States without our being able to learn their true identities or background information; and

WHEREAS, The events of September 11, 2001 have proven that we can no longer afford to accept people into our country without thorough background checks; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion encourages the Congress of the United States to amend the Temporary Protected Status section of the Immigration Act of 1990 to limit its coverage to foreign visitors legally in the United States.

Resolution No. 353: Tracking Arrival And Departure Of Foreign Visitors To The United States

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, Each day, foreign visitors flood our nation's ports of entry; and

WHEREAS, In the aftermath of terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, it was revealed that our government did not have the ability to determine when a foreign visitor leaves the United States or overstays their visa; and

WHEREAS, President Bush, during his 2002 State of the Union address, said that (we will) "use technology to track the arrivals and departures of visitors to the United States"; and

WHEREAS, The technology exists to place biometric information on visas to identify visitors, keep track of their entry and exit, and confirm compliance with the terms of their entry; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion encourages the Congress of the United States to provide agencies of the federal government with the necessary resources to track the arrival and departure of foreign visitors to the United States.

Resolution No. 354: Support Fairness For Immigrant Spouses
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion was founded by veterans who were concerned about the welfare of dependents of servicemen and women killed as a result of their service in World War I; and

WHEREAS, Current immigration law requires an immigrant spouse to be married to a citizen of the United States for two years before proceeding with a petition for legal permanent resident status; and

WHEREAS, The immigrant spouse's petition for permanent legal residence is canceled when the citizen spouse dies before the two-year threshold is reached; and

WHEREAS, Current law does not allow immigrant spouses of U.S. military personnel who die while serving in hostile conflict to continue their original petition for permanent resident status; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is committed to caring for the families of the service men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice by giving their lives in the furtherance of the interests of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion encourages the Congress of the United States to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to allow immigrant spouses of U.S. military personnel who die whether in training on military installations or overseas in hostile conflict to continue their petition for permanent resident status without the current two-year eligibility restriction; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Immigration and Nationality Act be amended to waive the fees for posthumous citizenship assessed to surviving family members who lose a relative in hostile combat while a member of the U.S. Armed Forces and who has a pending application for United States citizenship.

Resolution No. 355: Reform Of The Non-Immigrant Visa Program
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The Non-Immigrant Visa program has been used by terrorists and others with unlawful intentions to gain entry into the United States; and

WHEREAS, The fading distinction between the U.S. Non-Immigrant Visa (NIV) and Immigrant Visa (IV) programs has the potential to substantially undermine this country's legal immigration system; and

WHEREAS, The number of people from foreign lands admitted temporarily to this country under the NIV program over the past 20 years has increased from 9.5 million in 1985 to almost 32.8 million in 2003; and

WHEREAS, In 2005, the United States issued 5 million long-term NIVs, an even higher number than were granted permanent resident status; and

WHEREAS, Our national security has been breached by issuing visas for travel to this country without thorough background checks, resulting in the death of thousands of U.S. citizens and others on September 11, 2001; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion encourages the Congress of the United States to establish numerical limits for all immigration categories of temporary workers to help prevent labor market distortions; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the U.S. Department of State be required to enforce the completion of a thorough background check and also interview each candidate for a U.S. visa prior to issuing said visa; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the U.S. Department of State be responsible for tracking and arresting those visa recipients who perpetrate fraud and/or are visa overstays and that they be turned over to the Department of Homeland Security for removal/deportation processing.

Resolution No. 356: Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, Since the earliest days of our republic, Congress has exercised its constitutional power to establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization; and

WHEREAS, The Rules of Naturalization, as established by Congress, requires an oath of allegiance and renunciation of all prior allegiances as a condition of naturalization; and

WHEREAS, The Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance serves as a contract between the applicant for citizenship and the United States govemment in which the applicant, in return for the benefits and privileges received, agrees to

1. Renounce all allegiance to any foreign state or sovereign;
2. Support and defend the U.S. Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, both foreign and domestic;
3. Bear "true faith and allegiance" to the United States of America; and
4. Bear arms, perform noncombatant service, or perform work of national importance on behalf of the United States of America; and
5. Take this oath without mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that naturalization is a privilege, not a right, to be granted only in accordance with the conditions established by the Congress; and

WHEREAS, A "Citizenship Roundtable" was created by NEC Resolution 28 (Oct. 1999) titled "Citizenship Naturalization Process" that established a working relationship between The American Legion and the Hudson Institute, an internationally recognized public policy research not-for-profit 501c(3) organization; and

WHEREAS, The Citizenship Roundtable opposes any revisions to the oath of allegiance that would dilute or eliminate the applicant's commitment, under oath, to the United States of America; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion opposes any and all changes to the Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance, as used in naturalization ceremonies, that would dilute or eliminate any of the following important and necessary elements of the oath:

1. Renunciation of all allegiances to foreign states or sovereignties;

2. Support for and defense of the U.S. Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic;

3. Bear 'true faith and allegiance' to the United States of America; and

4. Bear arms, perform noncombatant service, or perform work of national importance on behalf of the United States of America; and

5. Take this oath without mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourages the Congress of the United States to prescribe the language that is used in the oath of renunciation and allegiance for purposes as outlined in the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Resolution No. 357: Prohibit Use Of Foreign-Issued Forms Of Identification
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The Mexican government has reportedly issued approximately 2 million identification cards known as the "matricular consular" to its nationals, whether they are in the United States legally or illegally during the past two years; and

WHEREAS, The Mexican government is lobbying state and local government jurisdictions and banks for acceptance of the card in the United States, especially in areas where Mexican illegal aliens are concentrated; and

WHEREAS, The Center for Immigration Studies reported that the cards are being issued without authenticating the documents used to obtain the cards and that safeguards are not in place to prevent multiple issuance of the matricular consular cards to the same individual; and

WHEREAS, The matricular consular is useful in the United States only for illegal aliens, since legal immigrants, by definition, already possess U.S. government-issued documents, including official forms of identification; and

WHEREAS, The acceptance of the matricular consular card by many commercial institutions, state and local government agencies in the United States has prompted other Latin American countries (Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Brazil and Colombia) to consider issuance of similar forms of identification for its residents living illegally in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Officials with the Federal Bureau of Investigation were quoted in the *Washington Post* as saying "there are major criminal threats posed by the cards and a potential terrorist threat"; and

WHEREAS, An obvious objective of the effort to gain universal acceptance for the cards is to establish quasi-legal status for an estimated 10-12 million illegal aliens in the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion encourages the Congress of the United States and the state legislatures to pass legislation that would prohibit acceptance of certain foreign-issued forms of identification, to include the Mexican government-issued "Matricular Consular" card, when it is determined said documents lack credibility, authenticity and accuracy of information when used in the application process for federal, state and local government-sponsored public services; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourages businesses in the private sector, including financial institutions, to refrain from accepting as valid identification, foreign issued documents that are not determined to be acceptable forms of identification; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That an agency of the federal government, determined by Congress and working in cooperation with other agencies having responsibilities for the administration and enforcement of immigration laws and policies, be tasked with determining the acceptability of forms of identification issued by foreign governments.

Resolution No. 358: Oppose Dual Allegiance; Enforce Citizenship Oath
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion considers the Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance to be a contract between the applicant for citizenship and the United States government in which the applicant, in return for the benefits and privileges received, agrees to

1. Renounce all allegiance to any foreign state or sovereign;
2. Support and defend the U.S. Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, both foreign and domestic;
3. Bear "true faith and allegiance" to the United States of America; and
4. Bear arms, perform noncombatant service, or perform work of national importance on behalf of the United States of America; and
5. Take this oath without mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and

WHEREAS, In taking the Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance, the immigrant pledges to transfer their full political allegiance from his or her birth nation to the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, According to immigration experts, the great majority of immigrants applying for U.S. citizenship come from countries that "allow or encourage multiple citizenship;" and

WHEREAS, From the beginning of this Republic, Americans have regarded the principle of dual allegiance as inconsistent with the principles of American constitutional democracy; and

WHEREAS, Many immigrant-sending countries, including Mexico, are actively promoting dual allegiance; and

WHEREAS, To retain allegiance to another constitution besides the U.S. Constitution, is inconsistent with the moral and philosophical foundations of American constitutional democracy, thus violating our core principles as outlined in the Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance; and

WHEREAS, The integrity of the Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance and the integrity of the entire citizenship naturalization process are challenged or compromised by the continuing increase in the number of U.S. citizens who hold multiple national allegiances; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion and the Hudson Institute, an internationally recognized public policy research not-for-profit 501c(3) organization, have established a working relationship called the "Citizenship Roundtable" to address concerns about the naturalization process in the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion encourage the Congress of the United States to enact measures to enforce the Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance and reject dual allegiance in principle and restrict and narrow its application in practice.

Resolution No. 359: Call For Action On Illegal Immigration Issue
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion, since its inception in 1919, has called for limits on legal immigration, expressing its concern that large numbers of immigrants arriving in this country would be unable to effectively assimilate into American society; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated by immigration reform groups and reported by news sources that more than 10 million individuals are in this country illegally with an estimated 500,000 illegal aliens arriving each year, thereby threatening the fabric of American society with economic hardship and fostering concerns about acts of terrorism; and

WHEREAS, Americans are becoming increasingly frustrated by what they see as the Federal government's failure to stop this invasion and the actions by some states to provide taxpayer-funded services and other benefits to illegal aliens thus providing additional incentives for more foreigners to enter this country illegally; and

WHEREAS, Citizen action groups such as the Minutemen have formed to monitor the borders and report illegal border crossing to enforcement agencies, creating an appearance of vigilante operations that increases the likelihood of confrontation between these groups and illegal immigrants and criminal smuggling operations; and

WHEREAS, Few candidates for public office or their political parties address the issue of illegal immigration or express a willingness to take a position—either pro or con—as to their stand on illegal immigration in the United States because of the likelihood of alienating a significant number of voters in their jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, The failure by the Federal Government to address this matter threatens the security and future of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion, on behalf of all Americans and future generations of Americans, urge from Congress an immigration reform policy that will secure the borders against those individuals attempting to enter this country illegally; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seize every opportunity to request an accountability of our elected officials in implementing and enforcing federal and international laws and treaties to stem the flood of illegal aliens across our borders; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That all candidates seeking public office and the two major party platforms express publicly to the American people their positions and solutions to this grave danger to our country's stability; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion use all possible means to bring solution to the challenges faced by the United States because of illegal immigration.

Resolution No. 360: The Boy Scouts Of America And The Department Of Defense
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The Eighty-Second National Convention of The American Legion in Milwaukee, Wisconsin passed Resolution 334 titled "Support of Boy Scouts of America" which reiterated The American Legion's longstanding support of the Boy Scouts of America in its efforts to maintain and practice traditional family values with regard to their membership and their leadership standards; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion, as chartered by the United States Congress, pledges to "transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy"; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion endorses the concept that the perpetuation of these principles may best be initiated by an enlightened public achieved through the implementation of educational practices offered in the homes, in our schools and through public wide programs organized and developed for this purpose by organizations like the Boy Scouts of America; and

WHEREAS, The Supreme Court of the United States has upheld the constitutional right of the Boy Scouts of America to set their own standards and membership policies because an indispensable part of being free is the right of individuals to hold moral positions and to associate with others who share those positions; and

WHEREAS, Despite the Supreme Court having ruled in favor of the Boy Scouts' freedom to associate with those sharing their moral views and to not associate with those who do not share their moral views, the Boy Scouts have been subjected to a continual barrage of attacks by groups and individuals holding opposing views; and

WHEREAS, These opposition groups have been successful in eliminating the Scouting program from all branches and installations of the U.S. Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that this unrelenting assault against the Boy Scouts is not a unique occurrence but a part of an orchestrated effort to denigrate, damage and systematically destroy traditional American values, as embodied in the Boy Scouts of America, The American Legion, the Flag of the United States, the Pledge of Allegiance, and numerous other embodiments of Americanism; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion express its steadfast opposition to Department of Defense policies that prohibit the chartering of Boy Scout units by components of the Armed Forces of the United States and the use by the Boy Scouts of America of Department of Defense installations worldwide; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion use every executive, legislative and judicial avenue available to restore longstanding policies of cooperation between the Department of Defense and the Boy Scouts of America that will allow Boy Scout units the right to use DOD facilities and to authorize components of the active duty military, National Guard and reserve units to charter or sponsor Boy Scout units without fear of legal reprisal.

Resolution No. 361: Award Medal Of Honor To The Four Chaplains
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, On the frigid night of February 3, 1943, at approximately 12:55 a.m., the United States troop transport ship *Dorchester* was torpedoed 150 miles off the coast of Greenland throwing the total ship into complete darkness amid shrieks of escaping steam and the frantic cries for help; and

WHEREAS, The Four Chaplains—Lieutenants John P. Washington, Clark V. Poling, George L. Fox and Alexander Goode—moved quickly among the bewildered troops, calming them and directing them to lifeboats and urging and assisting them to escape the quickly sinking vessel; and

WHEREAS, When there were no more life jackets available, the four chaplains aforesaid took off their own life jackets and made others accept them and use them in escaping the sinking vessel and, further, the four chaplains remained on the ship's slanted aft deck with arms linked together, heads bowed in prayer as the *Dorchester* slipped beneath the waves; and

WHEREAS, By their heroic actions, these four chaplains have become a legend with memorials to "their three faiths and one God" arising around this nation to promote brotherhood, to fight bigotry, and to encourage interfaith and interracial unity; and

WHEREAS, By these actions and in the sacrifice of their own lives they have become a beacon of faith for the people of this country to emulate with their traits of compassion and understanding based upon interracial and interfaith lessons as illustrated by the personal action of the four chaplains and is the basis for building bridges of understanding among all people of different faiths, religious and racial backgrounds; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion supports the awarding of the Medal of Honor to U. S. Army Chaplains, Lt. John P. Washington, Lt. Clark V. Poling, Lt. George L. Fox and Lt. Alexander D. Goode, for their heroism which cost them their lives on the night of February 3, 1943.

Resolution No. 362: A Plan To Reduce The Illegal Population In The United States
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The American Legion has urged the Congress of the United States to adopt an immigration policy that will eliminate social, economic and population

problems resulting from our country's failure to secure our nation's borders and to enforce its immigration and employment laws; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is opposed to any amnesty or legalization program, policy or directive that would grant illegal immigrants legal permission to remain in the United States, thereby rewarding them for criminal behavior while penalizing those immigrants following lawful immigration channels; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes our society cannot absorb the more than 12 million individuals that are in this country illegally without causing irreparable harm to our economy, our national security and the welfare of future generations of Americans; and

WHEREAS, Differing opinions on the issue between the houses of Congress and between illegal immigration proponents and opponents, like The American Legion, have resulted in a national debate that is being carried out in the media and on street corners across America; and

WHEREAS, It is the opinion of The American Legion that no effective immigration reform plan, to include any temporary worker programs, can be adopted without first securing our nation's borders; and

WHEREAS, It is universally thought by both proponents and opponents of illegal immigration that immediate deportation by force of all illegal aliens in the United States is not a workable solution to the issue with estimates for such action, according to the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), totaling perhaps as much as $206 billion over the next five years; and

WHEREAS, CIS, an independent non-partisan 501(c)(3) research think tank devoted exclusively to research and policy analysis of the impacts of immigration on the United States, has proposed an alternative to mass deportation or mass legalization of illegals, seeking instead the attrition of the illegal population through law enforcement, stronger border security and efforts to encourage illegal aliens to leave the U.S. of their own accord; and

WHEREAS, The CIS plan, which uses the government's own cost estimates, could cut the illegal population by nearly half in five years with an additional investment of less than $2 billion, or $400 million per year; and

WHEREAS, The provisions of the CIS plan have been reviewed by the National Americanism Commission and are determined to be compatible with the provisions of American Legion resolutions on the subject of illegal immigration; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion endorses the report by the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) titled "Attrition Through Enforcement—A Cost-Effective Strategy to Shrink the Illegal Population" and adopts the action as proposed in the report as a portion of its strategy for reform of the U.S. immigration policy; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion work with CIS to obtain Congressional approval and national acceptance of the plan which includes the following:

- **Mandatory workplace verification of immigration status**
- **Measures to curb misuse of Social Security numbers and IRS identification numbers**
- **Cooperation between federal, state and local law enforcement officials**
- **Increased screening of foreign visitors**
- **Increase non-criminal removals through increased interior enforcement; and**
- **Discourage illegal settlement by adopting additional state and local legislation.**

Approved and Consolidated

Resolution No. 2: Support The Pledge Of Allegiance

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism
(Consolidated with Resolutions 12 (UT), 14 (AZ), 22 (MT), 25 (VT), 50 (NE), 68 (MI), 74 (VA), 140 (WA), 152 (NJ), 165 (ID), 173 (PA), 174 (WV), 177 (KS), 180 (MO), 199 (TX), 217 (WY), 228 (SD), 230 (WI), 236 (ND), 267 (NY), 281 (AR), 287 (HI), 307 (OR), and 315 (MS))

WHEREAS, In October 1970, The American Legion's National Executive Committee passed Resolution 13 titled "Defense and Respect for the United States Flag," that voiced The American Legion's support for continuing the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in the nation's public schools; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, several states have passed legislation to encourage and authorize the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance in the schools within their state; and

WHEREAS, In 1954, The Congress of the United States reaffirmed the influence on government by a supreme power when it revised the Pledge of Allegiance by inserting the words "under God" as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all; and

WHEREAS, Liberal judicial opinions and media coverage has questioned the propriety of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools in the United States, citing the unconstitutionality in references to God; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion, the Congress of the United States, and many other groups and organizations open their regular meetings by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion reiterate its continuing support for the Pledge of Allegiance in its current form, voicing opposition to any and all attempts to revise it beyond the version approved by Congress in 1954, and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the nation's schools to include the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance by teachers and students in regular school activities and events; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion, at all levels, continue its unyielding support for the Pledge of Allegiance and its provisions of national loyalty by using all means practical to inform Americans about the belief in and the reliance in God by our nation's founders in forming our democratic Republic.

Resolution No. 326: Eliminate Damages And Attorney Fees In Establishment Clause Lawsuits
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism
(Consolidated with Res. 222 (SD))

WHEREAS, The American Legion, whose motto is "For God and Country" and has been since its founding by veterans of World War I in 1919, is leading a nationwide effort to combat the secular cleansing of our American heritage through Establishment Clause lawsuits; and

WHEREAS, Many Americans mistakenly believe that the words "separation of church and state" are included in the Constitution of the United States and provide the legal basis for removal of symbols with a religious aspect or references to God in our National Motto or to our country's founders' reliance on God, from veterans memorials, and other public lands, areas, monuments, buildings, seals, or ceremonies; and

WHEREAS, The First Amendment to the Constitution nowhere in fact mentions "separation of church and state," nor "separation of state *from* religion," but states only:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right

of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."; and,

WHEREAS, Judges in increasing numbers have issued orders in Establishment Clause cases that ban the Boy Scouts, ban the Ten Commandments, ban religious symbols at veterans memorials, ban the Pledge of Allegiance, ban historical religious symbols in the official seals of counties, and ban cities and the Department of Defense from assisting the Boy Scouts, and judges in such cases have awarded millions of dollars to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and others in attorney fees to be paid by taxpayers as authorized by 42 U.S. Code Section 1988, the Equal Access to Justice Act, 28 U.S. Code Section 2412, and/or other federal statutes; and,

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that all federal statutes of the United States should be amended to rescind and repeal the authority Congress gave the courts to impose damages or attorney fees in Establishment Clause cases, as the threat of judge-ordered damages or attorney fees is being used as a club to compel local elected bodies, villages, towns, cities, counties, school boards, and states, and federal agencies, to surrender to demands to remove or destroy symbols or expressions of a religious aspect from all areas of the public sphere for fear of imposition of damages or attorney fees to be paid by taxpayers, and is being used to chill private citizens from exercising the First Amendment right to seek redress by entering Establishment Clause lawsuits to defend symbols of and references to our American heritage, for fear that damages or attorney fees will be imposed upon them personally; and,

WHEREAS, The 86th National Convention of The American Legion, August 31–September 1, 2, 2004, passed Resolution 326, Preserve WWI Veterans Memorial in Mojave Desert, which called on Congress to amend the Civil Rights Attorney Fees Act of 1976, 42 U.S. Code Section 1988, to prohibit the courts from awarding attorney fees under that statute in lawsuits brought to remove or destroy religious symbols; and

WHEREAS, The 87th National Convention of The American Legion, August 23, 24, and 25, 2005, passed Resolution 139, Amend the Equal Access to Justice Act, which called on Congress to amend 28 U.S. Code Section 2412, or any other similar federal statute, to limit remedies to declaratory and injunctive relief only and to eliminate court-ordered attorney fee awards in cases brought under the Establishment of Religion Clause of the U.S. Constitution; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge the Congress of the United States to amend the Civil Rights Attorney Fees Act of 1976, 42 U.S. Code Section 1988, the Equal access to Justice Act, 28 U.S. Code 2412, and any and all other federal statutes, to limit remedies to injunctive relief and declaratory relief only, and to rescind the authority of the courts to award attorney fees to the prevailing party in lawsuits brought under the Establishment of Religion Clause in the U.S. Constitution.

Resolution No. 337: The English Language Be Declared As The Official United States Language
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 266 (NY))

WHEREAS, The United States has over the many years been a haven and in most cases a new home for people of many ethnic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, These people, although keeping their ethnic background alive, were urged to take advantage of the educational system that taught them the English language and American history; and

WHEREAS, Many permanent residents and new citizens, although clinging to their ethnic backgrounds did with pride take advantage of learning the language of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Bilingual programs funded by the Department of Education are designed to teach with the primary instruction in the student's home language, while English is subjected to a secondary status; and

WHEREAS, These programs tend to encourage separatism, rather than a unification of purpose; and

WHEREAS, There exists alternative bilingual education programs which provide a more efficient transition to proficiency in the English language; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion encourages legislation that would establish English as the official national language; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourages Congress to pass a constitutional amendment to designate English as the official language of government in the United States; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges Congress to encourage and fund alternative bilingual education programs to serve, as was intended, as a short intermediate step to achieve proficiency in the English language.

Resolution No. 345: Oppose Foreign Manufacture Of The Flag Of The United States
Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 290 (MA))

WHEREAS, The Flag of the United States is a uniquely American symbol; and

WHEREAS, The Flag Code of the United States as listed in Title 4, United States Code, Chapter l, subsection 8(j) states that: "The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing"; and

WHEREAS, It has come to our attention that foreign manufacturers are making and importing United States Flags and/or merchandise which violate certain provisions of the United States Flag Code; and

WHEREAS, Resolution l9l, l982 National Convention, Chicago, Illinois resolves that The American Legion promote through its Posts and Departments the purchase of American manufactured goods; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion encourages its membership, the general public, and all local, state and federal government agencies to purchase and display only U.S. manufactured Flags of the United States; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation through the United States Congress to prohibit the importation of foreign made Flags of the United States.

Referred to the Standing Commission on Americanism

Resolution No. 69 (NC): Border Security
Resolution No. 155 (NJ): Confirm Religious Expression of Faith in the American Public Forum
Resolution No. 163 (ID): Naturalized Citizens to Remain Ineligible as Candidate in U.S. Presidential Election
Resolution No. 172 (IA): Adopting Flag Code to Include Flying the POW/MIA Flag
Resolution No. 183 (MX): Teaching of Geography to America's School Children
Resolution No. 223 (SD): American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year Award
Resolution No. 279 (FL): Use of Wooden Bats Only for American Legion Baseball

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 164 (ID): National Anthem to Be Rendered in English and Unaltered
Resolution No. 248 (IL): National Anthem to Be Rendered in English and Unaltered

Rejected

Resolution No. 184 (MX): Constitutional Authority to Be Clearly Stated in Acts Passed by Congress

Mr. Commander, as a duly authorized delegate from the Department of New Hampshire to this National Convention, I move the adoption of this report.

…Second from the floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Heard a second is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed say 'no.' Motion carried. The Americanism Report is adopted.

Presentation: The Frank N. Belgrano, Jr. Trophy
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

With this next order of business being the last order of business being the adoption of the Americanism Report, it's appropriate to announce the winners of two Americanism awards. The Frank Belgrano, Jr. Trophy is given annually to the Department rendering the most outstanding service during the twelve month period beginning August 1 to the Boy Scouts of America program. This year's winner is the Department of Illinois.

Presentation: Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

The Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy is given to the Department within the United States documenting the greatest activity in using The American Legion School Medal Program. This winning Department shows what can be accomplished by an active, involved organization. The winner is the Department of Florida.

Presentation: William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy
W. Lawrence Walker, Jr., Chairman
San Antonio Express-News

The William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy is one of the most impressive awards that The American Legion presents during each National Convention. It is named in honor of one of American journalism's most prominent and influential figures and 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 finaicial—devoted to Americanism activities during the Legion program year.

With us today to announce the winner of the 2004 William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy is W. Lawrence Walker, Jr., Chairman of *San Antonio Express-News* of San Antonio, Texas.

Mr. W. LAWRENCE WALKER, JR.: I'm very proud to represent the Hearst Newspaper Group in presenting the 67th Annual William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy. As many of you here today know, Hearst has grown into a global multi-media company over these past 67 years, a growth emulating what you have experienced in The American Legion. We have become among the largest in the world magazine publishers. We own TV stations and cable-tv presence as a partner in such programing as *ESPN, Lifetime, Discovery*, and the *History Channel*.

Our founder, William Randolph Hearst, was a big fan and supporter of The American Legion, its members, their mission, and their support of local communities. We at the Hearst Corporation hope that this annual recognition will encourage all of you to continue your hard work in your communities and, hopefully, you will be accepting

this award in the future.

I have the great pleasure of announcing that the 2006 Americanism Trophy winner is Virginia. They don't want my fingerprints on it.

DELEGATE CHAPMAN (VA): Thank you for this award. I would humbly accept it on behalf of the Department of Virginia, the 216 Posts, the almost 58,000 Legionnaires in the great Commonwealth of Virginia.

NATL COMDR BOCK: I understand that there's a presentation somewhere up here that wants to interrupt us to give us some money. Looking for Rick Barnett and Tony Jordan. Can't imagine what this might be.

DELEGATE BARNETT: The Frank N. Hamilton Aces scribe Bob Legan was to make this presentation to the American Legion assembly here. He's unable to be here at this convention so he sent a note which is as follows:

In 1979 you elected a Legionnaire from the great State of Indiana to lead The American Legion. That man was Frank Hamilton. Frank was a great Commander. He was tough, but all who worked with him, loved him. He was firm but fair. He would say, "If you don't like my apples, don't shake my tree." Shortly after he was elected, at a meeting with the Vice Commanders, he said, "We're going to stop this membership side, and you guys are going to do it." With his great leadership and a great group of Department Commanders, we ended, up the year with a 10,000 membership gain.

After our year, Frank organized his Department Commanders and National Officers into an organization that selected the name of Frank Hamilton's Aces. The Hamilton's Aces would meet at the National Convention each year. We called it the Ace Reunion. As the years passed, a close friendship developed which created an indescribable bond among these friends. At our reunions, we discussed Legion activities; talked about our kids; our grandchildren; and later our great grandchildren. We bragged about how great we were. We bragged about being the only class that produced four National Commanders and several National Chairmen of important committees. Joe Caouette is one of those chairmen. Frank always said, "If they want leadership, they know where to get it."

We would also brag about our golf scores and the big fish that got away. I often wondered if half of the lies were told were true. They say that "old soldiers never die, they just fade away." In this case, the Hamilton Aces are just about to fade away. Our membership is getting to small that we have decided to throw in the towel and disband.

In so doing, Joe, we found that we have a bank account with a balance. We call this our Ace in the Hole. We discussed the most logical place to put it, and the place that Frank would like most. We chose our Legacy Scholarship Fund. We would like to present to you our entire bank account and a little more, in the amount of $1,115, as a memorial in honor of National Commander Frank Hamilton and the Frank Hamilton Aces.

With this goes our sincere congratulations on your achievements and best wishes for a continued success in funding this tremendous program. Signed, Bob Legan, Past National Vice Commander, and Hamilton Aces Scribe. Joining me for this presentation are Hamilton Aces Past National Commander Tony Jordan, and Americanism Chairman Joe Caouette, and Past National Commander Ray Smith.

Presentation: 2006 National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

As an organization anchored in the belief that we must maintain "law and order," The American Legion annually selects an individual as its Police Officer of the Year. The next order of business is to honor a member of law enforcement for setting an example in community service. Our 2006 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year is a veteran of law enforcement with a track record for high work ethic, a consummate team

player attitude and off-duty community service.

Officer Roessler is a 24-year veteran of the Milwaukee Police Department and a member of the 128th Security Police Squadron of the Wisconsin Air National Guard. Prior to joining the squadron, Roessler served on active duty with the U.S. Air Force. A fellow Legionnaire, Roessler is also a long-time member of The American Legion Milwaukee Police Post 415, and currently serves as the Sergeant-of-Arms for the 4th District in the Department of Wisconsin. On duty, Roessler has more than 12 merit arrests for burglary, armed robbery and fraud. He's received over a dozen letters of appreciation from citizens and service groups, trained more than 20 recruits as field training officer and received 15 letters of commendation of meritorious arrests.

Off duty, he has been nothing short of exemplary. Roessler has volunteered countless hours to many causes in Wisconsin. He served as chairman of the Make-a-Wish Foundation and was a wish granter from 1988-2003. He also has volunteered numerous hours of his time to the Special Olympics, Milwaukee Police Athletic League coaching basketball teams comprised of endangered youth, and the Milwaukee Teen on Teen Initiative Program, among several others.

It's an honor to present The American Legion Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award to Police Officer Charles M. Roessler of the Milwaukee Police Department.

ANNOUNCER: "America's Finest." The American Legion National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award presented to Charles M. Roessler. For distinguished service above and beyond your assigned duties, rendered through selfless dedication to community service and professional achievement. By your demonstrated performance, you have personified the versatile police officer who represents "America's Finest." The American Legion congratulates you and wishes you continued success in your career. Awarded August 30, 2006, at the 88th Annual National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.

OFFICER ROESSLER: I thank Post 415 and Post 18 of Milwaukee, the 4th District and the Department of Wisconsin for their efforts in submitting me for this award. I especially thank Mr. Wayne Jensen for all of his hard work to make this moment possible. I thank The American Legion for giving me this honor. I also thank my wife, Nancy, who is here with me today, and my children, Daniel and Valerie, who are back home for their many years of love and support.

During my 24 years as a police officer and my 27 years in the military, I have received several awards and honors, but I can honestly say that standing on this stage today for this prestigious award from The American Legion in front of fellow Legionnaires has to be the highest honor I've ever received. As a police officer you do your job because you enjoy it. You try to make the streets a little safer and to make a difference in someone's life. You really don't expect anything in return. However, when someone takes the time out to recognize you for a good job, you really appreciate it. It makes the job more memorable and just helps you desire to do a better job.

In closing, I'm extremely honored to receive this award. It is the highlight of my career in law enforcement.

NATL COMDR BOCK: The Chair recognizes Elmer Fuhrhop of Ohio, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Children and Youth for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Children and Youth
Elmer Fuhrhop, Ohio, Chairman

The Convention Committee on Children and Youth met at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 27, 2006 in the Hilton Salt Lake City Center Hotel, Canyon Room II, 2nd Level, Salt Lake City Utah. The meeting was organized by electing delegate Elmer Fuhrhop of

Ohio as Chairman and Robert D. Scott of Oregon as Secretary. There were 43 members of the committee present.

Approved

Resolution No. 317: Adequate Foster Care
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion affirms that all children need safe, permanent families that love, nurture, protect and guide them; and

WHEREAS, On any given day in the United States, half a million children and youth are in foster care, removed from their homes because of abuse and neglect; and

WHEREAS, While foster care protects children who are not safe in their own homes, too many times what should be a short-term refuge becomes a long-term saga, involving moves from one foster home to another; and

WHEREAS, Social agencies, both public and private, and dedicated foster parents provide these children with a temporary or a permanent environment that will help them become the responsible citizen of tomorrow; and

WHEREAS, These agencies and foster parents are finding it increasingly difficult to provide the basic needs of these children, such as medical and dental care, education, food, clothing, skilled social work, and other community resources; and

WHEREAS, These ends can be met only by increased funding and concerted public effort on the part of all citizens, governmental and private agencies, legislators, and others responsible and concerned for the future of these children; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support appropriate state and federal legislation aimed at improving services for children living in foster homes; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion is authorized to collaborate with the leading national foster care organizations as determined by the National Commission on Children and Youth to the end that The American Legion can maintain an effective role in the promotion of adequate foster care programs; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Posts be urged to volunteer their talents and energies on behalf of foster children and to make their communities aware of the vital role that adequate foster care services play in enabling these children to develop into mature, responsible and productive adults.

Resolution No. 318: Admission Of Children Of United States Citizens
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, United States citizens now have greater access to the nations of the world for work opportunities, both in the public and private sectors, and travel; and

WHEREAS, Many children in foreign countries are progenies of United States citizens; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 97-359 was enacted to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide preferential treatment in the admission of certain children of United States citizens; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 97-359 addresses only alien children from Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, or Thailand born after 1950 and before October 22, 1982; and

WHEREAS, No child created by a United States citizen should be denied equal treatment under the laws of this country; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion seek

legislative action to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide equal treatment in admission of all children of United States citizens.

Resolution No. 319: Catastrophic Illness In Children
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, A catastrophic illness is any illness or condition, acute or chronic, for which expenses are incurred that are not fully covered by a private insurer, federal or state health care assistance, or other financial source; and

WHEREAS, When a child becomes ill or disabled, the cost of medical care alone can be catastrophic for the family; and

WHEREAS, Families of any income level may be faced with high uncovered medical expenses for their children; and

WHEREAS, Families with or without insurance are vulnerable to extraordinary medical bills; and

WHEREAS, Several states have enacted legislation to establish Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Funds to help families bear the excessive financial burdens associated with the care of children with special health care needs and disabilities; and

WHEREAS, These funds have been proven effective and are designed to act as a safety net for families from all walks of life who have excessive expenses related to a child's medical needs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the federal government to enact legislation to financially assist families faced by the catastrophic illness of one of their children, thus preserving the family's financial integrity and their ability to cope with the responsibilities that accompany significant health problems in children; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion through Department and Post leadership, urge state governments to enact legislation including, but not limited to state-specific Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Funds, to assist financially those individual families faced by the catastrophic illness of one of their children in order to maintain the integrity of the family; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That it in lieu of a better approach, the present federal Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant programs be expanded to include catastrophic illness.

Resolution No. 320: Child Care Services
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion is deeply concerned about the quality of life issues surrounding our children and youth; and

WHEREAS, According to the National Center for Education Statistics there are approximately 21 million infants, toddlers, and preschool children under the age of six in the United States, with more than 12.9 million of these children in child care; and

WHEREAS, Child care services have traditionally been providing care, supervision and protection for children of pre-school and early school age, when the primary caregiver is necessarily absent from the home; and

WHEREAS, The Carnegie Report finds that quality child care enables a young child to become emotionally secure, socially competent, and intellectually capable; and

WHEREAS, Consistent studies have found that childcare at most centers in the United States are poor to mediocre and child care licensing standards, designed to assure minimal standards for health and safety, vary widely from state to state; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support appropriate state and federal legislation aimed at improving child care services for children; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion is authorized to collaborate with the leading national child care organizations as determined by the National Commission on Children and Youth to the end that The American Legion can maintain an effective role in the promotion of adequate child care programs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That all Departments and Posts are encouraged to cooperate with the state and community public or private agencies with day care responsibilities to the end that licensed child care facilities will be available to all children in our nation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Departments and Posts of The American Legion continue to encourage the adoption and implementation of safe and consistent licensing standards for childcare in facilities throughout this nation; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Departments and Posts of The American Legion be encouraged to assist in raising the level of understanding among the general public about the needs of adequate child care, and to contribute to a greater willingness to commit more resources to achieve a level of quality that is necessary for children to grow in a healthy and safe environment.

Resolution No. 321: Child Maltreatment
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion has, since its inception, voiced and demonstrated active concern about the health and welfare of children; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau reported that approximately 906,000 children were victims of child maltreatment in 2003; and

WHEREAS, The federal government defines child abuse and neglect in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) as "the physical and mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances which indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened"; and

WHEREAS, According to CAPTA, child maltreatment encompasses physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and emotional abuse; and

WHEREAS, All responsible citizens have a valuable role to play in building strong communities in which families and children are valued and supported, and in which children are safe from all forms of maltreatment; and

WHEREAS, There are concerned adults who care about this problem and will work to combat its degenerative effect on our society; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support appropriate state and federal legislation aimed at preventing child maltreatment; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion be authorized to collaborate with national and state child maltreatment prevention organizations as determined by the National Commission on Children & Youth to the end that The American Legion can maintain an effective role in the promotion of child maltreatment prevention programs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, The Departments and Posts of the American Legion cooperate in all ways possible with organizations and agencies that advocate for child maltreatment prevention and to promote and increase the public's awareness of child maltreatment and its detrimental effects on the children and youth of our society; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges all educators, coaches, school administrators and all others responsible for children in any capacity to familiarize themselves with the warning signs of all forms of child maltreatment, and when necessary, report any suspected maltreatment to the proper authorities, and ensure that these children are referred to the appropriate child protective service in their community; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue through its Children & Youth program, at all levels, to educate the public of their obligations and duties with respect to reporting suspected cases of child maltreatment.

Resolution No. 322: Child Safety
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, unintentional injury remains the leading cause of death and disability among children ages 14 and under in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Every day, more than 39,000 children are injured seriously enough to require medical treatment, totaling more than 14 million children each year; and

WHEREAS, The top causes of unintentional injury-related deaths and disabilities among children and adolescents are: automobile accidents, drowning, fire, falls and poisoning; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that as many as 90 percent of unintentional injuries can be prevented; and

WHEREAS, A combination of education, environmental improvements, engineering modifications, enactment and enforcement of legislation and regulations, economic incentives, community empowerment and program evaluation is effective at reducing the incidence and severity of unintentional death and disability; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support appropriate state and federal legislation aimed at preventing or reducing unintentional injury among children and adolescents; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion is authorized to collaborate with the leading national safety organizations as determined by the National Commission on Children and Youth to the end that The American Legion can maintain an effective role in the promotion of adequate child safety programs; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Departments and Posts of The American Legion are encouraged to provide leadership on organized safety commissions and to actively promote child safety at the state and local levels.

Resolution No. 323: Children In Pornographic Literature
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The very future of our country is being threatened by individuals who would use children in pornographic magazines and films; and

WHEREAS, National crime reports reveal that there is a strong correlation between those who read pornographic magazines and those who commit related crimes such as rape, incest, molestation, child abuse and even murder; and

WHEREAS, The use of children as subjects in the production of pornographic materials has a devastating effect upon these innocent children, which is a disgrace to our society; and

WHEREAS, Existing laws dealing with those who produce, sell and distribute pornographic materials are often weak and/or inadequate; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That state legislatures be encouraged

to evaluate and make appropriate improvements in existing laws aimed at those individuals involved in the child pornography business; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That we urge the strengthening of existing federal legislation by the United States Congress to make penalties severe enough to eliminate the production, distribution and sale of materials that use children in sexually explicit scenes, and we urge the Congress to provide adequate funding, when necessary, to accomplish these goals.

Resolution No. 324: Comprehensive Health Care For Children And Youth
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion has and will continue to do everything possible to ensure that every child has a home, health, education, character and opportunity; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, the Maternal and Child Health Services Title V Block Grant has provided a foundation for ensuring the health of our Nation's mothers and children; and

WHEREAS, The Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant has operated as a Federal-State partnership for more than 65 years; and

WHEREAS, When the Social Security Act was passed in 1935, the Federal Government, through Title V, pledged its support of state efforts to extend and improve health and welfare services for mothers and children; and

WHEREAS, While states and jurisdictions use Title V funds to implement a wide range of maternal and child health programs that meet national and state needs, all programs work to: reduce infant mortality and incidence of handicapped conditions among children; increase the number of children appropriately immunized against disease; increase the number of children in low-income households who receive assessments and follow-up diagnostic and treatment services; provide and ensure perinatal care for women, preventative and child care services; comprehensive care, including long-term care services for children with special health care needs; rehabilitation services for blind and disabled children; and facilitate the development of comprehensive, family-centered, community-based, culturally competent, coordinated systems of care for children with special health care needs; and

WHEREAS, These programs are dependent upon the annual appropriation of funds by the Congress of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion affirms its support and endorsement of the programs as outlined by the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant contained under Title V of the Social Security Act and urges the Congress of the United States to continue its support by adequately funding these programs, to include all programs related to the Comprehensive Health Care for Children and Youth.

Resolution No. 325: Drug Trafficking
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The illegal trafficking of drugs into the United States is one of the greatest threats to the welfare and safety of our citizens, particularly our youth; and

WHEREAS, The enemies of our Nation and way of life hope to destroy us from within by debilitating our most precious resource for the future, our youth; and

WHEREAS, The economic and social costs of drug abuse annually exceeds the $100 billion mark; and

WHEREAS, The efforts to halt the entry of such illegal drugs may be seen as a war of will and resources—a war that at the present we are not winning; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge the

President and Congress of the United States to fully support with adequate funding all border state, federal and military drug trafficking prevention programs through which our children and youth might secure a more stable and healthy future.

Resolution No. 327: Missing Children
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, Each day in the United States, an average of 2,185 children, 17 years and younger, are reported missing or disappear by abduction, run away or are lost to some unknown cause; and

WHEREAS, The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) was created in 1984 as a central resource and data clearinghouse for law enforcement, victims and their families, fighting for the safe recovery of missing children and the protection of all children from sexual exploitation; and

WHEREAS, Today more children come home safely than at any time in our nation's history, law enforcement is better prepared, and families are more alert and aware than ever before because of the tireless work of NCMEC and law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, NCMEC's overall recovery rate for missing children is 94.9 percent, demonstrating that the current system is working due to effective response of law enforcement, technological advances, and the general public paying attention to missing children photos; and

WHEREAS, Although NCMEC has made a significant impact in tackling this daunting problem, there is much that remains to be done for too many children still do not make it home, and too many are still victims of sexual predators; and

WHEREAS, Even one child disappearing is the concern of all responsible persons; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support appropriate state and federal legislation aimed at locating missing children and preventing child victimization; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the President of the United States and the Congress to provide adequate annual funding for the continued operation and expansion of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, America's best resource to combat the national crisis of child victimization; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion be authorized to collaborate with national and state missing and exploited children agencies and organizations as determined by the National Commission on Children & Youth to the end that The American Legion can maintain an effective role, at all levels, in locating missing children and preventing child exploitation; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Departments and Posts of the American Legion are encouraged to increase the public's awareness of child victimization and its detrimental effects on the children and youth of our society and to cooperate with credible organizations and agencies that seek to locate missing children in their states and communities.

Resolution No. 328: National Family Week
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, One of the principles guiding The American Legion's Children & Youth Program is to maintain the integrity of the family home; and

WHEREAS, The family is the center of our affections and the foundation of our American society; and

WHEREAS, No institution can take the family's place in giving meaning to human life and stability in our society; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting that official recognition be given to the importance of strengthening family life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the President of the United States and the Congress to establish "National Family Week" during Thanksgiving Holiday Week as an annual observance.

Resolution No. 329: Production, Sale and Distribution Of Obscene Literature
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, Since 1960, The American Legion has maintained a position of complete opposition to the production, sale and distribution of pomographic or obscene materials to children 17 years and under; and

WHEREAS, Present laws forbid the importation of such materials from foreign countries, interstate trafficking, the use of the United States Mail, and the use over public radio and television; and

WHEREAS, Any attempt to eliminate such protective laws from state and/or federal criminal codes would have a negative impact on our youth and society in general; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion strongly opposes any attempt to weaken our present laws governing the penalties for the production, sale and distribution of pornographic or obscene materials; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the United States Congress be made aware of our concern through proper legislative channels.

Resolution No. 330: Protect Children From The Unrestricted Media
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, In the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion we pledge "To uphold the Constitution of the United States;" and "To maintain law and order"; and

WHEREAS, The producers of our nation's movies, TV shows and TV news, and the Internet have become very explicit in describing and depicting various types of violence; and

WHEREAS, Organizations, such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) have taken it upon themselves to defend such actions as the constitutional right of freedom of speech of the author, regardless of the potential consequences to minor children; and

WHEREAS, God has been rejected as a violation of civil rights; and

WHEREAS, The void has been filled with violence, vulgarity, racism, and every other form of moral depravation that can be imagined; and

WHEREAS, The Internet has become a place for promoting violence and illegal activities; and

WHEREAS, The lack of laws governing such productions allows for a vast expansion of audiences at all media levels promoting a violent country without restraint; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support appropriate state and federal legislation to restrict the excessive use of violence, vulgarity and other forms of moral depravation in movies, TV programs, TV news and the Internet; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Departments and Posts of The American Legion provide leadership and be encouraged to conduct awareness campaigns to educate their members, their families and the general public, about the potential dangers the Internet and other forms of electronic media pose to children and teenagers; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the National Commission on Children & Youth disseminate educational materials to inform Department and Post leadership to the end that all children and parents will be better informed about the dangers inherent in the media, in an effort to return the country to the God-given principles of life, liberty, and the true pursuit of happiness, under God's moral laws.

Resolution No. 331: Reaffirming Immunization Program
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion has long recognized that there is no place in civilized society for communicable diseases; and

WHEREAS, There are today vaccines and other specific medical treatment to protect children against communicable diseases; and

WHEREAS, There exists today in our country areas with extremely low levels of immunization against certain childhood diseases that may break out in epidemic proportions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion reaffirms its position of supporting the fullest use of any licensed vaccine to combat communicable diseases; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That local Posts of The American Legion provide leadership and support to stimulate local treatment and immunization programs so that children in every community may achieve the fullest protection against communicable diseases; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That sufficient federal and state funds be provided so that medically indigent children may be afforded an opportunity to receive the necessary treatment and immunization against all communicable diseases.

Resolution No. 332: School Nutrition Program
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, There has been as expression of concern by health authorities and various national organizations with an interest in the status of proper nutrition among young people; and

WHEREAS, The Federal School Lunch Program and other federally-supported nutrition programs for children have demonstrated their effectiveness as evidenced by the reduction of health problems and improved performance among children; and

WHEREAS, There are many school systems throughout the United States which do not participate in the federal/state-supported school lunch program; and

WHEREAS, There are many schools and school systems throughout the United States that have never had a school lunch program or have dropped existing lunch programs because of the lack of funding, adequate facilities, excessive paperwork requirements, and the training of personnel; and

WHEREAS, Since 1941, The American Legion has supported the Federal School Lunch Program and other related programs of nutrition for children; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That the Congress of the United States be urged to appropriate sufficient funds for school nutrition programs to reflect the increased cost of food and to provide for needed facilities and trained personnel for the purpose of conducting an adequate school lunch program.

Resolution No. 333: Sexual Exploitation Of Children
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The sexual victimization of children is overwhelming in magnitude, yet largely unrecognized and under reported; and

WHEREAS, Statistics show that one in five girls and one in ten boys are sexually exploited before they reach adulthood, yet less than 35 percent of those child sexual assaults are reported to authorities; and

WHEREAS, The widespread use of the Internet to sexually victimize children presents an even broader threat to our children's safety; and

WHEREAS, According to *Highlights of the Youth Internet Safety Survey* conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice "one in five children (10 to 17 years old) receive unwanted sexual solicitations online"; and

WHEREAS, By far the most prevalent exploitive act reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children is the production and distribution of pornographic images of children; and

WHEREAS, The lives of the children featured in these illegal images are forever altered, not only by the exploitation itself, but by the permanent record of it; and

WHEREAS, the impact of these terrible acts can devastate families and put children at risk of depression, disassociation, and post traumatic stress—symptoms that can last well into adulthood; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support appropriate state and federal legislation aimed at the prevention, investigation and prosecution of child sexual exploitation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion be authorized to collaborate with national and state agencies and organizations involved in the prevention of child sexual exploitation as determined by the National Commission on Children & Youth to the end that The American Legion can maintain an effective role in preventing child sexual exploitation; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Departments and Posts of The American Legion are encouraged to raise community awareness about the prevalence of sexual exploitation of children and to cooperate with law enforcement agencies, government entities and public/private organizations that seek to empower the public to take immediate and direct action to enforce a zero tolerance policy regarding child sexual exploitation.

Resolution No. 334: Teenage Pregnancy
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion has long been concerned with the health and quality of life issues surrounding its young people; and

WHEREAS, Teenage pregnancy is a serious problem in the United States, which currently has the highest rates of teenage pregnancy and births in the industrialized world; and

WHEREAS, Each year one million pregnancies occur among American teenagers aged 15-19 and almost 200,000 teens aged 17 and younger have children, with the vast majority (86%) unintentionally; and

WHEREAS, Childbearing has adverse consequences for teenage mothers and particularly for their children, contributing directly to mothers and their children being poorly educated, unmarried and not well connected to the workforce; and

WHEREAS, Teenage pregnancy creates an ever-widening, self perpetuation of programs affecting the mother, infant, parents, grandparents; and therefore, tears at the very fabric of the all important family unit in our society; and

WHEREAS, The offspring of teen mothers have high rates of illness, mortality, educational and emotional problems, and often are the victims of child abuse at the hands of parents too immature to understand their baby's needs; and

WHEREAS, Preventing teen pregnancy is an effective way to address a range of other pressing social issues including poverty, child and family well-being, responsible fatherhood, workforce development, and out-of-wedlock childbearing; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support appropriate state and federal legislation aimed at reducing or preventing teen pregnancy; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion is authorized to collaborate with national and state teen pregnancy prevention organizations as determined by the National Commission on Children & Youth to the end that The American Legion can maintain an effective role in the promotion of adequate teen pregnancy prevention programs; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Departments and Posts of The American Legion are encouraged to support and cooperate with organizations and agencies that seek to educate teenagers on the advantages of delaying pregnancy.

Resolution No. 335: Intellectual Disabilities
Origin: Convention Committee on Children & Youth
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, Historically, it has been The American Legion's position that all children should have quality services to assure their physical, mental and emotional well-being; and

WHEREAS, According to the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, it is estimated that between 7 and 8 million Americans of all ages, or three percent of the general population experience intellectual disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Intellectual disabilities cuts across the lines of racial, ethnic, educational, social and economic backgrounds and one in ten families in the United States are directly affected by a person with intellectual disability at some point in their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, Intellectual Disabilities in children is a complex problem with educational, medical, social, cultural and vocational aspects, and presents a major challenge to the social, educational, health, and economic systems within the United States; and

WHEREAS, About 87 percent of those children with intellectual disabilities are mildly affected and may not be identified until they enter school, and as adults many will be able to lead independent lives in the community; and

WHEREAS, The remaining 13 percent of people with intellectual disabilities will have serious limitations in functioning, but with early intervention, a functional education and appropriate support as adults, can lead satisfying lives in the community; and

WHEREAS, During the past 30 years, significant advances in research have prevented many cases of intellectual disabilities, and other early intervention and prevention strategies have reduced the chance of intellectual disabilities in children; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion recognize and support the rights of all people with intellectual disabilities to enjoy a quality of life that promotes independence, self-determination, and participation as productive members of society; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the goals of the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities:

- **The assurance of full citizenship rights of people with intellectual disabilities;**
- **The provision of all necessary supports to individuals and families;**
- **The reduction of the occurrence and severity of intellectual disabilities; and**
- **The promotion of the widest dissemination of information of models, programs, and services within the field of intellectual disabilities;**

become the goals of The American Legion; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support and encourage early diagnosis, intervention and treatment, increased professional staffing, expanded educational opportunities, family counseling, improved and new living facilities, and adequate social and vocational services for the intellectually disabled; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports continuing research, and preventive and early intervention efforts to prevent intellectual disabilities, to include research on the development and function of the nervous system, fetal treatments, and gene therapy to correct the abnormality produced by defective genes; and early intervention programs with high-risk infants and children; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That whenever possible, The American Legion is encouraged to help alert the public through awareness and education programs designed to change the negative attitudes and prejudices concerning our nation's intellectually disabled children.

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 for the Department of Ohio, I move for the adoption of this report.

…Second from the floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Heard a second. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, give their sign by saying 'aye.' Opposed'no.' The report of the Children & Youth is adopted.

Presentation: Garland Murphy Award
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

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 this past program year. The winner of the award is the Department of, let's see, Ohio.

It a pleasure to me to present this special plaque to the Department of Ohio.

ANNOUNCER: The Garland D. Murphy, Jr. Award presented by The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation to the Department of Ohio for the program year 2005-2006. 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.

It is signed by Dennis R. Bowman, the President of the Child Welfare Foundation, and William Pease, the foundation's executive secretary.

Presentation: U.S. 'Udie' Grant Legacy Award
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

I have pleasure of presenting the U.S. "Udie" Grant Legacy Award to the Department that had the most participation from the Legion, the Ladies Auxiliary and the Sons of the American Legion and the Eight & Forty, in raising funds for the Child

Welfare Foundation during the past program year. The winner of the award is the Department of Ohio.

ANNOUNCER: The U.S. "Udie" Grant Legacy Award presented by The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation to the Department of Ohio for the program year 2005-2006. In recognition of outstanding support for The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. We thank you.

VP PEGGY MOON: My name is Peggy Moon and I am the Vice President of the Board of Directors for The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. Under your outstanding leadership this year, Legionnaires have donated over $100,000 to child welfare, and we thank all of you very much. You are truly helping our kids. With that in mind, Commander, we have this to present to you.

NATL COMDR BOCK: It is a gold Children & Youth Child Welfare Foundation Pin. Gorgeous, even has a big diamond rock in there.

VP PEGGY MOON: Thank you very much, Commander.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Now, they come in force. Every time they come up here like this, they bring money.

DON GUNDERSON DELEGATE (ID): It is again a pleasure to step up here to present to you a check for the Children & Youth for $60,000.

NATL COMDR BOCK: This is a different check, right?

DELEGATE FRAZIER BRINLEY (CT): It is from the great little State of Connecticut. I'd like to have $60,000, but we have $1,500 for the Child Welfare Foundation.

ALT NEC JOHN NEYLON DELEGATE (NH): Mr. Commander, from the state of New Hampshire, here is a further check for the Child Welfare Foundation for $862.48.

NATL COMDR BOCK: The Chair recognizes K. Robert Lewis of New London, Connecticut, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
K. Robert Lewis, Connecticut, Chairman

Eighty-nine members of your Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation met at 9:00 a.m. on August 27, 2006, in Room 255 A-B, Upper Level, Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah, and agreed on the following report, which is respectfully submitted for your consideration.

The Committee was called to order by Peter Gaytan (MD), Liaison Representative appointed by the National Adjutant to act as temporary chairman. Mark Regan (MD), Assistant Director for Program Management, VA&R Commission, acted as temporary secretary and called the roll. A quorum being present, nominations were received for permanent chairman. K. Robert Lewis (CT), Chairman of the Standing National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, was unanimously elected Chairman of the Convention Committee.

With unanimous consent, the Chairman appointed Pat Phillips (GA), as Committee Secretary; John Hickey (IN), Chairman of the Claims and Rating Subcommittee and Chris Harding (OK), Secretary; R. Michael Suter (NY), Chairman of the Hospital and Medical Services Subcommittee and John McKinney (TX), Secretary.

Subcommittee liaison assignments were as follows: Steve Smithson (MI), Deputy Director, to Claims and Rating and Mark Regan (MD), Assistant Director, to Hospital and Medical Services.

As has been the custom for the 62 previous National Conventions, a Special Department Service Officers Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Resolutions, in a preconvention meeting, screened and grouped the resolutions. A report of their action, with recommendations, was presented to the Convention Committee for consideration.

The Screening Committee conserved the time of the Convention Committee substantially. It was chaired by K. Robert Lewis, Chairman of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission and was composed of the following Department Service Officers:

Region 1—Fred C. Stockman (CT)
Region 2—Don Mathis (TN)
Region 3—Robert C. McBride (DE)
Region 4—John W. Hickey, Jr. (IN)
Region 5—Eldon L. Jones (WY)

The Convention Committee recommended that such a Committee be appointed for this purpose to serve the Eighty-ninth National Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation.

The 106 Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation resolutions presented for the consideration of this Convention were referred by the Resolutions Assignment Committee. The following action on the resolutions was taken by the Convention Committee:

Approved or Approved w/Amendment	58
Consolidated with Resolutions Approved	23
Referred to the Standing Commission	9
Received and Recorded	6
Rejected	10

A motion was made and seconded to authorize the Chairman and Secretary to sign and deliver the report on the Convention Committee's behalf.

A report of action taken on the 9 resolutions referred to the Standing National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission will be made to the National Executive Committee and to the Adjutant of the Department concerned.

Approved

Resolution No. 30: Support The Automatic Waiver Of Veterans Benefits Administration Debts Of $250 Or Less
Origin: Vermont
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans and Rehabilitation
(As amended)

WHEREAS, Overpayment of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits is often the result of a lack of understanding of VA regulations and not due to any fraud or misrepresentation; and

WHEREAS, VA processing of collection or waiver of small overpayment amounts requires significant resources and time; and

WHEREAS, Under current regulations, most overpayment waiver requests are granted; and

WHEREAS, Elimination of processing of small overpayment amounts would allow VA personnel to concentrate on other duties, such as claims processing, thus improving the timeliness of VA in delivering benefits; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That the Congress of the United States be requested to amend title 38, United States Code, to state that any alleged overpayment in the amount of $250 or less be granted an automatic waiver.

Resolution No. 62: Request Congress Provide The Department Of Veterans Affairs Adequate Funding For Medical And Prosthetic Research
Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research Service is very productive in advancing medical knowledge and improving health care for veterans and all other citizens; and

WHEREAS, VA has developed the cardiac pacemaker, nicotine patch, the concepts that led to the Computerized Axial Tomography (CAT) scan, and other medical breakthroughs; and

WHEREAS, Basic biomedical research provides the most rational and cost-effective means of preventive health care and provides treatments and cures for many diseases; and

WHEREAS, Advances in biomedical research lead to the creation of new knowledge in biotechnology and serve as a successful model in lowering long-term health care costs; and

WHEREAS, In 1998, VA realigned its research priorities in response to recommendations of the Department's Research Realignment and Advisory Committee to better serve the needs of the veteran population; and

WHEREAS, The Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) is a venture undertaken by the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research Service to establish a national system to translate research discoveries, innovation, effective and efficient diagnostic and treatment strategies into patient care; and

WHEREAS, QUERI is a comprehensive, data driven, outcome-based quality improvement program that will ensure excellence in all areas of Veterans Health Administration medical care: in-patient, out-patient and long-term care; and

WHEREAS, Continued research is urgently needed for many diseases if medical science is to overcome cancer, heart disease, AIDS, new strains of tuberculosis, mental illness, hepatitis and others, to help spare veterans and citizens from prolonged illness and permanent disabilities; and

WHEREAS, The need to reduce the nation's budget deficit must not compromise the efforts to maintain and improve health productivity and develop new preventive and therapeutic procedures through the Department of Veterans Affairs and other government agencies; and

WHEREAS, The VA Medical and Prosthetic Research budget has not kept pace with inflation during the past 15 years, unlike other federal agencies that have received significant funding increases; and

WHEREAS, It is essential that Congress and the Administration support strong medical and prosthetic research programs within VA so that veterans and all citizens continue to benefit from the exceptional research capability of the Department; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support adequate funding for VA biomedical research activities; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress and the Administration encourage acceleration in the development and initiation of needed research on conditions that significantly affect veterans—such as prostate cancer, addictive disorders, trauma and wound healing, post-traumatic stress disorder, rehabilitation, and others—jointly with the Department of Defense, the National Institutes of Health, other federal agencies, academic institutions and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution No. 63: Oppose Any Reduction Of Eligibility Criteria For Department Of Veterans Affairs Per Diem Payments To State Veterans Homes

Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, State Veterans Homes were founded for indigent and disabled Civil War veterans beginning in the late 1800s and have continued to serve subsequent generations of veterans for over one hundred years; and

WHEREAS, Today, there are 133 State Veterans Homes facilities in 49 states and Puerto Rico with over 30,255 total beds providing nursing home, hospital and domiciliary care; with more capacity being added annually; and

WHEREAS, The State Veterans Home Program has proven to be a cost-effective provider of quality care to many of the nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, This program is an important adjunct to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) own nursing, hospital and domiciliary programs; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, authorizes VA per diem payments for veterans residing in State Veterans Homes; and

WHEREAS, There has been consideration of limiting the eligibility for inpatient long term (maintenance) care to veterans in Priority Groups 1 through 3 and Priority Group 4 veterans determined to be catastrophically disabled; and

WHEREAS, Such a change would cause thousands of veterans who are now eligible for per diem to become ineligible; and

WHEREAS, Such a change could cause financial disaster to many State Veterans Homes that now rely on VA per diem for revenue; and

WHEREAS, Such a change could result in a new population of elderly homeless veterans, especially in states that have poor Medicaid nursing home reimbursement rates; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion shall oppose any legislative proposal to reduce the eligibility criteria for VA State Veterans Homes per diem.

Resolution No. 64: Support Presumption Of Service Connection For Hepatitis C
Origin: Michigan
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Hepatitis C is an easily transmittable blood-borne virus, which can result in long-term, potentially fatal health problems; and

WHEREAS, Because of the exposure risk factors directly related to military service, veterans have a much higher incidence of hepatitis C than the general population; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates 10 to 20 percent of veterans currently have hepatitis C, compared to under 2 percent for the general population; and

WHEREAS, Vietnam veterans are the group most directly affected by the hepatitis C virus; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans who contracted hepatitis C 25 or 30 years ago or more in service are now showing signs of severe liver disease and 52 percent of the liver transplants done by VA are for veterans with hepatitis C; and

WHEREAS, In 85 percent of cases, no acute symptoms would have shown up at the time of infection with hepatitis C; and

WHEREAS, Military training and combat situations offer many opportunities for transmitting the blood-borne hepatitis virus through blood to blood contact; and

WHEREAS, No effective blood test for hepatitis C was available until 1992; and

WHEREAS, Veterans with hepatitis C who were treated for acute hepatitis during military service and who now claim service connection are generally denied by VA, because they cannot prove the current hepatitis C is related to the hepatitis noted in service; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Veterans' Appeals often rejects claims for service connection for hepatitis C, because the veteran's medical records do not show the presence of hepatitis C at time of discharge from service; and

WHEREAS, Because of the nature of this disease and the long latency period, veterans who experience certain exposure risk factors in service, such as: blood transfusion prior to 1992; exposure to blood on or through the skin or mucous membrane; hemodyalisis; experience of a needle-stick accident or medical event involving a needle,

not due to the veteran's willful misconduct; a diagnosis of unexplained liver disease in service; experience of an unexplained liver dysfunction or abnormal liver test; or duty as a health-care position or specialty as prescribed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; should be accorded a statutory presumption for the purpose of establishing entitlement to service connection for hepatitis C; and

WHEREAS, Service connection for hepatitis C is important to veterans and their families, since it entitles the veteran to compensation for any disability related to the disease as well as necessary medical care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion strongly urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to expeditiously promulgate regulations providing for presumptive service connection for hepatitis C; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation to provide for a statutory presumption of service connection for hepatitis C under certain conditions in service; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs provide regular notification to Congress, the veterans service organizations, and veterans on new treatment modalities for hepatitis C.

Resolution No. 65: The American Legion Policy On Gulf War Veterans Illnesses
Origin: Michigan
Submitted by: Convention Committee on 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 200 scientific studies are investigating these illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Few of the aforementioned studies are focused exclusively on the illnesses experienced by women Gulf War veterans; and

WHEREAS, Misleading information about Gulf War veterans illnesses has spread on the Internet and through the media, and this information has caused a great deal of misunderstanding regarding the severity and prevalence of Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, The National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine is currently preparing reports that evaluate the nature, the likely causes and the Federal Government's response to Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, These reports directly affect Department of Veterans Affairs compensation programs for Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Several independent expert scientific committees and organizations have stated that a number of suspected causes of Gulf War veterans illnesses are not likely associated with those illnesses, whereas others are more likely associated with those illnesses; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of Veterans Affairs established a committee comprised of doctors, scientists, Gulf War veterans and veteran service organization representatives to provide guidance and advice on future Gulf War-related research efforts; and

WHEREAS, Pyridostigmine bromide was used by the United States and some coalition troops as a nerve agent pre-treatment during the Gulf War although the Food and Drug Administration had not yet approved the drug for that use and some researchers contend that pyridostigmine bromide may be associated with Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Several medical studies have found that the unexplained physical symptoms reported by Gulf War veterans are similar to other medically unexplained symptom syndromes like chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and irritable bowel syndrome; and

WHEREAS, The President of the United States signed into law legislation amending the Gulf War undiagnosed illness law (title 38, United States Code, section 1117) to include medically unexplained disabilities such as chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, and irritable bowel syndrome; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's contract with a medical consultant from the University of Connecticut proved invaluable in helping the organization strive towards its goal of serving Gulf War veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to devote the appropriate resources to finding effective medical treatments to alleviate the unexplained physical symptoms of Gulf War veterans; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs fund more scientific studies that exclusively investigate the health of women Gulf War veterans; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to quickly implement any reasonable recommendations contained in Institute of Medicine reports, or recommendations offered by the newly established Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses, regarding its Gulf War veterans programs and research; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the scientific community to focus its efforts on the most likely causes of Gulf War veterans illnesses and to refrain from supporting or encouraging investigations of risk factors that are not likely related to Gulf War veterans illnesses; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Defense to not use investigational drugs on U.S. troops without their informed consent; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to closely monitor the implementation of the changes to title 38, United States Code, section 1117, to ensure proper application of the law at the Department of Veterans Affairs regional office level; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs continue to develop the Gulf Registry; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion will continue to consult with medical experts from time to time in order to ensure the effectiveness of its advocacy.

Resolution No. 66: Improve the Disability and Death Pension Program
Origin: Michigan
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Public Law 95-588, the Veterans and Survivors Pension Improvement Act of 1978, provided major changes in the disability and death pension program for the veterans of World War I, World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, and Gulf Wars and their surviving spouses and children; and

WHEREAS, This pension program established different guaranteed annual income levels for necessary economic support; and

WHEREAS, After extensive study, The American Legion concludes that certain inequities exist in the Improved Pension program that need to be addressed by Congress; and

WHEREAS, Under the current Death Pension program, the annual benefit rate for a surviving spouse with no income and no dependents is $7,094 or about only two thirds of the amount received by a veteran with no income and no dependents; and

WHEREAS, In addition, current regulations provide that surviving spouses are not entitled to pension benefits for the month in which the veteran dies, if they are not found eligible for death pension; and

WHEREAS, The majority of these surviving spouses are elderly and disabled and are living below the poverty level; and

WHEREAS, Under the current Death Pension program, the annual benefit rate for a surviving child with no income where there is no surviving spouse is $1,806 or seventeen percent of the amount received by a veteran with no income or dependents; and

WHEREAS, This limited amount may impose a severe financial hardship on the surviving child; and

WHEREAS, Under title 38, United States Code, section 1543 where the surviving child is residing with a person who is legally responsible for such child's support, the income and corpus of estate of that person is countable for the purposes of determining entitlement or continued entitlement to pension benefits; and

WHEREAS, Currently, when two veterans are married to one another where both meet the disability, service and income requirements, basic pension benefits are payable only at the rate of a "veteran with one dependent," which is currently $13,855 annually; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that since each veteran in their own right meets the eligibility criteria for pension with the exception of being married to another veteran, this discriminatory provision of the law should be eliminated and each veteran should be paid at the basic pension rate of a single veteran without dependents which is $10,579, reduced by the amount of countable family income; and

WHEREAS, In the determination of annual income, payments under all Government Life Insurance programs are countable, but proceeds from fire and casualty insurance policies may be excluded; and

WHEREAS, Previous pension programs have excluded the proceeds of Government Life Insurance Policies in the determination of annual income; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the effective date of reduction or discontinuance of pension based on a change of income shall be the last day of the month in which the change occurred; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes it would lessen the financial hardship of such adjustments to pension if any such change would be made as of the last day of the calendar year in which the change occurred; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support amendments to title 38, United States Code, to accomplish the following:

1. Establish the pension rates of surviving spouses at ninety percent of the rate for a veteran without dependents;

2. Establish the pension rate for a surviving child where there is no surviving spouse entitled at ninety percent of the rate of a veteran without dependents;

3. Delete the requirement that the income and corpus of estate of a person legally responsible for the support of a surviving child be counted in the determination of annual income of such child;

4. Provide that when two veterans, who meet the service, disability and income requirements for pension eligibility, are married to one another, each shall be paid at the rate of a single veteran without dependents reduced by the amount of countable family income;

5. Exclude in the determination of annual income payments all proceeds from Government Life Insurance policies;

6. Change the effective date for reduction or discontinuance of pension based on a change of income from the last day of the month in which the change occurred to the last day of the calendar year in which the change occurred.

Resolution No. 67: The American Legion Policy Regarding Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs)

Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (Consolidated with Resolution No. 251 (CA))

WHEREAS, A Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) is a health care site in a fixed position that is geographically distinct from the parent medical facility; and

WHEREAS, A CBOC can be a site that is operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, A CBOC site can also be contracted since the Veterans' Health Care Eligibility Reform Act, Public Law 104-262, significantly enhanced VA's sharing authority so that it may now be used to contract for primary care and/or for a CBOC; and

WHEREAS, Since 1995, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) of the Department of Veterans Affairs has activated hundreds of new CBOCs to more efficiently and effectively serve eligible veterans and provide care in the most appropriate setting; and

WHEREAS, The establishment of CBOCs is subject to multiple criteria including the development of a CBOC business plan and application of national CBOC criteria, VA Central Office approval and notification of Congress, the availability of funds within the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN), and applicable federal statutes and VA regulations; and

WHEREAS, A CBOC must have the necessary professional medical staff, access to diagnostic testing and treatment capability, and referral arrangements needed to ensure continuity of health care for currently and potentially eligible veteran patients; and

WHEREAS, The VISN Network remains the focal point for CBOC planning, allowing decisions regarding needs and priorities to be made in the context of local market circumstances; and

WHEREAS, CBOC proposals must meet minimum uniform criteria and standards to ensure consistency nation-wide; and

WHEREAS, There has been a major shift in the delivery of mental health services away from inpatient care and towards outpatient care; and

WHEREAS, There has not been a commensurate shift in resources to support the necessary continuum of outpatient care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion affirm its support for the development of Community Based Outpatient Clinics that meet established criteria as a means of improving veterans access to high quality health care services in the most appropriate setting and in a cost-effective manner; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue to monitor the incorporation of mental health services as an integral component in the planning, development, and activation of CBOCs to promote reasonable access to services, and to ensure sufficient resources and capacity at CBOCs to meet the mental health needs of the local veteran population.

Resolution No. 130: Recognize Operations In Lebanon (1958), Grenada (1983) And Panama (1989-1990) As Periods Of War For Department Of Veterans Affairs Pension Purposes

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Subsection 11 of section 101, title 38, United States Code (USC), defines "period of war" as the Spanish-American War, Mexican Border Period, World War I, World War II, the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam Era, the Gulf War and the period beginning on the date of any future declaration of war by Congress and the ending on the date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or concurrent resolution of Congress; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, USC, section 1521 (a) provides that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) shall pay pension to each veteran of a "period of war" who meets the length of service requirements specified in section 1521 (j) and who is permanently and totally disabled and who meets the income criteria in this section; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, USC, section 101 (6) recognizes that, for VA purposes, the dates for the "period of war" for the Spanish-American War (April 21, 1898, to July 4, 1902) also include service during the Philippine Insurrection, Boxer Rebellion, and service in the Moro Province from April 21, 1898, to July 5, 1903; and

WHEREAS, Operation "Blue Bat" in Lebanon, July 1, 1958, to November 1, 1958, Operation "Urgent Fury" in Grenada, October 23, 1983, and Operation "Just Cause" in Panama, December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990, are not qualifying service for pension or benefit purposes, under title 38, USC, definition of a "period of war"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, That the Congress be urged to include in the definition of "period of war" in title 38, United States Code, sections 101 (11) and 1521, the following periods-the operations in Lebanon in 1958, Grenada in 1983, and Panama in 1989-1990 for the purpose of establishing entitlement to VA pension.

Resolution No. 131: Clarification Of "Service In The Republic Of Vietnam" For The Purpose Of Agent Orange Presumption

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun to implement a General Counsel opinion that impacts negatively on the eligibility of veterans who served their country during a time of war; and

WHEREAS, Until most recently, VA awarded service connection on a presumptive basis for all individuals who served on the Republic of Vietnam soil and also those who served in the territorial waters of Vietnam, thus recognizing such service as service in the Republic of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Congress in its plain language included a definition of "Service in Republic of Vietnam" in the most general of terms; "performed active military, naval or air service in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975," so as to plainly be deemed an intent of inclusion, rather than exclusion; and

WHEREAS, Succeeding interpretations in 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and General Counsel precedent opinion (VAOPGCPREC) prior to VAOPGCREC 27-97 have considered service in a "naval" capacity as service in the offshore or territorial waters of the Republic of Vietnam, as included in the category of "exposed" to Agent Orange, and, therefore, included in those eligible for presumptive consideration; and

WHEREAS, The plain language and sentence structure of the statute is expanded in 38 CFR 3.307(a)6(iii) to include restrictive terminology which was further supported and confirmed in VAOPGCREC 27-97; and

WHEREAS, The sentence structure and plain meaning of even the restrictive language can be interpreted to include "service in the territorial waters offshore" as "service in the Republic of Vietnam;" as "territorial waters" would be considered to be within the boundaries of the Republic of Vietnam; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion seek legislation to plainly identify and further clarify "service in the Republic of Vietnam beginning January 9, 1962 and ending on May 7, 1975" to include those who served in the territorial waters offshore, as this was clearly the original intent of the statute; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That those individuals who served in "other locations," who can

show their condition of service-involved duty or visitation in the Republic of Vietnam, shall also be included under the definition of those exposed to Agent Orange and the resultant presumptive conditions.

Resolution No. 132: The American Legion Policy On Radiation
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 301 (MN))

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code (USC), section 1112, lists various diseases which will be presumed to be service-connected in radiation-exposed veterans; and

WHEREAS, The term "radiation-exposed veteran" is defined as a veteran who participated in a radiation-risk activity while on active duty or inactive duty for training; and

WHEREAS, The term "radiation-risk activity" is defined as involving onsite participation in an atmospheric nuclear weapons test, or the occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki during the period beginning on August 6, 1945, and ending on July 1, 1946, or internment as a POW in Japan during WWII which resulted in an opportunity for radiation exposure, or participation in underground nuclear tests at Amchitka Island, Alaska prior to January 1, 1974, or service at gaseous diffusion plants at Paducah, Kentucky, Portsmouth, Ohio, or Oak Ridge, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Radiogenic diseases recognized as being presumed to be related to the veteran's exposure to radiation in service—listed in title 38, Code Of Federal Regulations (CFR), section 3.309—include various cancers that may manifest decades after exposure; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, CFR, section 3.311, requires VA to consider the circumstances of the veteran's service and make a determination of whether the veteran's disease resulted from the claimed exposure; and

WHEREAS, Such determinations are based heavily on an estimate of the veteran's probable dose exposure; and

WHEREAS, It is well documented that, because thousands of veterans who participated in the atmospheric nuclear weapons tests and various other radiation-risk activities did not have dosimetry badges, and record-keeping by the military and other Federal agencies concerning individual and group exposures was poor, current radiation dose estimates have been arbitrary, unreliable, and inaccurate; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) continued use of questionable radiation dose estimates has caused the claims of thousands of radiation-exposed veterans to be denied; and

WHEREAS, Congress recently expressed concern about this problem in a provision of Public Law (PL) 106-419 requiring VA to conduct a two-year study of the radiation dose estimate program and report back to Congress; and

WHEREAS, Based on the lack of credible historic data as to the amount of radiation atomic veterans were actually exposed to, The American Legion believes this requirement in the regulations should be eliminated; and

WHEREAS, PL 106-398 included provisions amending the Radiation Compensation Act of 1990 to include workers in Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear weapons-related programs who were exposed to radiation, beryllium, or silica; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, thousands of veterans have been assigned duty at various DOE nuclear weapons development, testing and manufacturing facilities, such as Hanford, Washington, Oak Ridge, Tennessee and others, and would have been similarly at risk of exposure to radiation, beryllium, or silica; and

WHEREAS, The claim for a radiogenic disease or a disease related to beryllium or silica by such veterans would be denied by VA, because their military duty does not meet the current definition of a radiation-risk activity in title 38 USC and proof of such exposure for direct service connection would be difficult if not impossible to obtain, nor

do these veterans meet the eligibility criteria for benefits under the Radiation Compensation Act of 1990 as amended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion seek legislation to eliminate the radiation dose estimate requirement in claims of veterans who were exposed to ionizing radiation during their military service; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation to recognize military duty at all DOE nuclear weapons development, testing and manufacturing facilities as a "radiation-risk activity"; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation to include in title 38, United States Code, those diseases recognized for benefit purposes under the Radiation Compensation Act of 1990 as amended, including those resulting from exposure to beryllium and silica.

Resolution No. 133: Provide Full Funding For The Department Of Veterans Affairs Construction Program

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

(Consolidated with Resolution No. 298 (MA))

WHEREAS, The health care delivery facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are increasingly aging physical plants in need of replacement; substantial renovation and improvements relating to fire, safety and privacy standards are necessary, as well as modernization and reconfiguration to meet the demands of the advances of medicine; and

WHEREAS, The increasing demands placed upon the outpatient and ambulatory care facilities of VA require substantial alterations to meet changing space requirements; and

WHEREAS, No health care delivery system can be expected to provide quality care if the physical settings that house that care are allowed to deteriorate to a state which places them beyond redemption; and

WHEREAS, VA has undertaken a Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) planning process with the stated intent to realign its medical facilities and services more effectively and more efficiently; and

WHEREAS, Major and minor construction appropriations for VA have been consistently targeted for reduction since such funding is regrettably the most vulnerable to annual assault; and

WHEREAS, For several years VA facility directors have been forced to use non-recurring maintenance funds to provide care; and

WHEREAS, The CARES Decision released in May 2004 contained hundreds of construction requests, upgrades, and alterations of current buildings that will require a substantial increase in funding for Major and Minor Construction within VA; and

WHEREAS, Sufficient funding must be provided to maintain, improve and realign VA health care facilities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge Congress to annually appropriate sufficient funds for the Department of Veterans Affairs construction program to ensure the continued provision of quality health care to our nation's veterans and the implementation of the CARES decisions.

Resolution No. 134: The American Legion Policy On Prostate Cancer Research And Treatment

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Prostate cancer is the most common form of cancer, other than skin cancer, among men in the United States and is second only to lung cancer as a cause of cancer-related death among men; and

WHEREAS, One of ten males will develop clinically significant prostate cancer in their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, The American Cancer Society estimates that 250,000 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed annually; and

WHEREAS, Prostate cancer has been demonstrated to be service-connected to Agent Orange exposure and, pursuant to the Agent Orange Act of 1991, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has determined that a presumption of service connection based on exposure to herbicides used in Vietnam is warranted for prostate cancer, in that VA has found a positive association between the condition and such exposure; and

WHEREAS, Advances in biomedical research are leading to new treatments and cures for all forms of cancer, and will lower long-term health care costs; and

WHEREAS, VA is very productive in advancing medical knowledge, improving health care for veterans and all other citizens; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That federal funding for prostate cancer research, treatment, and therapies at the National Institutes of Health, Department of Defense, and Department of Veterans Affairs be significantly increased and that Congress and the Administration re-double their efforts to find a cure for prostate cancer; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Veterans Health Administration increase its investment in prostate cancer clinical research by improving and accelerating clinical trials at VA hospitals and affiliated university medical centers and research programs.

Resolution No. 135: Support Medicare Reimbursement For The Department Of Veterans Affairs

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (Consolidated with Resolution No. 226 (SD))

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides medical care to eligible beneficiaries as authorized by title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, The fundamental branch of VA that administers and operates this medical care delivery system is the Veterans Health Administration (VHA); and

WHEREAS, VHA is the nation's largest comprehensive, integrated health care delivery system that provides excellence in health care value, service, education and research; and

WHEREAS, The mission of VHA is to meet the medical needs of America's veterans by providing specialized care, primary care and related medical and social support services for eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, VHA consists of hospitals, ambulatory clinics, nursing homes, domiciliaries and readjustment counseling centers located nationwide; and

WHEREAS, VHA continues to be the nation's largest educator of health care professionals through its affiliations with medical schools, academic medical centers and other research institutions; and

WHEREAS, VHA continues to be a major national research asset conducting basic, clinical, epidemiological and behavioral studies across the entire spectrum of scientific discipline; and

WHEREAS, VHA continues to serve as a contingency back-up to Department of Defense (DoD) medical services and, during national emergencies, supports the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS); and

WHEREAS, Enrollment in VHA could be limited by the availability of existing annual federal discretionary appropriations to meet the health care needs of enrolled veterans; and

WHEREAS, VHA continues to seek other revenue streams to supplement limited annual federal discretionary appropriations and meet the growing demands for quality treatment of enrolled veterans; and

WHEREAS, VHA is authorized to bill, collect and retain payments from enrolled veterans and their health care insurers, except Medicare, for inpatient and outpatient care, outpatient medications and long-term care services; and

WHEREAS, Medicare is a prepaid, federally mandated health insurance program for all eligible Americans; and

WHEREAS, Medicare is an entitlement program for nearly forty million Americans; and

WHEREAS, VA is prohibited from billing and collecting Medicare reimbursements for the treatment of nonservice-connected medical conditions of enrolled Medicare-eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, Indian Health Service has successfully demonstrated the ability to bill and collect Medicare reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's GI Bill of Health proposes Medicare Reimbursement for VA as a realistic health care coverage for enrolled, Medicare-eligible veterans seeking treatment of nonservice-connected medical conditions in VHA health care facilities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion advocate to Congress amending title XVIII of the Social Security Act, to allow Medicare Reimbursement for VA on a fee-for-service basis for the treatment of nonservice-connected medical conditions of enrolled, Medicare-eligible veterans; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That enrolled, Medicare-eligible veterans be authorized to participate in the Medicare Advantage option by choosing VA as their primary health care provider.

Resolution No. 136: Revision of Work-Rate Standards for Department of Veterans Affairs Adjudicators

Origin: Washington

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The current Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) work-rate standards are based upon a series of work credits or End Products (EPs) that can be taken upon completion of work at the various stages in the processing of a claim; and

WHEREAS, This data is used to measure and evaluate each individual adjudicator's performance as well as the station's overall perfonnance; and

WHEREAS, Under this type of system, the amount of work performed is measured in terms of the cumulative number of EPs reported without regard to whether the action taken, as indicated by the EP, was correct or proper; and

WHEREAS, Since all action—good and bad—receives the same amount of work credit, there is no incentive to do good quality work or disincentive to do poor quality work, which makes the use of these work credits prone to manipulation and abuse; and

WHEREAS, The use of a piecemeal approach to work measurement does not provide accurate or reliable information on the actual amount of work being performed, its quality, or the amount of time and resources needed to properly process a claim; and

WHEREAS, The number of new appeals filed each year and the overturn rate by the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) and the courts can be useful tools in gauging claimant satisfaction with the "quality" of a VA regional office decision and how the BVA views the propriety of these decisions; and

WHEREAS, Since decisions of VA regional office adjudicators do not become final until ruled upon by the BVA, or the claimant does not file a timely appeal within one year; and

WHEREAS, Without a fundamental change in the work measurement system, the BVA will continue to be burdened with an inordinate number of unnecessary appeals, and veterans and their families forced to endure prolonged hardship while waiting for a final decision on their claim; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion seek legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide that VA regional office adjudicators shall not receive work credit for a claim until the decision in that claim becomes final, meaning that no future action is permitted by statute, either because the claimant has failed to initiate a timely appeal or the Board of Veterans' Appeals has rendered a final decision on the claim.

Resolution No. 138: Support Legislation to Place Mariner Medal Recipients in Priority Group 3 for Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care

Origin: Washington

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Qualified Merchant Marines are eligible for veterans benefits; and

WHEREAS, Congress authorized the Mariner's Medal, which was awarded to any seaman who while serving in a ship during the war period (World War II) was wounded, suffered physical injury, or suffered through dangerous exposure as a result of an act of enemy of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Enrollment levels for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care are set according to eight priority groups established by Congress; and

WHEREAS, Purple Heart recipients are accorded Priority Group 3 status for VA health care; and

WHEREAS, Recipients of the Merchant Medal should be accorded similar priority group status for VA health care; now; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support legislation that would place recipients of the Mariner Medal in the priority group 3 enrollment level for Department of Veterans Affairs health care.

Resolution No. 139: The American Legion Policy On Department Of Veterans Affairs Nursing Home Capacity

Origin: Washington

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Long-Term Care (LTC) has been the subject of discussion and legislation for nearly twenty years. In a landmark July 1984 study, Caring for the Older Veteran, it was predicted that a wave of elderly veterans had the potential to overwhelm VA's long-term care capacity; and

WHEREAS, The recommendations of the Federal Advisory Committee on the Future of Long-Term Care in its 1998 report VA Long-Term Care at the Crossroads, made recommendations that serve as the foundation for VA's national strategy to revitalize and reengineer long-term care services; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 106-117, the Millennium Act, enacted in November 1999, required VA to continue to ensure 1998 levels of extended care services (defined as VA nursing home care, VA domiciliary, VA home-based primary care, and VA adult day health care) in its facilities; and

WHEREAS, The Millennium Act specifically requires VA to maintain its in-house Nursing Home Care Unit (NHCU) bed capacity at the 1998 level of 13,391. However, VA has never met this mandate; and

WHEREAS, Recent General Accounting Office reports show that VA has failed to fully implement mandates of the Millennium Act that would expand non-institutional long-term care services; and

WHEREAS, VA continues to focus its long-term care treatment on non-institutional care and is projecting a continued decrease in the level of beds for VA nursing homes from 11,151 to 11,100 beds for 2007; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That VA should be required to restore its nursing home care unit capacity as intended by Congress to the 1998 level of 13, 391; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA must create incentives and receive appropriate funding to maintain its nursing home care unit beds rather than abandon them to alternative sources; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA be prohibited from counting any but their own nursing home care unit beds for the purposes of compliance with the provisions of Public Law 106-117, the Millennium Act; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress should appropriate sufficient funds to support the provisions of the non-institutional long-term care mandates of Public Law 106-117, the Millennium Act, so that VA is not forced to reduce its nursing home care unit capacity in order to comply with said non-institutional care mandates.

Resolution No. 141: The GI Bill of Health
Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion's intention in its initial draft of the GI Bill of Health was to ensure the permanent existence of an effective veterans health care delivery system for the nation's veterans and their eligible dependents into the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, For the past 50 years, the Department of Veterans Affairs has provided high quality health care to America's veterans, trained numerous health care providers, engaged in innovative research, and supported the Department of Defense and the Federal Emergency Management Agency in times of crisis; and

WHEREAS, VA has changed the way it delivers health care during the past decade through restructuring and legislative initiatives, which has resulted in the implementation of several of the original provisions of the GI Bill of Health; and

WHEREAS, The elements of the GI Bill of Health that have already been accomplished under measures established by Eligibility Reform in 1996 and the Millennium Bill in 1999, include:

- Portability
- An equitable standardized resource distribution method
- Extension of health care access to all veterans
- A defined benefits package
- Long-term care for veterans rated 70 percent or higher or for service-connected conditions; and

WHEREAS, There are two main components of the GI Bill of Health that have yet to be addressed, Medicare Reimbursement and dependents access to VA health care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support the enactment of the remaining main components of the GI Bill of Health involving Medicare Reimbursement and dependent access to VA health care.

Resolution No. 142: Amend the Eligibility Requirements and Extend the Eligibility Time Period for Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance
Origin: Washington
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (SDVI) program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was founded by Congress in 1951 to provide life

insurance coverage for veterans suffering only from disabilities rated by VA as being connected to their military service to the nation; and

WHEREAS, Service-connected disabled veterans are required by statute to not only be in good health except for their service-connected disability, but must apply for SDVI coverage within two years from the date of their last VA rating for a new, original, disability, with increases in prior VA disability ratings not being includible for this purpose; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans in good health except for their service-connected disabilities, and who are granted rating increases because of worsening severity in such disabilities, continue to be denied SDVI coverage at a time when it has become most needful to them, due to the requirement that SDVI eligibility periods begin only with a VA rating for a new disability and last for only two years; and

WHEREAS, Other service-disabled veterans also continue to be denied insurance, due to the strict two year time limit (from the date of their last original rating) to make application; and

WHEREAS, It continues to be the experience of veterans service organizations such as The American Legion that many service-disabled veterans remain unaware of the SDVI program despite automated VA notifications, a fact supported by VA's own casework experience and program studies, and that the insurance benefit remains inadequate and in need of enhancement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to amend Sec. 1922(a) of title 38, United States Code, to permit that increases in VA service-connected ratings also provide a service-connected veteran with an eligibility period to apply for VA Service-Disabled Life Insurance in the same manner that ratings for new, original, disabilities presently do, and that the time period of such eligibility be increased from the current two years to a period of at least five years from the date of rating determination and notification.

Resolution No. 143: The American Legion Policy On The State Veterans Home Program

Origin: Washington

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

(Consolidated with Resolution No. 38 (NE); No. 75 (VA); No. 76 (OH); No. 235 (ND); No. 275 (NY); No. 304 (MN); No. 305 (MN); and No. 308 (OR))

WHEREAS, State Veterans Homes were founded for indigent and disabled Civil War veterans beginning in the late 1800s and have continued to serve subsequent generations of veterans for over one hundred years; and

WHEREAS, Today, there are 133 State Veterans Homes facilities in a total of 49 states and territories with over 30,000 beds providing nursing home, hospital and domiciliary care, with more capacity being added annually; and

WHEREAS, The State Veterans Home Program has proven to be a cost-effective provider of quality care to many of the nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, This program is an important adjunct to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) own nursing, hospital and domiciliary programs; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, authorizes VA per diem payments for veterans residing in State Veterans Homes; and

WHEREAS, Under the provisions of title 38, United States Code, VA is also authorized to make payments to states to assist in the construction and maintenance of State Veterans Homes; and

WHEREAS, The Grant for Construction of State Veterans Home Program, which provides funding for 65% of the total cost of building new veterans homes, has not been able to keep pace with the number of grant applications; and

WHEREAS, The enactment of the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits bill makes it mandatory that VA provide institutional care and nursing home service to veterans with service-connected disabilities rated at 70% or higher; and

WHEREAS, Currently the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will only provide these services to 70% or higher service-connected veterans, if the veteran either resides in a VA long-term care facility or a private contracted facility, but not in a State Veterans Home; and

WHEREAS, Veterans with a rating of 50% or greater service connection receive VA pharmaceutical benefits at no cost; and

WHEREAS, Pharmaceutical services are available at the Veterans State Homes for these veterans, but they are required to unnecessarily travel to VA facilities to receive them; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing the growth in long-term health care needs of older veterans, it is essential to maintain the State Veterans Home Program as a viable and important adjunct health care provider to the VA system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support enactment of legislation to require VA per diem payments at a rate of 50% of the national average cost of providing care in a State Veterans Home; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to pass legislation that adequately funds the State Veterans Home Construction Grant projects; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA should allow for full reimbursement of nursing home care to 70% service-connected veterans or higher, if the veteran resides in a State Veterans Home; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support the receipt of prescription drugs and over-the-counter medication in State Homes by veterans enrolled in the VA health care system who have a VA disability rating of 50% or greater; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the National Association of State Veterans Homes and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to support mutual planning efforts, enhanced medical sharing agreements, and enhanced-use construction contracts with qualified providers.

Resolution No. 145: The American Legion Policy on Department of Veterans Affairs National Service Life Insurance

Origin: Connecticut

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, No regular government life insurance program was available to veterans entering and leaving service in the period January 1957 to September 1965; and

WHEREAS, Veterans of the Vietnam War serving on active duty during the period beginning September 29, 1965, through May 7, 1975, were covered under either the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program or, later, the Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) program; and

WHEREAS, Upon discharge or separation from service, individuals had only 120 days within which to convert their government life insurance to a private commercial policy, with Veterans' Group Life Insurance not becoming available until August 1974, with a retroactive open period to 1970 for unconverted active or inactive SGLI policies, but not applying to the major portion of the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, Many of these veterans experienced extraordinarily severe readjustment problems and were often financially and/or emotionally unable to take advantage of the conversion provision within the 120-day time limit after discharge from service; and

WHEREAS, Many Vietnam War veterans who did not convert their government life insurance to a private policy, as well as veterans of the World War II and Korean War

period whose National Service Life Insurance (NSLI) polices may have lapsed, and veterans of the Cold War period of 1957-1965 who had no government life insurance coverage for their families' protection, but because of disability may not be able to purchase commercial insurance; and

WHEREAS, There is precedent for the reopening of the National Service Life Insurance program in that it was previously reopened in 1965-1966 for World War II and Korean War veterans with disabilities who had been eligible to apply for NSLI on or after October 8, 1940, through December 31, 1956, (disabilities could have been service-connected and/or nonservice-connected); and

WHEREAS, Many such eligible veterans, due to financial hardships and problems associated with their service-connected disabilities and adjustments to civilian life, or to notification problems resulting from VA procedures, did not apply for NSLI service-disabled insurance within the prescribed eligibility period; and

WHEREAS, Since 1951, veterans granted a service-connected disability and who are otherwise in good health may purchase up to a basic $10,000 of NSLI service-disabled insurance at standard rates within two years from the date the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) notifies them of the grant of service connection (one year prior to September 1, 1991); and

WHEREAS, VA service-disabled life insurance does not permit an eligibility period for increases in previously rated service-connected disabilities, but only for new ratings; and

WHEREAS, Those who may now be able to afford insurance at standard NSLI-disabled rates, and who still would meet the underwriting criteria, cannot apply due to the statutory bar; and

WHEREAS, The continuous inflation of the past four decades has rendered the maximum face value of $10,000 for basic NSLI coverage totally inadequate; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion sponsor and support legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the reopening of the National Service Life Insurance program for a minimum of one year for all disabled veterans within underwriting criteria similar to that of the Veterans Reopened Program of 1965-1966, to include a similar reopened period for the service-disabled insurance program for those veterans in good health except for their service-connected disabilities, regardless of the date of their service-connected rating, and that such reopened issues be at a maximum optional face value at a level that appropriately reflects current inflationary experience.

Resolution No. 146: The American Legion Policy on Department of Veterans Affairs Pharmacy Benefits

Origin: Connecticut

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) basic Medical Benefits Package includes prescription drugs and supplies; and

WHEREAS, VA has experienced unprecedented demand for prescription drugs since open enrollment in 1998; and

WHEREAS, By law (Public Law (P. L.) 101-508 and P. L. 106-117) VA must charge veterans a co-payment for each 30-day or less supply of medication provided on an outpatient basis for the treatment of a nonservice-connected condition; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act (P. L. 106-117) authorized VA to increase the co-payment amount and to establish an annual cap on the amount of medication co-payment charged; and

WHEREAS, The amount of the medication co-payment and the annual cap may be changed on an annual basis; and

WHEREAS, VA increased the amount of the co-payment from $2.00 to $7.00 dollars effective February 4, 2002; and from $7.00 to $8.00 in 2005; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion opposed the pharmacy co-payment increases citing alternative options; and

WHEREAS, The Office of Inspector General reported an audit of VA regarding pharmacy co-payment levels and restrictions on filling privately written prescriptions for priority group 7 veterans in December 2000; and

WHEREAS, This report raised the issue that the indirect cost of re-writing private prescriptions that are filled by VA physicians can exceed the direct cost of the prescriptions themselves; and

WHEREAS, VA's policy to fill only prescriptions written by VA physicians and the processes that have been developed to comply with this policy affects all veterans receiving or eligible to receive VA health care; and

WHEREAS, VA has been unable to provide all enrolled veterans with services in a timely manner and this has generated interest in filling prescriptions from outside providers; and

WHEREAS, Various legislative proposals have been offered to grant VA the authority to provide veterans with pharmaceuticals prescribed by physicians or other health care professionals who have no affiliation with VA; and

WHEREAS, VA is a managed health care system that requires enrollment; and

WHEREAS, Authorizing VA to fill prescriptions from a private sector physician without the veteran enrolling would fundamentally change the system; and

WHEREAS, VA provides medications and pharmaceutical supplies to veterans, with limited exceptions, only in the course of providing medical care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion oppose significant pharmacy co-payment increases at the expense of veteran beneficiaries, in lieu of seeking alternative funding sources, such as Mandatory Funding and Medicare Reimbursement, that would generate and provide VA with more adequate system-wide funding; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support the provision of VA Pharmacy Benefits to enrolled veterans only when prescribed by an authorized VA physician or provider in the course of providing them medical care.

Resolution No. 147: Open-Ended Presumptive Period For Undiagnosed Illnesses For Gulf War Veterans

Origin: Connecticut

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Thousands of Gulf War veterans still suffer from chronic unexplained physical symptoms; and

WHEREAS, Many service members who have served in the Southwest Asia theater since the 1991 Gulf War—including those serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom—have also been exhibiting chronic, unexplained physical symptoms; and

WHEREAS, The Gulf War Era has not been officially concluded; and

WHEREAS, There has recently been some progress in research on the long-term health effects of many of the agents Gulf War veterans were potentially exposed to during the Gulf War, but numerous symptoms experienced by sick Gulf War veterans are still not well understood, the causes of such symptoms remain elusive and answers could likely remain evasive for some time; and

WHEREAS, Additional research into the long-term health effects of exposures is needed, a fact confirmed the Department of Veterans Affairs Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses; and

WHEREAS, The current presumptive period for undiagnosed illnesses expires January 1, 2007; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge that legislation be enacted to extend the presumptive period for service connection of Gulf War veterans with undiagnosed illnesses indefinitely.

Resolution No. 148: The American Legion Policy on the Department of Veterans Affairs Mental Health Services
Origin: Connecticut
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 170 (ID))

WHEREAS, The Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) has a substantial mental health population; and

WHEREAS, According to the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards, of the returning Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans who have sought care at VHA facilities, mental health problems are the second most common medical problem of these war veterans; and

WHEREAS, There has been significant restructuring of VA mental health services during the past several years; and

WHEREAS, This restructuring has often resulted in a downsizing of in-patient-based care, and the shift of treatment programs from residential-based to ambulatory-based programs; and

WHEREAS, There has not been a commensurate re-investment of resources in alternative treatment modalities to maintain community-based mental health services to treat veterans who were de-institutionalized by the closure of inpatient programs; and

WHEREAS, During the past several years, the number of veterans provided specialized substance abuse treatment has declined, while the funding for such treatment has been significantly decreased; and

WHEREAS, Since the restructuring, the Veterans Health Administration now has more mental health patients seeking treatment with fewer mental health providers; and

WHEREAS, Veterans continue to need increased access to mental health services, including, but not limited to, Community Based Outpatient Clinics, Mental Health Intensive Case Management, Substance Abuse Disorder Programs, and Compensated Work Therapy Programs; and

WHEREAS, VA has published and started implementing a Mental Health Strategic Plan that embraces many of the New Freedom Commission's concepts and recommendations; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion shall monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the Mental Health Strategic Plan; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to annually appropriate sufficient funds for the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure comprehensive mental health services are available to veterans; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to provide annual oversight of VA's mental health services.

Resolution No. 149: The American Legion Position on Attorney Representation Before the Department of Veterans Affairs
Origin: Connecticut
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, There have been restrictions, dating back to the Civil War, limiting fees and imposing other limitations on attorney representation of veterans; and

WHEREAS, Contrary to popular belief, attorney representation is permitted throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claims process; and

WHEREAS, Current statute prohibits an attorney from charging a fee for representation in a claim for VA benefits prior to the issuance of a final decision by the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA), effectively curtailing attorney representation prior to appellate action in the Federal Court system; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has never had an official position either supporting or opposing the attorney restrictions currently in place, nor has The American Legion ever had an official position supporting or opposing the lifting of the current restrictions; and

WHEREAS, In response to growing interest and public support to "open the VA system up to attorneys," legislation was recently introduced in the House of Representatives and the Senate to lift current attorney restrictions; and

WHEREAS, Current legislation introduced in the House of Representatives does not contain any provisions to ensure attorney competence or proficiency in veterans' law, nor does it contain other safeguards or oversight measures to protect the rights of the veteran/claimant; and

WHEREAS, Just because an individual is an attorney does not mean that he or she is proficient in this very specialized area of veterans' law and would be an effective representative; and

WHEREAS, There is currently only a small number of attorneys familiar with veterans' law; and

WHEREAS, Currently the only requirement pertaining to attorney qualifications to represent claimants before VA is admission to a state bar association; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That although The American Legion does not oppose the concept of attorney representation or the lifting of current restrictions on attorney representation in the VA system, The American Legion is opposed to any such measure that does not include adequate safeguards, including, but not limited to, fee limits, training requirements and or competency/proficiency certification requirements and strict agency oversight, to ensure the protection of the claimant.

Resolution No. 150: The American Legion Policy On Opening The Federal Supply Schedule For Pharmaceuticals To Medicare And Medicaid

Origin: Connecticut

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

(As amended)

WHEREAS, The Federal Supply Schedule for Pharmaceuticals (FSS-P) is a schedule of pharmaceutical supply contracts awarded to responsible vendors supplying comparable products and services at fair and reasonable prices to the Government; and

WHEREAS, FSS-P is essentially a price catalog of approximately 24,000 pharmaceutical products available to the Federal Government; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the largest purchaser of pharmaceuticals under FSS-P; and

WHEREAS, Pricing of pharmaceuticals to VA is at least 24% below and as much as 60% below drug manufacturers' most favored non-federal, non-retail customer pricing; and

WHEREAS, Known as Federal Ceiling Prices (FCP), these prices are generally 14-20% lower than regular negotiated FSS-P prices; and

WHEREAS, Medicaid is a joint Federal and State program that pays for medical assistance for individuals and families with low incomes and relatively few assets; and

WHEREAS, Numerous states encounter shortfalls in Medicaid funds and implement aggressive measures to control growth and curb expenditures, including prescription drug expenditures; and

WHEREAS, Beneficiaries of prescription drug benefits under Medicaid who also receive medical care under Medicare Parts A and B are known as "dual-eligible"; and

WHEREAS, "Dual-eligible" are mostly elderly poor who account for 34% of the enrolled Medicaid population, but 80% of the Medicaid drug bill; and

WHEREAS, "Dual-eligible" beneficiaries were automatically enrolled into the new Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit; and

WHEREAS, In 1990, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (OBRA90) required drug manufacturers to provide rebates to State Medicaid programs for outpatient drug purchases in exchange for Medicaid reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, Manufacturers are willing to price FSS-P low because it accounts for a very small fraction of the total domestic drug market and because up to 70% of new doctors receive some residency training in medical school affiliated VA medical centers, thereby creating a continuous flow of loyal prescribers of their products; and

WHEREAS, When OBRA90 Medicaid rebates went into effect, manufacturers responded by raising FSS-P pricing to VA some 14%; and

WHEREAS, If Federal legislation mandates that the new Medicare Part D drug benefit be tied to FSS-P, pharmaceutical manufacturers will act predictably to raise FSS-P prices to VA; and

WHEREAS, U.S. veterans receiving outpatient VA pharmacy benefits requiring co-payments of $8.00 for a 30-day supply of medication would almost certainly end up paying more were VA to lose its protected FSS-P pricing; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has consistently opposed increases in prescription co-payments in the past, arguing that corrections to other programs should not be made "on the backs of veterans"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion oppose any Federal legislation that would open the Federal Supply Schedule for Pharmaceuticals to Medicaid, Medicare Part D, or any other entity or program not now specifically authorized to purchase on the Federal Supply Schedule for Pharmaceuticals.

Resolution No. 214: Include World War II Veterans In Priority Group 6 For Department Of Veterans Affairs Health Care

Origin: Texas

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Mexican War and WW I veterans were provided priority medical care on reaching advanced age; and

WHEREAS, The average age of the WW II veteran is 82.6 years; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code (USC) fails to provide reasonable care to WW II veterans who are passing away at the rate of 1000 a day; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support legislation to amend title 38 USC to give VA the authority to enroll WWII veterans in "Priority Group 6" for the purpose of receiving VA health care services.

Resolution No. 218: The Establishment Of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) As A Gulf War Presumptive Disease

Origin: Wyoming

Submitted by: Convention Committee Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is a fatal neurological disease that controls muscle movement and neither a cause or effective treatment for ALS is known; and

WHEREAS, Preliminary findings of a joint Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DoD) study, released in December 2001, of nearly 2.5 million veterans indicated that deployed Gulf War veterans are twice as likely as their non-deployed counterparts to develop ALS; and

WHEREAS, The VA study initially identified 40 Gulf War veterans with ALS and there may be other Gulf War veterans currently suffering from ALS yet to be identified; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of Veterans Affairs ("Secretary") announced that he would explore VA's options for compensating Gulf War veterans who subsequently develop ALS; and

WHEREAS, VA subsequently directed all VA regional offices to submit all Gulf War ALS cases to VA Central Office for expeditious adjudication; and

WHEREAS, Despite the Secretary's announcement and subsequent action, VA did not have plans to draft a regulation establishing an ALS presumption under current law guaranteeing compensation for Gulf War veterans who develop ALS in the future; and

WHEREAS, The joint VA and DoD study was published in the scientific journal *Neurology* in September 2003, resulting in the Secretary to publicly announce that this "final study" supports his 2001 decision to compensate Gulf War veterans stricken with ALS; and

WHEREAS, Despite this public announcement and the Secretary's initial decision to expeditiously service-connect, on a direct basis, Gulf War veterans diagnosed with ALS, VA recently informed The American Legion that it would be "premature" at this time to create a regulatory presumption of service connection for Gulf War veterans with ALS; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion pursue specific legislation to establish ALS as a condition presumed to be service-connected when incurred by veterans of the Gulf War.

Resolution No. 219: The American Legion Policy on the Correction of Military Records

Origin: Wyoming

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 provided for the recognition of representatives of The American Legion, and other organizations, to serve as counsel before the discharge and retirement boards of the Armed Forces, and this recognition was extended to cover the Boards for Correction of Military Records (BCMRs) when they were created under the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion was actively involved in the legislative process that established the Correction Boards under section 1552 of title 10, United States Code (USC); and

WHEREAS, Although under provision of title 10, USC, 1552, a three year statute of limitations was created which begins as of the date of discovery of an error or injustice on the military records of a former servicemember, the Boards are also authorized, under statute, to excuse filings beyond the three year period if it is in the interest of justice to do so; and

WHEREAS, For many years, the Boards routinely waived the three year statute of limitation so as to provide veterans the opportunity to correct any error or injustice in their records; and

WHEREAS, In the past, the BCMRs have considered that the effective date of commencement of the three year limit was effective the date of the final separation from service; and

WHEREAS, Congress is investigating the fairness and independence of the BCMRs and the effective date for the commencement of the correction of records by active servicemembers; and

WHEREAS, Section 205 of The Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 provides for the waiver of periods of limitation for persons in military service with respect to civil proceedings; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruling in the case of Detweiler v. Pena, held that the three year rule does not apply to active duty personnel; and

WHEREAS, The Discharge Review Board, considered to be a lower review agency, has a 15 year statute of limitation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That appropriate action be taken in support of legislation to amend title 10, United States Code, section 1552, so as to eliminate all time limitations restricting when a claimant may petition the Boards for Correction of Military Records for relief of an error or injustice.

Resolution No. 220: Support for Enhanced Department of Veterans Affairs Rural Health Care

Origin: Wyoming

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Men and women who serve in our armed forces come from both rural and urban backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Veterans deserve access to the medical attention they have been promised, regardless of where they choose to live; and

WHEREAS, Veterans, many of them elderly and infirm or unable to travel, are isolated from the regular, preventive medical attention they need and deserve; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has an obligation to provide services to those veterans in rural and highly rural areas just the same as veterans who choose to reside in an urban area; and

WHEREAS, Providing health care services to the rural and highly rural veteran population has posed many problems for VA, to include finding providers who can furnish the types of services needed by the veteran in the rural area; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, section 1703 provides VA with the authority to contract for services where they are needed; and

WHEREAS, Veterans should not be penalized or forced to travel long distances to access quality health care because of where they choose to live; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge VA to improve access to quality primary and specialty health care services, using all available means at their disposal, for veterans living in rural and highly rural areas.

Resolution No. 221: All Veterans Receive "Wartime" Benefits For Active Military Service Between February 28, 1961, And August 5, 1964

Origin: Wyoming

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Certain VA benefits require wartime service by veterans; and

WHEREAS, The present dates for wartime service during the Vietnam War are August 5, 1964, through May 7, 1975; and

WHEREAS, On November 10, 1997, Public Law 105-110 was signed by President Clinton; and

WHEREAS, This legislation amended the public law which established The American Legion (41 Stat. 285; 36 United States Code (USC) 45), approved September 16, 1919, by striking December 22, 1961, and inserting February 28, 1961; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has always advocated the principle of equal benefits for equal service and believes that wartime service is not limited to only those who served in combat; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes the provision in section 101(29(A), title 38, USC, which limits entitlement to wartime benefits to those who served "in-country in the Republic of Vietnam" in the period February 28, 1961, to August 5, 1964,

discriminates against those other veterans who served on active duty during this period, but who did not happen to have been stationed in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, During these early years of the war in Vietnam, those serving on active duty in other parts of the world were a part of the build-up of military forces in Vietnam and were subject to transfer to Vietnam at any time; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, That The American Legion shall seek legislation to establish February 28, 1961, as the beginning date of the Vietnam War for VA benefit purposes.

Resolution No. 238: Exempt Certain Income From VA Pension Rate Determination
Origin: Illinois
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Serving on jury duty is a civic obligation, which all citizens, when called, should take very seriously, and

WHEREAS, At many polling places, there is a shortage of needed supervisory personnel and serving as an election judge helps insure a fair and impartial election process; and

WHEREAS, Veterans and surviving spouses in receipt of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pension benefits under Public Law (PL) 95-588 must report all income received from outside sources, since this directly affects the amount of VA pension to which they are entitled; and

WHEREAS, The amount of financial remuneration received from these types of civic activities is relatively small, but it can result in the reduction in monthly benefits, dollar for dollar, or the complete loss of entitlement to pension, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to exempt income received from jury duty and income from service as an election judge in determining the VA pension rate under PL 95-588.

Resolution No. 239: Exempt Purple Heart Recipients from VA Prescription Co-Payment
Origin: Illinois
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(As amended)
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 31 (VT))

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Under the priority category system at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers, those who were awarded the Purple Heart have been singled out as a special group of veterans deserving special consideration for their service and sacrifice to their country; and

WHEREAS, This special group of Purple Heart recipients has been placed in Priority Group Three; and

WHEREAS, Priority Group Three veterans do not have to make any co-payments for any of their inpatient or outpatient care; and

WHEREAS, These same veterans, if they are rated under 50% service-connected disabled or receiving prescriptions for a non-service connected condition are charged an $8 co-payment for each 30 day supply of medication; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to exempt all those who were awarded the Purple

Heart and are enrolled in the VA health care system, from any co-payment for prescription drugs.

Resolution No. 240: Increase The Maximum Coverage Under The Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance Program

Origin: Illinois

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (also known as S-DVI or RH insurance) was established in 1951 to meet the insurance needs of certain veterans with service-related disabilities; and

WHEREAS, The maximum coverage was set at $10,000 back in 1951; and

WHEREAS, What cost $10,000 back in 1951 would cost over $74,000 in 2006 due to inflation; and

WHEREAS, This puts a greater burden on the surviving family members to meet the burial and final expenses of a deceased service-connected disabled veteran; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to increase to $50,000 the maximum coverage a service-connected disabled veteran can purchase under the Service-Disabled Veterans insurance program.

Resolution No. 242: Remove The Specific Date To Award Dependency And Indemnity Compensation Benefits To Surviving Spouses Of Former Prisoners Of War

Origin: Illinois

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (Consolidated with Resolution No. 32 (VT))

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Millennium Benefits Act, Public law 106 11, authorized payments of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits to the survivors of former Prisoners of War (POWs) who died after September 30, 1999, and who were continuously rated totally disabled due to a service-connected disability for a period of not less than one year immediately preceding death; and

WHEREAS, There are thousands of widows whose spouse was a former POW who died before September 30, 1999, and who was rated totally disabled for over one year for a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, These widows are not able to become eligible for DIC because their husband's death was before September 30, 1999; and

WHEREAS, When other survivor benefit programs were liberalized, they usually covered the widows of veterans who died before the enactment of the law, e.g. deaths from cancers from Agent Orange; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assmebled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to amend section 1318 of title 38, United States Code, to remove the date of September 30, 1999, and substituted "who died any time after discharge from active duty and who were rated totally disabled for over one year."

Resolution No. 243: Allow Beneficiaries to Retain $90 of Their Benefits while in Medicaid-Covered Nursing Homes

Origin: Illinois

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, When a veteran without dependents in receipt of pension benefits is covered by Medicaid for nursing home care, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pension is reduced to $90 for incidental expenses; and

WHEREAS, However, when a veteran without dependents who is receiving compensation benefits and is similarly covered by Medicaid, only $30 a month is allowed for incidentals; and

WHEREAS, When a helpless child who is in receipt of pension or Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) and is similarly covered by Medicaid, there is no provision for VA to reduce the individual's award for incidental expenses; and

WHEREAS, When a surviving parent who is in receipt of Parents' DIC and is similarly covered by Medicaid, there is no provision for VA to reduce the individual's award for incidental expenses; and

WHEREAS, Under current VA and Medicaid statutes, the service-disabled veteran, helpless child and surviving parent are financially disadvantaged; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to authorize veterans in receipt of VA compensation, or a helpless child in receipt of VA pension or DIC, or a surviving parent in receipt of VA Parents' DIC, to keep up to $90 of their monthly VA benefits for incidental expenses while in a Medicaid-covered nursing home.

Resolution No. 244: Reduce The Number Of Years Of One-Hundred Percent (100%) Service Connection Required For Dependency And Indemnity Compensation Purposes

Origin: Illinois

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is paid to the widows and widowers of service-connected disabled veterans who die as a result of their service-related condition or who at the time of death were rated 100% service-connected disabled for at least ten years; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans don't reach the 100% level until they are much older and their condition has worsened; and

WHEREAS, They often pass away due to other than their service-related condition well before they have been receiving the 100% rate for the required length of time; and

WHEREAS, The spouse has usually been the primary care giver and companion for these disabled veterans throughout the veteran's lifetime and the VA compensation has been a primary means of support; and

WHEREAS, The surviving spouse in many instances can no longer count on VA benefits for assistance due to a 100% rating of less than ten years; and

WHEREAS, This causes a dramatic change in the quality of life of the surviving spouse; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to reduce the number of years a veteran must be rated 100% from ten years to five years for eligibility to DIC payments.

Resolution No. 245: Amend Title 38, United States Code, To Increase The Special Monthly Compensation (K) Award

Origin: Illinois

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code (USC), section 1114, provides for the payment of disability compensation for a service-connected disability, which is rated from ten percent to one hundred percent under the Department of Veterans Affairs' Schedule for Rating Disabilities for the particular disability; and

WHEREAS, An additional $87 in Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) is payable, under title 38, USC, section 1114 (k), where a veteran, as the result of a service-connected disability, has suffered the anatomical loss or loss of use of one or more creative organs, or one foot, or one hand, both buttocks, or blindness in one eye and having only light perception in the other eye, or rendered unable to speak, or deafness in both ears, or in the case of a female veteran, suffered the anatomical loss of one or both breasts, including by mastectomy; and

WHEREAS, The SMC (k) award, which is paid over and above the amount of compensation authorized under title 38, USC, section 1114, for these losses or loss-of-use disabilities, is intended to recognize the lifelong physical limitations and psychological trauma associated with such loss or loss of use of the veterans' limbs or other body parts; and

WHEREAS, In contrast to regular increases in the rates of disability compensation through the years, the SMC (k) award, which was initially authorized in 1939, has been increased infrequently; and

WHEREAS, In 1939, the SMC (k) award was originally $18.75 when the rate of compensation for being totally or one-hundred percent disabled was $75; and

WHEREAS, In 2006, the SMC (k) award is currently $87 and the rate of compensation for being totally or one-hundred percent disabled is $2,393; and

WHEREAS, Veterans are again being placed in harm's way and many of the seriously wounded veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan have suffered loss or loss of use injuries; and

WHEREAS, The token payment of $87 is a disgrace to those men and women who have put their bodies on the line in the service of their country and paid a heavy price as a result; and

WHEREAS, To restore the original twenty-five percent (25%) differential that existed in 1939 between the amount of the (k) award and the compensation rate for being totally or one-hundred percent disabled, the SMC (k) award should be increased to $598; and

WHEREAS, This substantial increase would provide a more appropriate level of additional compensation to those veterans who have suffered these types of grievous wounds; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support an increase in the SMC (k) award, under title 38, USC, section 1114(k) from $87 to $598.

Resolution No. 252: Extend The Filing Period Of An Appeal Notice To The Court Of Appeals For Veterans Claims

Origin: California

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Claimants have up to one year from notice of a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) rating decision to file an appeal with any or all adjudicated issues to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA); and

WHEREAS, Notice of Appeal of a final denied claim by the Board of Veterans' Appeals must be filed with the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) within 120 days of the denial by the BVA; and

WHEREAS, The CAVC lacks statutory authority to waive the 120 day period for filing Notice of Appeal; and

WHEREAS, Veterans or their surviving spouses can become discouraged, or are not effectively represented, or may require more time to perfect their appeal to the CAVC; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion shall support legislation to extend the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims Notice of Appeal filing period to one year following BVA final denial of an appeal.

Resolution No. 253: VA Role In National Emergency Preparedness
Origin: California
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Under title 38, United States Code, 8111A, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been established as the principal medical care back-up for military health care "during and immediately following a period of war, or a period of national emergency declared by the President or the Congress that involves the use of the Armed Forces in armed conflict"; and

WHEREAS, Under the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) and the Federal Response Plan (FRP) VA's specialized duties entail conducting and evaluating disaster and terrorist attack simulation exercises; managing the nation's stockpile of pharmaceuticals for biological and chemical toxins; maintaining a rapid response team for radiological releases; and training public and private NDMS medical center personnel around the country in properly responding to biological, chemical, or radiological disasters; and

WHEREAS, The VA Strategic Plan for 2001-2006 lists as an objective, "Improve nation's response in the event of a national emergency or natural disaster by providing timely and effective contingency medical support and other services"; and

WHEREAS, If VA is to play a key supporting role as part of the FRP and the NDMS, it must have adequate resources to execute its role; and

WHEREAS, The Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) process was designed to ensure that VA's capital infrastructure meets the needs of veterans for health care services in 2010 and beyond; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That implementation of the CARES decision must take into consideration and sustain VA's ability to perform its fourth mission as a back up to the Department of Defense; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to continue to take an active role in the development and implementation of plans to enhance federal homeland security initiatives; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion strongly urge the President and Congress to provide VA with the funding necessary to further enhance its capacity to act as a back-up to the Department of Defense in times of war and to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in responding to national emergencies.

Resolution No. 254: The American Legion Policy On Assured Funding For VA Medical Care
Origin: California
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 51 (NE); No. 55 (CO); and No. 166 (ID))

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) annual budget consists of both mandatory and discretionary funding; and

WHEREAS, Mandatory funding refers to a process where the level of funding is governed by formulas or criteria set forth in authorizing legislation rather than by appropriations; and

WHEREAS, Under budget law, a mandatory program is one that requires provision of benefits to all who meet the eligibility requirements of the law; and

WHEREAS, Mandatory funding is provided for programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and VA compensation and pension; and

WHEREAS, In contrast, discretionary funding is "all other" funding subject to the annual appropriations process; and

WHEREAS, Discretionary funding in VA's current annual budget provides for programs such as medical care, major and minor construction, National Cemetery Administration, State Extended Care Facility Grants, and State Cemetery Grants; and

WHEREAS, There have been annual struggles to obtain sufficient funding to provide access to quality care for eligible veterans seeking care in VA facilities; and

WHEREAS, A method to provide dependable, stable and sustained funding for veterans health care is needed; and

WHEREAS, Assured (mandated) funding is one component of a combination of funding mechanisms to ensure adequate Veterans Health Administration (VHA) funding; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That Congress designate assured funding for VA medical care; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress continue to provide discretionary funding required to fully operate other programs within the Veterans Health Administration's budgetary jurisdiction; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress provide, if necessary, supplemental appropriations for budgetary shortfalls in VHA's mandated and discretionary appropriations to meet the health care needs of America's veterans.

Resolution No. 255: The American Legion Policy on VA Compensation
Origin: California
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The current disability compensation program has proven to be a fair and equitable manner in which to indemnify veterans suffering disabilities that are incurred or aggravated in line of duty in the military, naval, or air service; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is totally supportive of every benefit that is currently provided to veterans for their past contributions to their country and its welfare; and

WHEREAS, Disability compensation is a monthly payment made by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) based on a schedule of ratings of reduction in earning capacity from specific injuries as set forth in title 38, Code of Federal Regulations; and

WHEREAS, It is the opinion of The American Legion that there is no way to adequately compensate a veteran for loss of ability to be a working, productive member of society, and that the current monthly rates do not adequately compensate these disabled veterans for the loss due to reduced earning capacity; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes Congress should periodically review the amount of disability compensation veterans are receiving and provide a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to assure they have sufficient economic support; and

WHEREAS, Periodically, proposals are made to tax VA disability compensation benefits; and

WHEREAS, Taxation of these benefits would amount to nothing more than a permanent, enduring reduction in benefits and would demean the sacrifice and service of our nation's service-connected disabled veteran population; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in

Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion vigorously oppose any proposal that would subject VA disability compensation benefits to taxation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion oppose any administrative or legislative proposal to dilute or eliminate any provision of the disability compensation program; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, section 1114, to provide a periodic COLA increase and to increase the monthly rates of disability compensation; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion oppose any legislative effort to automatically index such cost-of-living adjustments to the cost-of-living adjustment authorized for Social Security recipients, nonservice-connected disability recipients and death pension beneficiaries.

Resolution No. 256: Presumptive Medical Care for Persian Gulf War Veterans
Origin: California
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 294 (MA))

WHEREAS, Many servicemembers who served in the Gulf War suffer from long-term, life-altering ailments and chronic multi-symptom illnesses that have unknown etiolgy-like chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome, concentration problems; and

WHEREAS, Certain ailments caused by environmental exposures may produce unforeseen health effects that may manifest in the future; and

WHEREAS, Eligibility for Gulf War veterans in Priority Group 6 of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)'s health care system-established by the Veterans' Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996 (PL 104-262)-expired in 2002; and

WHEREAS, Although VA has continued to treat ill Gulf War veterans, despite the expiration of its authority to do so, lack of congressionally mandated authority to treat these veterans could mean abrupt discontinuation of the treatment that is currently available; and

WHEREAS, Continuation of care for ill Gulf War veterans would provide invaluable data that could be used to examine the nature of Gulf War illnesses, provide better care for ill Gulf War veterans, and provide preparation for treatment of future servicemembers who may become ill after deployments to the Southwest Asia theater; and

WHEREAS, Congress needs to grant VA the authority to re-establish eligibility for Gulf War veterans in Priority Group 6; and

WHEREAS, Those veterans who have become ill 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 Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion encourage Congress to enact legislation to give VA the authority to include ill Gulf War veterans in Priority Group 6; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That VA continue to provide 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.

Resolution No. 257: The American Legion Policy on Former Prisoners of War
Origin: California
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(As amended)

WHEREAS, In its interest for the welfare of all those who have served in the nation's Armed Forces, one of the major concerns of The American Legion has been the welfare of those who have been prisoners of war (POWs); and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has supported various legislative measures intended to alleviate the disabilities that afflict former POWs as a result of experience during internment; and

WHEREAS, In the past, The American Legion supported enactment of Public Law 97-37, the Former Prisoners of War Benefits Act of 1981, approved August 14, 1981, and the presumptions included in Public Law 100-322; and

WHEREAS, Continued scientific observation of their condition during the years subsequent to their internment indicates additional health problems probably associated with the conditions of their internment; and

WHEREAS, The United States has a fundamental obligation to do everything possible to alleviate any and all health problems of former POWs and see to their physical, social, and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes there is a need to further modify the current provisions of title 38, United States Code, that provide for former POWs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion shall support legislation to amend section 1112 of title 38, United States Code, so as to provide presumptive service connection for the following conditions in the absence of demonstrable intercurrent disease or injury:

1. Hepatitis or other infectious diseases of the liver;

2. Arthritis, including osteoporosis;

3. Chronic pulmonary disease (where there is a history of forced labor in mines during internment);

4. Chronic liver disease;

5. Adult-onset diabetes; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation to be enacted to rescind the requirement in 38 U.S.C. § 1112(b) that a POW must be held in captivity for at least 30 days to receive benefits and compensation for any presumptive disabilities, specified in that section, that were incurred in captivity; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion shall support any and all efforts on the part of the United States government to alleviate and ameliorate social, economic, and physical disabilities experienced by former POWs where such disabilities can reasonably be attributed to the effects of internment by the enemies of the United States.

Resolution No. 262: The American Legion Policy on Agent Orange
Origin: New York
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Agent Orange was the most common herbicide used in Southeast Asia by the U.S. Armed Forces during the Vietnam War from 1962-1971; and

WHEREAS, Agent Orange was contaminated by the carcinogen dioxin (2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-para-dioxin [TCDD]); and

WHEREAS, Over 2 million veterans served in Vietnam during the Vietnam War and are presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange; and

WHEREAS, Scientific evidence has linked human exposure to dioxin and certain diseases; and

WHEREAS, A significant number of Vietnam veterans have developed various cancers, neurological disorders, liver dysfunction and other severe diseases; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion supported Public Law 96-151 (1979), which mandates that the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) conduct a major epidemiological

study of Vietnam veterans who were exposed to dioxin, unless it is determined to be unfeasible; and

WHEREAS, VA was congressionally mandated by Public Law 102-4 (1991) to contract with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to review existing peer-reviewed research on herbicides—to include their components—exposure and medical evidence on related health effects; and

WHEREAS, A committee convened by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies to study the health effects of herbicide exposure had little information about the exposures the Vietnam veterans encountered and recommended in its 1994 biennial report that VA, upon discovering the feasibility of a valid exposure reconstruction model, facilitate epidemiological studies; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of VA, in response to the recommendation, requested that IOM convene a separate committee to oversee development and evaluation of herbicide exposure models for use in studies of Vietnam veterans; and

WHEREAS, The IOM committee determined-in 2003-that a model created by researchers from Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health demonstrated the feasibility of a valid exposure-reconstruction model of Vietnam veterans' herbicide exposure and recommended that VA and other governmental agencies promote more epidemiological studies of veterans by non-governmental groups and independent researchers; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs has still not funded the major epidemiology study mandated by public law; and

WHEREAS, In view of the current absence of alternative judicial recourse to remedy the injustice perpetuated on so many disabled Vietnam veterans, their families and survivors, The American Legion will continue to monitor other pending dioxin-related suits; and

WHEREAS, Information has been released by the Department of the Defense on numerous locations other than Vietnam where the herbicide was tested, sprayed, and stored, including: testing at Fort Drum, New York, in 1959; spraying in the Panama Canal Zone in the 1960s and 1970s and in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in 1968-69; and the storage of unused herbicide on Johnston Atoll in the Pacific from 1972-78; and

WHEREAS, VA has recently identified more units that were exposed to herbicide at the Korean DMZ; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, section 1116 and title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, section 3.309, set forth certain presumptions that apply to claims for service connection based on herbicide exposure by veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975; and

WHEREAS, Veterans who served in other locations during these periods who may have been exposed to the herbicide and who may have developed one of the recognized Agent Orange-related diseases, set forth in title 38, United States Code, section 1116 and title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, section 3.309, are not entitled to presumptive service connection for their disability, rather they must meet the more stringent requirements for direct service connection; and

WHEREAS, This inequity was not contemplated at the time of the enactment of Public Law 102-4, the Agent Orange Act of 1991, as amended, due to limited available information on the full extent of the United States' Agent Orange testing, spraying, and storage activities; and

WHEREAS, Under title 38, United States Code, Chapter 18, benefits are payable to children of veterans that served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period January 9, 1962, to May 7, 1975, and who suffer from the birth defect spina bifida; and

WHEREAS, Recent legislation has extended the spina bifida benefits to include the children of veterans who served in or near the Korean Demilitarized Zone during the period of September 1, 1967, and August 31, 1971, and determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to have been exposed to herbicides during such service; and

WHEREAS, The children of veterans who served in locations other than Vietnam and Korea who were possibly exposed to Agent Orange would be denied entitlement to compensation for spina bifida under the current statute and regulations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion continue to urge the completion of the scientific study mandated by Public Law 96-151; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion vigorously support the liberalization of the rules relating to the evaluation of studies involving exposure to dioxin and the adjudication of claims based on Agent Orange exposure; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue to closely monitor the development of all ongoing research on the long-term effects of Agent Orange exposure and point out to the proper officials any perceived deficiencies or discrepancies in these projects; and to ensure that government committees charged with review of such research are composed of impartial members of the medical and scientific community; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That veterans reporting to VA medical care facilities claiming exposure to Agent Orange be provided examinations and treatment which are thorough and appropriate, and that VA physicians demonstrate compassion in responding to the medical needs of these veterans; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, section 1116, to provide entitlement to these presumptions for those veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange while serving in areas other than the Republic of Vietnam where Agent Orange was tested, sprayed, or stored; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion seek legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, Chapter 18, to provide entitlement to spina bifida benefits for the child or children of any veteran who was exposed to Agent Orange as the result of service in the Republic of Vietnam or in other locations where Agent Orange was tested, sprayed, or stored.

Resolution No. 265: Oppose Legislation Authorizing Legion-Accredited Representatives To Develop Claims

Origin: New York

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, There are over 25,000,000 honorably discharged veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Currently, there are approximately 531,000 veterans who have some type of action pending on their claims by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, Approximately 128,000 of those claims are over six months old; and

WHEREAS, In addition, there is a growing backlog of pending appeals, which is now over 153,000 cases, as well as over 15,000 cases at the Appeals Management Center; and

WHEREAS, Appeals are, by definition, among the oldest claims in the system and reflect the claimant's belief that they have not received a fair or proper decision; and

WHEREAS, The nation's veteran population is dying at a rate of over 1,300 veterans a day; and

WHEREAS, Proposed legislation to reduce the backlog of veteran's claims at VA was previously introduced in the United States House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, Under that proposed legislation, the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers offered to partner with VA in order to eliminate the backlog of claims for veteran's benefits; and

WHEREAS, The vast majority of the County Veterans Service Officers who are members of the National Association are, in fact, accredited representatives of The

American Legion and employed by local municipalities; and

WHEREAS, The proposed legislation would have allowed the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to choose a County Veterans Service Office for development of a claim based upon the office's geographical proximity to the claimant; and

WHEREAS, County Veterans Service Officers are already working long hours to assist veterans and eligible dependents in the application for, administration of, or receipt of benefits under any federal, state, or county veterans benefits program; and

WHEREAS, VA referrals to a County Service Officer imply a dual role, that of advocate for the veteran and adjudicator of the veteran all at the same time; and

WHEREAS, VA referrals could jeopardize the veteran-service officer confidentiality and even violate the Privacy Act and Power of Attorney relationship; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion adamantly oppose any federal legislation requiring an American Legion-accredited representative to develop claims for VA.

Resolution No. 270: Exempt VA Benefits And Services From Pay-Go Provisions
Origin: New York
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Budget Enforcement Act (BEA) significantly amended the laws pertaining to the budget process by constraining direct spending through a Pay-As-You-Go (PAY-GO) requirement for all legislation affecting the direct spending of all federal agencies and departments; and

WHEREAS, Under this statute, as an example, if Congress wishes to establish a new entitlement or expand an existing program for veterans, it must find the money to fund such change within existing budget limits; and

WHEREAS, Wartime disabled veterans have earned the benefits and services they, their dependents and survivors receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as a result of the injuries sustained during their period of wartime service; and

WHEREAS, The benefits and services received by wartime-disabled veterans as a result of their service-connected disabilities are an extension of the cost of war; and

WHEREAS, This country has a moral obligation to continue to care for these citizen-soldiers who have risen in defense and support of the ideals of this great nation and who have returned to civilian life with service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Since BEA PAY-GO requires Congress to fund new benefits or services within existing spending limits, this, in effect, requires one group of disabled veterans to give up benefits or services, so that another group of wartime disabled veterans can receive benefits or services to which they are entitled; and

WHEREAS, The budget implications of PAY-GO are often a deterrent to favorable congressional action on major changes in veterans legislation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support legislation to exempt VA benefits and services provided to service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors from the Pay-As-You-Go (PAY-GO) provision of the Budget Enforcement Act.

Resolution No. 272: Oppose Increased Co-Payments And An Enrollment Fee For Priority Groups 7 And 8 Veterans To Receive VA Health Care
Origin: New York
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 224 (SD) and Resolution No. 225 (SD))

WHEREAS, Since the enactment of Public Law (PL) 104-262, that authorized eligibility reform and open enrollment process, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Veterans Health Administration (VHA), has experienced a dramatic growth from 2.5

million veterans to over 7 million veterans enrolled in VA health care; and

WHEREAS, Y 2002 saw the astronomical growth of Priority Group 7 veterans seeking health care at their local VA medical facility and the creation of a new Priority Group 8; and

WHEREAS, VA, upon creating the new Priority Group 8, placed an immediate suspension on all new Priority Group 8 enrollments; and

WHEREAS, VHA is authorized to bill, collect, and retain co-payments and the third party insurance payment of Priority Groups 7 and 8 veterans; and

WHEREAS, During the past several years, VA has proposed to increase the outpatient co-payment from $15 to $20 and the prescription co-payment from $8 to $15 per 30 day supply, as well as, levy a $250 enrollment fee on Priority Groups 7 and 8 veterans; and

WHEREAS, In 2006, VA proposed to eliminate the copayment offset (reduction in payment) to Priority Groups 7 and 8 veterans who have third party insurance; and

WHEREAS, The co-payment increases and enrollment fees could suppress the demand for VA services at the expense of Priority Groups 7 and 8 veterans who may not be able to afford the co-payment increases and out-of-pocket enrollment fee; and

WHEREAS, VA believes these initiatives will ultimately drive 1.2 million veterans away from the VA health care system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion adamantly oppose any effort to increase co-payments or impose an enrollment fee for Priority Groups 7 and 8 veterans to receive VA health care.

Resolution No. 273: Project 112/Operation "Shipboard Hazard And Defense" (SHAD)

Origin: New York

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Project 112 refers to a program of chemical and biological tests planned by the Department of Defense (DoD) conducted in 1962-1973 and that encompassed both land and sea-based testing; and

WHEREAS, Operation "Shipboard Hazard and Defense" (SHAD-the ship-based portion of the testing-was conducted to assess the vulnerabilities of U.S. Navy ships and their ability to maintain operational readiness in the event of a chemical or biological attack; and

WHEREAS, Identified SHAD tests were conducted on various open sea locations in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, and off the coasts of San Diego, Hawaii, the Marshall Islands and Puerto Rico; and

WHEREAS, The land-based component was conducted in, mainly, Alaska, Florida, Hawaii, Georgia, Maryland, Utah, Canada, Great Britain, Panama and one unspecified location; and

WHEREAS, Participants included, primarily, Navy and Marine Corps personnel, with assistance from Air Force and Army personnel; and

WHEREAS, Testing the effectiveness of shipboard detection and protective procedures against chemical and biological threats exposed participants to simulated and live biological and chemical agents, as well as decontaminates, that have potential adverse health effects for those participating; and

WHEREAS, Veterans involved in the tests suffer from multiple complaints, especially illnesses associated with the respiratory system; and

WHEREAS, DoD has concluded its Project 112/SHAD investigation and submitted its report to Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, DoD has identified 5,842 participants of Project 112/SHAD and provided this information to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, VA has been attempting to notify all of the identified service members of their participation in Project 112/SHAD and encourage them to visit VA medical

facilities to receive medical evaluations for health effects experienced that are believed to have resulted from Project 112/SHAD exposures, or if they believe they were exposed to harmful agents; and

WHEREAS, 134 tests had been planned: 50 tests were actually conducted and 84 cancelled; and

WHEREAS, DoD has declassified the medically relevant information necessary for VA to determine health risks to exposed participants of Project 112/SHAD and created fact sheets containing the names of the units involved with the various tests; and

WHEREAS, DoD created fact sheets with information about the nature of the tests, those who participated, the time frame and location of the tests, the chemicals, decontaminates and other agents used; and

WHEREAS, VA is working to establish a new system of records that can be used as a mechanism for processing claims; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense's Deployment Health Support Directorate will provide information to the Department of Veterans Affairs to assist SHAD participants in their claims by verifying their units' participation in Project SHAD; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That DOD consider all new information that surfaces and disclose any new developments related to Project 112/SHAD in a timely manner; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge VA to ensure that all of the 5,842 participants involved in the tests receive prompt notification of their entitlement to benefits and health care for any ailment that may have resulted from their exposures; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge VA to keep an organized account of claims from Project 112/SHAD participants in order to monitor any trends in ailments and to keep abreast of the number of claims granted for SHAD-related ailments; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recommend that VA routinely disseminate all declassified information pertaining to Project 112/SHAD, especially long-term health consequences of exposure to various agents used in SHAD, names of participants identified as well as ships and units involved, to all department medical facilities and regional offices responsible for processing disability benefit claims; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge VA to conduct thorough health assessments of participants as they are located, as well as the records of those deceased, to establish guidelines to be used in examining participants of SHAD and awarding appropriate compensation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recommend that VA and any government agency that conducts health or mortality studies on SHAD participants disclose their findings to the public; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That VA be urged to reopen all cases involving veterans of identified units to determine any long-term health effects from exposure to chemical and biological agents during these tests and, when supported by medical and scientific evidence, that these veterans be granted compensation and benefits for disabilities associated with their participation in Project SHAD and associated tests.

Resolution No. 274: The American Legion Policy On Tobacco-Related Disabilities
Origin: New York
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Throughout its history, The American Legion has fought to ensure that disabled veterans receive benefits and medical care for injuries and diseases related to their period of military service; and

WHEREAS, This would include certain diseases developing years after service which can be related to nicotine addiction resulting from the use of tobacco products during service; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, agencies of the federal government, most notably, the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), have promoted, condoned, fostered and encouraged the use of tobacco products by members of the Armed Forces and veterans; and

WHEREAS, DoD continues to be the nation's largest distributor of tobacco products to active duty, reserve, National Guard personnel and their dependents through the military supply system stateside and overseas; to post and base exchanges, canteens, ship's stores and commissaries; and

WHEREAS, Historically, DoD took little or no action to discourage the use of tobacco products by making them readily accessible and affordable (in some instances they were free) to military personnel and has only recently established physical fitness policies to discourage tobacco use by active duty and reserve personnel; and

WHEREAS, VA hospitals up until 1991 continued to provide tobacco products at discounted prices; and

WHEREAS, Although the federal government has required a health warning on cigarette packages and other tobacco products sold to the public beginning in 1965, such warning labels were not required on tobacco products distributed through DoD until 1970; and

WHEREAS, Until the early 1990s, most all claims for disability and death due to smoking were generally denied by the courts and VA due to the lack of scientific evidence of a relationship between nicotine addiction, tobacco use and certain diseases, such as cancers of the lip, mouth, pharynx, esophagus, larynx, lung, pancreas, bladder, urinary tract and kidney; coronary heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, other circulatory diseases, chronic bronchitis and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD); and

WHEREAS, Within the last several years, there has been increasing scientific data establishing a causal link between tobacco use and an increased prevalence of certain diseases among those who used tobacco products; and

WHEREAS, There have been ongoing revelations in the course of recent litigation against the tobacco companies about the addictive effects of nicotine and its consequences and the efforts of the tobacco companies to conceal and withhold such information and scientific data from the public, the federal government, the Congress and the courts; and

WHEREAS, In 1993, the VA General Counsel issued a precedent opinion which held that a claim for service connection for a smoking-related disability or death was legally possible; and

WHEREAS, From 1993 until May 1997 tobacco-related illness claims were held in abeyance while VA officials debated the practical and budgetary implications of this change in VA policy; and

WHEREAS, The four specific evidence requirements for a tobacco-related illness claim were finally set forth in a May 13, 1997, VA General Counsel precedent opinion:

1. There must be a statement from the veteran that he or she used tobacco products (i.e., smoked, chewed tobacco, or used snuff) during service; and
2. There must be a currently diagnosed medical condition, such as emphysema, chronic obstructive lung disease, lung cancer, etc.; and
3. A medical opinion must state this condition is related to tobacco use; and
4. A medical opinion must also state that the veteran was dependent on nicotine; and

WHEREAS, The VA General Counsel Opinion concluded that, providing these four requirements are met, it would be consistent with the historical concept of service connection for VA to grant direct service connection for nicotine dependence and service connection on a secondary basis for a subsequently developing tobacco-related disease; and

WHEREAS, VA has estimated there would be some 2.5 million smoking-related claims filed over the next five years resulting in additional benefit costs of some $15 billion, which VA believes would have a devastating impact on the VA budget, in particular, and the federal budget, as a whole, while ignoring the plight of veterans who used tobacco on active duty and especially those who were introduced to tobacco during such service; and

WHEREAS, The President's FY 1999 budget request for VA was predicated on legislation barring the grant of service connection of any disability or death due in whole or in part to tobacco use as well as entitlement to VA medical care for such disability; and

WHEREAS, Congress, in the course of debate on the FY 1999 federal budget, used the $15 billion identified as savings resulting from the bar to veterans claims for tobacco-related illnesses as a funding source for the "Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century" (TEA-21); and

WHEREAS, TEA-21, signed by President Clinton as PL 105-178 on June 9, 1998, made veterans use of tobacco products in service synonymous with willful misconduct; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that action should be taken by Congress to overturn this anti-veteran legislation that violates veterans constitutional rights, since no other group of citizens, who are ill from tobacco-related causes, is being singled out and stripped of their eligibility for federal benefits and medical care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support legislation to restore entitlement to service connection for disability, or death, related to the veteran's use of tobacco products during the period of active military service from June 9, 1998, the date of the enactment of Public Law 105-178, the "Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century"; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion also support congressional appropriation of sufficient funds to pay compensation benefits for tobacco-related illness claims.

Resolution No. 299: Oppose Lump-Sum Payments Of VA Disability Compensation
Origin: Minnesota
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Disability compensation is paid monthly to an eligible veteran on account of and at a rate commensurate with diminished earning capacity resulting from the effects of service-connected disease or injury; and

WHEREAS, Such compensation, by design, continues to provide relief from the service-connected disability for as long as the veteran continues to suffer its effects at a compensable level; and

WHEREAS, By law, the rate of compensation is determined by the level of disability present, thereby requiring reevaluation of the disability upon a change in its degree; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of the Inspector General, in a May 2005 report on variances in VA disability compensation payments, specifically recommended that VA consider establishing lump sum payments for veterans with disability ratings of 20 percent or less and the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission, created by Congress to study the VA claims processing system, will undoubtedly be making recommendations regarding the lump sum issue in its report to Congress and the President in October 2007; and

WHEREAS, Such lump-sum payments would not, on the whole, be in the best interests of disabled veterans but would be for Government savings and convenience; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion oppose

any recommendation, legislative or otherwise, to establish lump-sum payments of VA disability compensation.

Resolution No. 310: Protect Disability Rating After Ten Years
Origin: Oregon
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Section 110 of title 38, United States Code, 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 Salt lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion recommend that section 110 of title 38, United States Code, 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. 311: Extend Presumptive Period For Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) To Seven Years
Origin: Oregon
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) begins insidiously, involving degeneration of the nerve cells either in the brain, the brain stem, or spinal cord and it's characterized by atrophy and almost always fibrillation of the muscular system of the body; and

WHEREAS, ALS in its primary stage is difficult, if not impossible, to diagnose since in this stage the condition may appear to be dormant with little or no progression of symptoms for many years, thus leading the individual and his doctor to believe that the condition has become arrested and nothing more is done to establish its diagnostic entity; and

WHEREAS, Some Gulf War veterans have been diagnosed with ALS several years following discharge from service and some veterans have been denied service connection because the condition was not diagnosed while on active duty or within the presumptive time frame; and

WHEREAS, Gulf War veterans diagnosed with ALS so far appear to be generally younger than the average ALS sufferers; and

WHEREAS, In addition to two studies, published in the scientific journal *Neurology* in September 2003, that concluded that deployed Gulf War veterans are twice as likely as their non-deployed counterparts to develop ALS, new research conducted by Harvard University suggests an elevated risk of ALS for anyone who served in the military; and

WHEREAS, A presumptive period of one year from the date of termination of active duty as currently provided for ALS under title 38, United States Code, section 1112 (a) is inadequate; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge that legislation be enacted to extend the current presumptive period for service connection of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis from one year to seven years from the date of separation from active duty.

Resolution No. 312: VA Involvement In The Department Of Homeland Security
Origin: Oregon
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Homeland Security provides a single source of authority, at the highest level, for all homeland defense programs and policies; and

WHEREAS, The role of the Department of Homeland Security is to coordinate national strategy to strengthen protection against terrorist threats or attacks; and

WHEREAS, One of the critical missions of the Department of Homeland Security is emergency preparedness and response "to minimize the damage and recover from future terrorist attacks"; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical system serves as a primary back-up to the Department of Defense (DoD) in the event of military casualties; and

WHEREAS, VA and DoD have a Contingency Hospital System Plan as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency; and

WHEREAS, VA is prepared to augment the DoD's network of hospital and health care facilities in the event of a crisis, with 157 medical centers and a significant medical staff, many of whom are veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA also acts as a federal support organization during major disasters, as one of four partners in the National Disaster Medical System; and

WHEREAS, VA provided medical and psychological support to those in need during the months following the September 11, 2001, attack; and

WHEREAS, VA also maintains radiological response teams and decontamination systems should radioactive materials ever be used; and

WHEREAS, VA manages the largest health care program and is the largest medical education and health professional training program in the United States; and

WHEREAS, VA is a federal presence in virtually every local community in the country; and

WHEREAS, VA has the ability to move health care professionals to the site of a disaster and provide medical care quickly and efficiently; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that the contingency plan for disasters developed by VA and DoD should be integrated as a part of the primary health care procedures of Homeland Security; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge Congress and the Administration to include VA in all strategic planning of the Department of Homeland Security; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress take into account any additional requirements of VA as a result of involvement in Homeland Security obligations when developing VA's annual budget.

Resolution No. 313: The American Legion Policy On The National Cemetery Administration

Origin: Oregon

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA) was established by Congress and approved by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862 to provide for the proper burial and registration of graves of Civil War dead; and

WHEREAS, NCA is currently comprised of 123 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico, as well as, 33 soldiers' lots and monuments; and

WHEREAS, More than 2.5 million Americans including veterans of every war and conflict are buried in VA's national cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, More than 25 million veterans and Reservists and National Guard members have earned the honor of burial in a national cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Annual internments in national cemeteries have annually increased and are projected to increase for the next several years due to an aging veteran population; and

WHEREAS, Appropriate land acquisition is a key component to providing continued accessibility to burial options; and

WHEREAS, Operations, maintenance, renovation, and construction funding must continually be adjusted to reflect the true requirements of the National Cemetery Administration; and

WHEREAS, NCA administers a program of grants to states to assist them in establishing or improving state-operated veterans cemeteries in locations where there are no nearby national cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, In 2005, there were 61 operating state cemeteries that performed more than 200,000 internments; and

WHEREAS, Congress must provide sufficient major construction appropriations to permit NCA to accomplish its stated goal of ensuring that burial in a national or state cemetery is a realistic option by locating cemeteries within 75 miles of ninety percent of all veterans; and

WHEREAS, In addition to providing a grave site, NCA provides a headstone or marker, a Presidential Memorial certificate, a U.S. Flag, and perpetual care for the grave; and

WHEREAS, The 1990 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act eliminated the then-headstone allowance of $85, which was paid to all eligible veterans in lieu of a government-provided headstone or marker and now directly provides a standard government headstone or grave marker to eligible veterans anywhere in the world; and

WHEREAS, VA pays a burial allowance of $2,000 for veterans who die of service-related causes. For veterans who were receiving VA compensation or pension, VA pays $300 for burial and funeral expenses and $300 for a plot. The plot allowance would still be payable to state veterans cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, If a veteran passes away in a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary, or in an institution at which the individual was receiving hospital or nursing care at the expense of the United States at the time of death, VA will pay for the cost of transporting the remains to the place of burial; however, a veteran who passes away in a State Veterans Home is not allowed transportation cost for the remains to the place of burial by VA; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support the establishment of additional national and state veterans cemeteries and columbaria wherever a need for them is apparent and petition Congress to provide required operations and construction funding to ensure VA burial in a national or state veterans cemetery is a realistic option for veterans and their eligible dependents; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support restoration of a veterans burial allowance and an increase in the burial benefit; along with restoration of the pre-1990 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act criteria to provide eligibility for a government-furnished headstone or marker allowance and restoration of the burial plot allowance for all honorably discharged veterans; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support action to provide that when an eligible veteran dies in a state veterans hospital or nursing home, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall pay for the cost of transporting the remains to the place of burial as determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution No. 314: Restore And Increase Burial And Plot Allowance
Origin: Oregon
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Benefits for deceased veterans include a burial and a plot allowance to assist families in providing a proper burial of their loved one; and

WHEREAS, The National Cemeteries Act (Public Law 95-73) enacted in 1973 established a burial allowance of $250 for eligible wartime veterans, and a $1500 burial allowance for veterans who died of a service-connected condition; and

WHEREAS, The Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1990 limited the payment of the burial plot allowance of $150, which was previously paid to all honorably discharged wartime veterans, to only those veterans who are indigent or who are in receipt of VA disability compensation or pension; and

WHEREAS, Although there have been subsequent increases in the allowances, the infrequent incremental increases have meant that the current $300 burial plot allowance and respective $300 and $2000 burial allowances have not kept pace with inflation and increases in the cost of living throughout the years; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 95-73 originally covered 13% of a private burial plot, and now only covers 3%; and

WHEREAS, The $250 burial allowance under Public Law 95-73 represented 22% of the cost of an average funeral of a wartime veteran, at the time; and the current burial allowance reflects only 6% of the cost; and

WHEREAS, The corresponding allowance for veterans who died of a service-connected condition covered 73% of the same average burial; now it only covers 39% of the current average funeral cost; and

WHEREAS, Increases, based on VA's Price-Waterhouse-Cooper Study, "Assessment of Burial Benefits Administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs" (December 2000), would help to restore the amount and percentages of the allowance payments relative to current burial and plot costs; and

WHEREAS, Tying these allowances to the Consumer Price Index, thus requiring VA to adjust the allowance for inflation annually, would eliminate the need for periodic legislative action to bring the allowance in line current with burial and plot costs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to return the burial allowances and burial plot allowance to all veterans who served during a time of war or conflict; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the burial allowance for veterans now eligible under 38 United States Code (USC) §§ 2302 and 2303 be increased from $300 to $1135; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the burial allowance for veterans who died as a result of a service-connected condition as set forth in 38 USC § 2307 be increased from $2000 to $3712; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the burial plot allowance be increased from $300 to $670; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That VA be required to annually adjust burial allowances and burial plot allowance for inflation by tying the increased allowances to the Consumer Price Index.

Resolution No. 363: Veterans Disability Benefits Commission
Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 303 (MN))

WHEREAS, The Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission recently asked the United States Congress for an interpretation of Public Law 108-136 concerning the commission's review of the use of Social Security data and matching of codes between the Social Security Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, The responses from various Senators and Congressmen and consultations with the Disabled American Veterans indicate that it is possible that an offset of Social Security benefits and veterans' disability benefits is contemplated; and

WHEREAS, In the alternative, it is possible that the commission may propose termination of veterans' disability benefits when a veteran obtains a job despite the disability; and

WHEREAS, Social Security benefits are an insurance benefit paid for by taxes on individuals' incomes, and often end when the individual obtains a job; and

WHEREAS, Veterans' benefits are intended to compensate veterans for disabilities incurred or aggravated by military service and include the conscious, pain and suffering and the problems the disabled veteran will have for the rest of his or her life; and

WHEREAS, Any limitation or reduction of veterans' disability benefits because of Social Security disability benefits would constitute a second veterans' tax, deliberately hurting those who have done the most to protect this country and our way of life; and

WHEREAS, The situation has been reviewed by the National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission which recommends to the National Executive Committee that The American Legion work with other veterans' organizations to ensure that an offset of veterans' disability benefits or a conversion of veterans' disability benefits to transitional assistance not occur; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That Social Security benefits and veterans' disability benefits are and should remain totally separate and subject to separate rules because Social Security benefits are the result of insurance premiums which constitute part of the Social Security tax and veterans' benefits are earned for taking up the burdens of the Nation,[1] subjecting themselves to the mental and physical hazards, as well as the economic and family detriments, which are peculiar to military service[2]; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the National Commander in furtherance of the traditional goal of The American Legion of protecting and enhancing veterans' benefits, is hereby authorized and directed to take all appropriate actions, with other organizations or singly, up to and including authorizing litigation to ensure that the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission or any other entity does NOT attempt to make veterans' benefits subject to the rules and laws pertaining to the Social Security system or similar rules allowing the end of benefits because the veteran has found a job, offset veterans' benefits with Social Security disability payments or turn veterans' benefits into a transitional assistance program; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion is further authorized to work with the Disabled American Veterans and any other organization with a common goal, jointly or separately as appropriate, to accomplish The American Legion's traditional goal of preserving, protecting and enhancing veterans' benefits and preventing the erosion or destruction of such benefits.

1. **Boone v Lightner 319 U.S. 561, 635 S.ct. 1223, 87L.Ed. 1587 (1943)[3]**
2. **Johnson v Robison 415 U.S. 361, 94 S.ct. 1160, 39 L.Ed.2d 389 (1974)[3]**
3. **Both cases cited with approval in Regan v Taxation with Representation of Washington 461 U.S. 540, 1035 S.ct. 1997,79L.Ed.2d129(1983)**

Resolution No. 364: VA Compliance With Existing Security Information Protection Laws

Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, In the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 Performance and Accountability Report auditors identified "Information Technology (IT) Security Controls" as a repeat material weakness; and

WHEREAS, In the IT finding, the auditors reported that VA's "program and financial data continue to be at risk due to serious weaknesses related to control and oversight over access to information systems"; and

WHEREAS, The Government Reform Committee publishes an annual federal computer security report card compiled by the committee that measures compliance with the 2002 Federal Information Security Management Act; and

WHEREAS, VA has consistently scored near the bottom and as recently as 2005 earned an F; and

WHEREAS, In May, 2006, VA had a serious information security breach resulting in the loss of personal information to include names, dates of birth and social security numbers for over 26 million veterans; and

WHEREAS, On June 29, 2006, VA testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on the security breach and that there were as many as 10 other recent incidents involving the loss of personal data by VA; and

WHEREAS, On August 3, 2006, VA announced that a personal laptop was stolen from a VA contractor resulting in the loss of names, dates of birth and social security numbers for 38,000 veterans; and

WHEREAS, These security breaches have put millions of veterans and their dependents at risk for identity theft; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge more intense Congressional oversight of VA's compliance with security protection laws; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA put into place a comprehensive plan to ensure that VA employees fully understand and comply with all agency requirements and procedures involving individual responsibilities concerning security and the protection of sensitive data; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge VA to keep its original commitment to have veterans and all effected persons receive free credit monitoring for at least one year if they so choose; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That veterans or their dependents be fully compensated if they suffer any loss due to identity theft.

Resolution No. 365: Indiana-Ohio Center For Traumatic Amputation Rehabilitation Research

Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Many veterans of the War on Terror have been subjected to high energy, penetrating blasts or high-velocity gunshot wounds and many survive their injuries, due to advancements in protective gear and improvements in medical treatment available in theater; and

WHEREAS, Those injured in Iraq and Afghanistan have required more than twice the number of amputations needed in previous conflicts; and

WHEREAS, Those with traumatic amputations require extensive physical rehabilitation and functional prosthetics to enable them to live autonomously and care for their dependents; and

WHEREAS, There is a need for research addressing long-term outcomes of military personnel who experienced war-related traumatic amputations; and

WHEREAS, Conditions related to blast injuries and amputations-like heterotropic ossification, a rare and understudied condition where bone growth occurs during recovery at the amputation site-have already begun to manifest in some recovering Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) veterans; and

WHEREAS, The Indiana-Ohio Center for Traumatic Amputation Rehabilitation Research (The Indiana-Ohio Center) was established to specifically promote research that will address the needs of veterans with war amputations; and

WHEREAS, Data on Vietnam War veterans with amputations related to blast trauma has not been widely collected and their rehabilitation experiences would be valuable in illustrating the long-term health effects of traumatic amputations; and

WHEREAS, The Indiana-Ohio Center seeks to develop a databank to capture the long-term health care and rehabilitation experiences of Vietnam War veterans to improve care for future veterans who sustain traumatic amputations and to increase knowledge of war-related amputations for the scientific community; and

WHEREAS, The Indiana-Ohio Center's initiative will also address issues affecting war amputees, such as use of prosthetic devices and access to health care, as well as psychological, social, and economic outcomes; and

WHEREAS, Information gathered during the course of this research would be beneficial in determining possible outcomes in current and future war veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion provide public endorsement for the efforts of Indiana-Ohio Center researchers; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion provide input to highlight issues relevant to war amputees; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion disseminate information (i.e. via publications and the website) about the war amputation research project to the membership in an effort to solicit participation from eligible Vietnam War veterans who may be interested in providing information for the databank; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion provide support for efforts of Indiana-Ohio Center researchers to collect information that would improve the knowledge of the long-term effects of traumatic amputations, at no direct cost to The American Legion.

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 7 (LA): Appreciation to John D. Church, Jr., Director, New Orleans VA Medical Center

Resolution No. 54 (CO): Support of Rural Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Facilities

Resolution No. 56 (CO): Support for Legislation Barring Protest at Veterans Funerals

Resolution No. 156 (NJ): Support Legislation to Protect the Sanctity of the Funeral Services of Servicemen and Women

Resolution No. 171 (ID): Increase Department of Veterans Affairs Beneficiary Travel

Resolution No. 189 (MX): Urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to Publish and Circulate Spanish Language Pamphlets

Referred to the Standing Commission on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Resolution No. 8 (LA): Support Authorization and Full Funding for the Construction of a New VA Medical Center in New Orleans

Resolution No. 53 (CO): Support for a National Veterans Cemetery in the Pikes Peak Region of Colorado

Resolution No. 137 (WA): Licensing and Credentialing of VA-Employed and Contracted Medical Practitioners

Resolution No. 144 (CT): Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center West Haven, CT Parking Garage

Resolution No. 154 (NJ): Increase the Maximum Department of Veterans Affairs Pension Benefits

Resolution No. 227(SD): Reinstate Overnight Travel for the Vet Center Counselors

Resolution No. 237 (IL): Sensitizing VA Records to Prevent Identity Theft

Resolution No. 263 (NY): Exclude Blind Annuity Payments as Income in the Calculation of Veterans' Benefits

Resolution No. 271 (NY): Include Pension and Death Pension as Exclusions to the Minimum Active Duty Statute

Rejected

Resolution No. 21 (MT): Continue Oversight of Project 112/Operation Shipboard Hazard and Defense (SHAD)

Resolution No. 33 (NE): Support Legislation to Grant Merchant Mariners a Monthly Compensation

Resolution No. 49 (NE): A National Trust Fund for Asbestos Illness Compensation

Resolution No. 157 (ME): Preclude Dependent Benefits to Emancipated Children

Resolution No. 167 (ID): Eliminate Co-Payments for Department of Veterans Affairs Medications

Resolution No. 168 (ID): Use Median Salary for Department of Veterans Affairs Compensation

Resolution No. 249 (IL): Support Legislation to Pay Interest on Claims Granted by the Board of Veterans' Appeals

Resolution No. 264 (NY): Establish Deadlines for the Board of Veterans' Appeals to Adjudicate Claims

Resolution No. 276 (FL): Sponsor and Support the Veterans Detoxification Project

Resolution No. 316 (CA): Support Legislation for WWII Merchant Mariner Benefits

As a duly elected and registered delegate to this convention, I move for the adoption of this report.

…Second from the floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: I heard the motion and a second. All those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed say 'no.' Motion carried. The report of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation is adopted.

Presentation: William F. Lenker National Service Trophy
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

With the adoption of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Report, it's appropriate to announce the winner of the William F. Lenker National Service Trophy. This trophy is awarded annually to the Department that best supports and implements programs to benefit veterans, their families and their survivors. For the 2005-2006 program year, the Trophy is awarded to the Department of Idaho.

The Trophy reads: "*For God and Country." The William F. Lenker National Service Trophy is awarded to the Department of Idaho. This plaque is symbolic of the Trophy awarded annually to the Department which best supports and implements programs to benefit veterans, their families and their survivors. National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, August 30, 2006. Signed by Chairman Lewis and the Director Peter Gaytan.*

IPDC DAVID E. SHERIDAN (ID): There are a few people in Idaho that worked hard for this. Idaho, let them know where you're at. *[response from floor]* I think they're all up here.

The people who earned this didn't do it for this. But I believe they deserve it. They did it because they think the veteran deserves the best. And Idaho will keep doing that.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Just as a report on the update. The amount of money received for the Child Welfare Foundation today was $62,362.48. The update on the National Emergency Fund as of today is $149,041.68. It's still coming in.

The Chair recognizes Larry Besson of Illinois, Acting Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Credentials & Internal Affairs for the purpose of making a report.

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

Forty-five members of the Credentials and Internal Affairs Committee, Section II, elected Larry J. Besson of Illinois as Permanent Chairman, and Larry Sheets of Florida as Permanent Secretary, and 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; one approved as amended; nine were referred; and five were rejected.

Approved

Resolution No. 6: The National Moment Of Remembrance
Origin: District of Columbia
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters (Section II)

WHEREAS, The White House Commission on Remembrance, established as an independent agency by an Act of Congress (PL 106-579), "encourages Americans to honor the sacrifices of America's fallen and promotes acts of remembrance throughout the year"; and

WHEREAS, One of the principal tasks of the Commission is "to unite the country in the National Moment of Remembrance on Memorial Day"; and

WHEREAS, This is an act of unity to honor America's fallen and all citizens, alone or with family and friends wherever they are at 3 p.m. local time, are asked to pause for a Moment of reflection and rededication honoring those who died for our country; and

WHEREAS, A Gallup poll indicated that only 28 percent of Americans realize the meaning of this noble day; therefore, our goal is to put "Memorial" back into Memorial Day; and

WHEREAS, The Time of Remembrance, an annual ceremony on the Washington Monument Grounds, brings families together of those who died in service to our country in a special tribute to America's fallen in Afghanistan and Iraq; and

WHEREAS, This event intends to show those families, their relatives and friends that their fellow Americans care about their loss, and this tribute is a celebration of the lives of those who have died for our freedom and, at the same time, a celebration of that freedom; and

WHEREAS, The Gold Medal of Remembrance, initiated by the Commission and designed by the Institute of Heraldry, is presented to children of military men and women killed in action in Afghanistan and Iraq; and

WHEREAS, The Commission encourages Americans to honor the sacrifices of America's fallen and the families they left behind; therefore, it promotes acts of remembrance throughout the year and asks Americans to pay our debt of gratitude in memory of our fallen by giving something back to the Nation; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's membership participates in memorials and commemorations in honor of our war dead and welcomes this initiative to direct American public attention to the sacrifices of men and women of our Armed Forces; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, on August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion fully

supports and applauds the President and Congress for the creation of The White House Commission on Remembrance; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion become a patriot partner with the White House Commission on Remembrance to promote the National Moment of Remembrance, support the Time of Remembrance tribute for the families, and the Gold Medal of Remembrance for the children of our fallen; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion publicize the work of the Commission through its Departments, Posts and Units to encourage maximum Legion-wide participation.

Resolution No. 382: Appreciation To Host City
Origin: Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters, (Section II)
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters, (Section II)

WHEREAS, The 88th National Convention has been held in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29-31, 2006, and

WHEREAS, There has been a spirit of cooperation and friendship along with mutual helpfulness evidenced by the Legionnaires of Utah, the officers of the Convention Corporation and the Department, and by the officials and the people of Salt Lake City, Utah, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That we express our deep appreciation to the Department of Utah, Governor Jon Huntsman, Jr., Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon; the city of Salt Lake City, Utah, including the Fire Department, Police Department, and other Public Safety Officials, and to the 2006 National Convention Corporation Officers, William E. "Bill" Christoffersen, President. Around this nucleus has been built the moving force that provided for every necessity that made for a successful and enjoyable Convention.

Approved as Amended

Resolution No. 178: National American Legion Visitor Center And Memorial
Origin: Kansas
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Credentials and Other Internal Matters (Section II)
(As amended)

WHEREAS, American Legion Post #49 believes citizens of this country want a site for a National American Legion Visitor Center and Memorial. The idea for the National American Legion Memorial Highway originated in Osborne, Kansas and since the city itself it situated on U.S. 281, the National American Legion Memorial Highway, the local members feel that this would be the ideal location for this project. Osborne also sits adjacent to the geodetic center of North America and is near the Geographic Center of the "lower 48" United States making the location the core of the organization. Currently, Osborne has a building available as well as property for this proposed memorial; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That we support the idea of the American Legion Visitor Center and Memorial on U.S. 281 without financial obligation to the National Organization.

Referred to the Standing Commission on Internal Affairs

Resolution No. 57 (CO): Task Force Committee on the American Legion Veterans Database Director

Resolution No. 176 (TN): National Personnel Records Center Charges for Some Veterans' Records

Resolution No. 193 (MX): Further Exploitation of the Internet by the American Legion

Resolution No. 258 (Ca): Alliance Defense Fund and the Defense of Veterans' Monuments Project

Resolution No. 260 (CA): Memorial to the Veterans of Desert Storm, Iraqi Freedom and the Afghanistan Conflicts

Referred to the Standing Commission on Internal Affairs, Trophies, Awards and Ceremonial Committee

Resolution No. 306 (OR): Proper Disposal of POW/MIA Flag

Referred to the Emblem Committee

Resolution No. 61 (AZ): Past Department Commander Caps

Referred to the Standing Convention Commission

Resolution No. 60 (IN): Future Hosting 2012 National Convention

Resolution No. 181 (MO): Future Hosting of the 2013 National Convention

Rejected

Resolution No. 175 (WV): Motto of the American Legion Riders

Resolution No. 182 (MO): Amending the Text on the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC

Resolution No. 192 (MX): Rename Department of Mexico

Resolution No. 247 (IL): Appointment of a Committee to Study a Change in Eligibility Dates for Membership in the American Legion

Resolution No. 280 (FL): United States Naval World War II Monument in Normandy, France

It was regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Permanent Committee Chairman and Permanent Secretary be authorized to sign the Committee report on behalf of the Committee. It was also regularly moved, seconded and carried that the Permanent Committee Chairman and Permanent Secretary be authorized to make technical corrections to the resolutions reported out of this Committee to ensure proper wording and form without changing the substance or meaning of the resolution(s).

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

…Second from the floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Hearing a second, is there any discussion?

…Yes, from microphone Number 1.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Microphone Number 1.

DELEGATE LLOYD: Reese Lloyd, District 21, Department of California, Delegate to this Convention. Commander, I wish to object to the action as to Resolution 258 only. I would ask for discussion and to submit an amended motion regarding 258 only.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Do you wish to set aside this resolution?

DELEGATE LLOYD: Yes.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Ok, that's an automatic. Is there any further discussion on the report of the Credentials & Internal Affairs Section 2? Hearing none, all those in favor of accepting the report excluding Resolution 258, give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed 'no.' Motion carried.

Considering Resolution 258. Mr. Chairman.

…At the time Acting Chairman Besson read the following:

Resolution No. 258
Subject: Alliance Defense Fund And The Defense Of Veterans' Monument Project
Referred To: Committee On Credentials And Other Internal Matters (Section II)

WHEREAS, The American Legion has since its founding in1919 dedicated itself to the defense of veterans and American values pursuant to its founding creed of "For God and Country" and the precepts of the Preamble of its Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Grateful communities across America, and the United States government itself, have established veterans monuments to honor the service and sacrifice of veterans, and The American Legion has traditionally assisted in the establishment, maintenance, care, or defense of those veterans monuments; and

WHEREAS, Many of those veterans monuments include symbols of America's religious history and heritage, or expressions of religion, in tribute to veterans, including without limitation at America's National Cemeteries, and overseas at Normandy Beach and other cemeteries in theatres of war, and at such singular veterans monuments as the Mojave Desert WWI Veterans Memorial and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; and,

WHEREAS, certain special interest groups adhering to a secular humanist creed, including particularly the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), have engaged in litigation attacks under the Establishment of Religion Clause against the Boy Scouts of America, the public display of the Ten Commandments and other symbols of America's religious history and heritage, including to remove or destroy religious symbols or expressions at veterans monuments, including at the Mojave Desert WWI Veterans Memorial; and,

WHEREAS, The American Legion, in defense of veterans memorials and in opposition to the secular cleansing litigation of the ACLU, and others, adopted by unanimous vote Resolution 326, Preserve Mojave Desert WWI Veterans Memorial; and,

WHEREAS, the Alliance Defense Fund ("ADF"), a non-profit legal defense organization whose mission is the defense of traditional American values, particularly religious freedom and expression, has offered and agreed to provide its legal services to The American Legion, on terms specified by The American Legion, and without cost to The American Legion, in a cooperative working relationship to establish and maintain a defense of veterans monuments project; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion, acting in a cooperative working relationship with the Alliance Defense Fund, on terms specified by The American Legion, and without cost to The American Legion for legal services, establish and maintain a defense of veterans monuments project.

Mr. Commander, as a duly elected and registered delegate from the Department of Illinois, I move that this resolution be rejected.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Ok, you heard the motion for rejection of Resolution 258, is there a second?

…Second from the floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: There is a second. Is there discussion?

DELEGATE LLOYD: Yes, indeed, there is Mr. Commander.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Microphone No. 1.

DELEGATE LLOYD: Thank you, Commander. The recommendation of the Committee was to refer this to the Standing Committee, not to reject it.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Exactly. That was the recommendation of the report. However, since the resolution has been removed from the report, the Chairman has made his motion since it's considered separate from the report. Now your discussion.

DELEGATE LLOYD: Yes, he's made a motion that is at variance with the vote of his Committee, so it's an independent recommendation for rejection and I object to that. I want to see this resolution move, and move as quickly as possible, Commander. It is a resolution that is part and parcel of our fight with the ACLU. And I preference my remarks with 10 words to all of you here in the convention hall and those 10 words are 10 I hope you'll agree with and that's for: God and country—forever; surrender to the ACLU—never! And we can make a fight with the ACLU if we move with alacrity to adopt the defense of veterans memorials project that California has brought forward.

And my amended motion, which I urge you to pass, is brought, not in hostility, but in a sense of comradery and to make this resolution work. We need action and we need action now! I don't know that the members of this body are aware that after the success that our Commander described as to Mount Soledad National War Memorial, where because of the Commander's efforts in main part, the President of the United States on August 14, signed the Mount Soledad Protection Act, that took it away from the jurisdiction of the District Court which ordered its destruction.

On August 25, on Friday, as we gather here, the ACLU filed a new lawsuit in San Diego attacking a memorial and asking for the destruction of the cross. We need to fight that and we need to fight it by moving quickly, not delaying, but acting. Therefore, I ask this amended resolution to be passed, not to be rejected. Rather that Resolution 258 is to be referred to the Standing Committee for subsequent action by the NEC at its October meeting, with notice that it is the will of the convention that all further study or related acts be carry out as expeditiously as is feasible so that the NEC will be able to vote on adoption of the defense of veterans memorials project at its October meeting without further delay.

Comrades, I urge your vote in support of this because we need action, not more delay. We have to fight for passage of PERA with this, the Public Expression of Religion Act, because in this new lawsuit the ACLU is asking for taxpayer-paid attorney fees if it's successful in destroying the cross. That is my motion, Commander, on that amendment that it goes to the committee with the will of this body be in that it work as quickly as possible to get it to the NEC for a vote.

…Second from the floor. *(Applause.)*

PAUL JOHNSON, Wyoming: Paul Johnson, Wyoming, I second that motion.

NATL COMDR BOCK: I need some clarification here. I was really confused. You started off your discussion speaking against the motion to reject the resolution. Is that correct?

DELEGATE LLOYD: I am objecting to rejecting our Resolution. I'm moving instead that it go to the standing committee, but with the will of this body to act as expeditiously as possible to get it to the NEC so the NEC can vote in October, vote it up or down, to establish this defense project so we can get in court and fight the ACLU.

NATL COMDR BOCK: So that's in a proposed amendment to the resolution or the motion?

DELEGATE LLOYD: It is an amended motion which takes precedence and that's what was voted on first what I've just presented.

NATL COMDR BOCK: I understand. In order to consider an amendment to the motion, we need that amendment in writing. Has that been prepared in writing?

DELEGATE LLOYD: It most certainly, has Commander, because I learned a lesson yesterday. It has to be in writing. I went and bought another copy of *Roberts' Rules of Order.* I had so many documents in my saddlebags on technical, bureaucratic motion procedures that when I put the book in it, my saddlebags broke, the leather ripped, and they're gone.

NATL COMDR BOCK: I'm sorry for your saddlebags.

DELEGATE LLOYD. I also …

NATL COMDR BOCK: I have a prepared letter. I'm assuming this is the letter you submitted with a proposed amendment in it. The letter also includes a statement that "I reserve the right to make changes to the above language." So that would indicate to me that perhaps the amendment is not complete.

DELEGATE LLOYD: I have made no changes. I read orally, exactly what you have in writing.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Except for that last statement, that you reserve the right to make changes.

DELEGATE LLOYD: The reservation of right is not part of the amended motion. That is a statement about the motion. The motion ended with the words "without further delay."

NATL COMDR BOCK: So you waive your right to make further changes to that amendment?

DELEGATE LLOYD: Absolutely.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Ok. I'm trying to be clear with the documentation. Ok. Comrade Lloyd, it's ok.

Now in addressing your amendment. Your amendment is an attempt to control the action of the NEC on finance which is in violation of Article 1, Section V of the National By-laws. So, your amendment is out of order. Is there further discussion?

DELEGATE LLOYD: Yes, there is. There's not a word in here about controlling the NEC, Commander. We're talking about the processes from the close of this convention until the NEC meets. All it does is to ask that it be dealt with expeditiously, to get all the information necessary, so when they do meet in October, they can do an up or down vote without the necessity of delay until May. But it does not tell the NEC to do anything. It's in between the Convention and the NEC meeting.

NATL COMDR BOCK: I'm sorry, Comrade Lloyd, your time is up for the five minute rule of discussion. Is there any additional discussion?

MICROPHONE NO. 3: Yes, there is.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Microphone No. 3.

PNC MILLER: Butch Miller, Past National Commander, duly elected delegate to this convention, member of the Credentials & Internal Affairs Committee.

First of all, I agree with the intent that Delegate Lloyd is speaking of. However, we have rules in this organization and this convention as well. I somewhat don't understand how the resolution that came out of the committee to be referred to the standing committee suddenly, now you need to amend the language for referral. That's where it was going to begin with. So, let's vote on the issue. I do believe, as you said, that the amendment was out of order. Let's pass the resolution the way that it came out of the committee and let this organization operate under the rules that it always has and should, and not have to be worried about what the ACLU or anybody else is doing. Let's do our business the right way.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Was that some form of a motion? Comrade Miller, was that in the form of a motion, or what was that? I was confused.

PNC MILLER: That was supporting rejecting the motion.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Supporting rejection the motion of rejection of the resolution. You've got me confused. *(Laughter.)*

PNC MILLER: Exactly.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Any further discussion? Very difficult to see out there. I'm going to ask again, is there any further discussion on the motion? Ok.

The motion on Resolution 258, Mr. Chairman, do you have a final word?

CHRMN BESSON: Mr. Commander, due to the request for monies that has to come through the NEC, and the request for computing a database and other expenses that would be expended through this resolution, I request that the delegates reject this resolution.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Ok. Having no further discussion, we're ready to call for the vote. All those in favor of rejecting Resolution 258, give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. '*no*.' So the motion to reject failed. *(Applause.)*

CHRMN BESSON: Mr. Commander, I make a motion that the Resolution 258, Alliance Defense Fund and Defense of the Veterans Memorial Project be referred to the Standing Committee on Internal Affairs.

…Second from the floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Ok. There's a motion to refer to Standing Committee and there is a second. Is there discussion? Hearing no discussion, all those in favor of referring Resolution 258 to the Standing Committee on Internal Affairs give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed, same sign. Motion carried. The resolution is referred. *(Applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: I just have another update. I mean the National Emergency Fund is just incredible. I think the economy must be hurting. We've received another $1,000 check and we are over $150,041.68 for the National Emergency Fund. Just incredible!

The Chair recognizes Raymond Walters, the Past Department Commander of Louisiana, and Charles Aucoin, NEC, Louisiana.

PDC WALTERS (LA): First, I would like to thank our Commander, Tom Bock, for allowing us this opportunity to address the convention at this time. My name is Raymond Walters. I'm the Past Department Commander, Department of Louisiana.

We come here now to say to all of our family members on behalf of the Department of Louisiana, "Thank you." When Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana this past year, afterwards, I had the opportunity to speak to many of you in Indianapolis at the NEC meeting this past October. Many of you asked what you could do to help. This Legion family of ours stood up and stood strong and answered the call. It's because of you that the Department of Louisiana and Department of Mississippi were able to rebound and get back on their feet.

We have a lot of Legionnaires who are still evacuated who haven't returned home. We still have many of our American Legion Posts that are completely lost. They will have to be rebuilt. But because you answered the call, you sent us aid. Many of you sent funds directly to Posts you adopted within Louisiana and you related to them directly. We want to say thank you.

Many of you sent funds directly to our Department headquarters; I want to assure you that those funds were used properly. Those funds were given to our Legionnaire family members and to many of our Posts to rebuild. It makes up very proud to be part of this American Legion family. After this hurricane came through, it showed the togetherness and the love that this family has for each other. Again, I say thank you. We still have some of our Louisiana delegation here. Please stand. *(Applause.)*

This coming year, you may know that my term is up as Department Commander of Louisiana. But we have our incoming Department Commander, Forrest Travirca, III, and our Department Adjutant, David Simon. Please correspond with them. I'm not going anywhere. You can still get in touch with me at anytime. Thank you for coming to our aid.

May God continue to bless and keep us all. May this family continue to grow, and grow strong, look out for one another, and stand together: The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion, and the Auxiliary.

NEC AUCOIN (LA): Well said, Commander. Thank you and keep those donations to the National Emergency Fund coming, because, Lord knows, that one time or another before long we'll need them.

NATL COMDR BOCK: The Chair recognizes Charles Mills of New York, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee on Constutional Amendments for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments
Charles G. Mills, New York, Chairman

To the 88th Annual National Convention of The American Legion, Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006.

The Committee on Constitutional Amendments met at 9:00 a.m., Sunday, August 27, 2006 in the Canyon Room I, 2nd Level, Hilton Hotel. Committee Liaison Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr. (MD) called the roll and announced that forty-four members of the

Constitutional Amendments Committee were present. The following report was authorized by the members and is hereby submitted to this Convention.

The meeting was opened by Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr. (MD), who acted as temporary chairman. He stated a quorum was present and proceeded to the first order of business, which was the election of a permanent chairman and secretary.

Charles G. Mills (NY) was elected Chairman and Cathy Gorst (WI) was duly elected Secretary. Thereupon they assumed their respective places.

Copies of all the Resolutions, the Report of the Standing Committee, the Godwin Report, and copies of the National Constitution and By-Laws were made available to all members of the Committee.

A motion was duly made by James S. Whitfield (MO) and duly seconded by David King (KY) that all members of the Standing Committee on Constitution and By-Laws who were present at the meeting, but not actual delegates to the Convention Committee and delegates present from Departments without a member on the Committee 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 regarding the requirements for consideration of resolutions to amend the Constitution of The American Legion, and the details stated in the Standing Committee's report, he would rule out of order those resolutions which did not meet those requirements.

Resolution No. 179 (KS). The Chair announced that it was in agreement with the report of the Standing Committee on Constitution and By-Laws and that Resolution 179 (KS) was out of order because it did not provide language upon which the National Convention could vote. Accordingly, he ruled Resolution No. 179 (KS) out of order.

Resolution No. 194 (SC) was next considered. The Chair announced that this resolution was also out of order because it was so confusing it could not actually be passed. Essentially, the changes in the dates without having years inserted means that it would be possible for a member to be deemed expelled when the member had not yet become delinquent or been suspended. In addition, the resolution did not provide the language of the various sections to be voted on by the Convention. Accordingly, the resolution could not be adopted.

The Committee was of the opinion that the resolution was not in form to be adopted and that no study had been done on its economic or other impact. A motion was made by David King (KY), seconded by Fred Frisch (MT), and adopted that the resolution be rejected, without prejudice to the Commander's Ad Hoc Committee on Membership and Retention considering the subject and after a proper study of its impact, adopting an appropriate resolution. A motion was made by Ken Knight (VA) and seconded by Cecil Phillips (SC) to send a copy of this report to the Commander's Ad Hoc Committee on Membership and Retention.

Resolution No. 196 (TX) was next considered. The Committee was concerned about adverse tax consequences of opening up eligibility to what could be deemed to be a peace time period by the Internal Revenue Service and which would change the nature of The American Legion to a non-wartime veterans' organization. It was noted that those who participated in the expedition against the terrorist, Pancho Villa, and in expeditions between the two World Wars were not made eligible.

After thorough discussion, David King (KY) made a motion, seconded by John Tart (NC) that Resolution No. 196 (TX) be rejected. The motion carried.

The Chair then asked for a motion that the Chairman and Secretary be permitted to sign the report to the Convention on behalf of the members of the Convention Committee. James N. Creasy (CA) made the motion, and it was seconded by Don Hay (AK). The motion carried.

Charles Tucker (GA) made a motion to recess, subject to the call of the Chairman. The motion was seconded by Bruce Feuerbach (IA) and adopted.

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 delegate to the 88th National Convention of The American Legion, I move that this report be adopted.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Motion to adopt the Report on Constitutional Amendments is there a second.

…Second from the floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Hearing a second any discussion? Hearing none all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed say 'no.' Motion carried. The Report of Constitutional Amendments is adopted.

NATL COMDR BOCK: As you know, security is going to be tight tomorrow so I would encourage you to be alert to all the public announcements I have given you throughout the day and be prepared for the magnetometers. I now call on National Adjutant Robert Spanogle for any administrative announcements.

Announcements

After the recess of this day of this National Convention, the Western Caucus will hold a meeting in the Convention Hall. Leave the microphones and the lights on.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Delegates, please rise. Join me in a salute to the flag of the United States of America. All by the numbers. One! Two!

…The Delegation rose and saluted the Colors.

The time is now 3:25 p.m. The Convention will stand in recess until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

…At 3:25 p.m., the Convention recessed to reconvene the following day, Thursday, August 31, 2006, at 9:00 a.m.

PROCEEDINGS
THIRD DAY

Thursday, August 31, 2006

...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 third day of the 88th Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were conducted.

...Announcer introduces National Commander Bock and President George W. Bush.

Call to Order
Michael E. Harris, Virginia, National Vice Commander

This Convention will please come to order. Please stand. The flag of our nation being in place, please join me in honoring it. Hand salute. One, two.

...The delegates stood and rendered a right-hand salute to the Colors.

For the invocation, I call on National Chaplain Bishop, Steven E. Wright, of Layton, Utah.

Invocation
Bishop Steven E. Wright, Utah, National Chaplain

Our Eternal Father in Heaven, we give Thee thanks this morning for the great blessings to us, even for the blessings to this great nation. Help us always to remember that it is a blessed land by Thee, and help us to remember our responsibility and stewardship over those blessings.

Now, we thank Thee this beautiful morning that we'll have our President, Commander in Chief, with us. Wilt Thou continue to bless and strengthen him. Help to lift his hands, help to bear his burdens.

May we as a people strive to stand behind all that is good in this land. We're so grateful, Father, for the men and women of our armed services. Would Thou bless them and their families. Bless all Americans everywhere. Will Thou bless the children of this great land, that they may learn that this is a land blessed by Thee.

Help us this day now as we meet in convention, that we will have Thy spirit with us. Wilt Thou bless those who have lost loved ones in this great global war on terrorism. Strengthen them, stand with them, bless them. May we be there for them in their time and hour of need.

We humbly pray, offering a moment of silence that each may offer the benediction of their own heart and faith. Amen.

NATL VICE COMDR HARRIS: Ladies and gentlemen, remain uncovered and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

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

NATL VICE COMDR HARRIS: Please cover. The Convention is now in session. We have a two minute wait for the Commander in Chief.

...At this time Peter Ole entertained the delegation with selected music.

...At this time National Commander Bock resumed the Chair.

NATL COMDR BOCK: It's a personal honor and great pleasure for me to once again to have the opportunity to introduce our special guest this morning. As the Commander in Chief of a nation at war, he carries a heavy burden to protect America and all her freedoms and fight those who fight to take away those freedoms and our republic.

The American Legion and proud Americans everywhere who support our troops and the cause of a terror-free world must rally to show that our nation supports the President, the Congress and most of all our servicemembers in the global war against terrorism.

Last year at this time, these delegates unanimously adopted Resolution 169, Support

for the War on Terrorism. It's a definitive expression of our support for the war and warrior alike for they are inseparable. *(Applause.)*

As the nation's largest wartime veterans organization, we look forward to listening to his message because the policies of his Administration have a tremendous impact on our fellow veterans and the nation.

Please give a warm welcome to a fellow Legionnaire and member of Post 77 in Houston, Texas. He is a Paid-Up-For-Life member by the way, *(Laughter.)* The President of the United States the Honorable George W. Bush. *(Standing Applause.)*

Address: The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States

Thanks for the warm welcome. It's great to join you here in one of America's most beautiful cities. I appreciate your hospitality. I'm proud to stand before some of our country's finest patriots, our veterans and their families. *(Applause was given often throughout the address.)* And I'm pleased to call you my fellow Legionnaires—I suspect I may be the only one here, though, from Post 77, Houston, Texas. That's what I thought. *(Laughter.)* If you're from Post 77, behave yourself here in Salt Lake. *(Laughter.)*

Laura did remind me the other night, though, that at least I've joined a few of my fellow members in another illustrious organization, the "Over 60 Club." *(Laughter.)*

For almost 90 years, Legionnaires have stood proudly "for God and country." From big cities to small towns, The American Legion name brings to mind the best of our nation —decency, generosity, and character. I thank you for a lifetime of service. I thank you for the positive contributions you make to our nation, and I'm proud to join you today.

First, I want to thank Tom Bock, the National Commander, for his kind introduction and his strong leadership. I always am pleased to welcome the Commander to the Oval Office to discuss common issues. You've done a fine job leading this organization, Tom. I also want to thank your wife, Elaine, and I particularly want to pay respect to your son, Captain Bock, of the United States Army, who's joined us today.

I appreciate being here with Carol Van Kirk, the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary. I thank all the Auxiliary members who are with us here today, as well.

I'm proud that the Governor of this great state, Jon Huntsman, and his wife Mary Kaye, have joined us. Governor, thank you for your time. I'm also proud to be joined by two United States Senators who are strong supporters of the United States military, Senator Orrin Hatch, and Senator Bob Bennett.

Members of the congressional delegation from the state of Utah have joined us: Congressman Rob Bishop, and Congressman Chris Cannon. Thank you both for coming. Proud you're here. I thank the state Senator, John Valentine, who is the President of the Utah State Senate. I appreciate Speaker Greg Curtis. I want to thank all the state and local officials who have joined us here today. Most particularly, I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come and speak to you. I particularly want to thank all the Gold Star families who have joined us today. May God bless you.

As veterans, all of you stepped forward when America needed you most. From North Africa to Normandy, Iwo Jima to Inchon, from Khe Sanh to Kuwait, your courage and service have made it possible for generations to live in liberty. We owe you more than just thanks. We owe you the support of the federal government. And so, in my first four years as President, we increased funding for veterans more than the previous administration did in eight years. Since then, we've increased it even more. My budget for this year provides more than $80 billion for veterans—that's a 75-percent increase since I took office. It's the highest level of support for veterans in American history.

For many veterans, health care is a top priority, and it's a top priority of my administration. When Congress passes my 2007 budget, we will have increased the VA health care budget by 69 percent since 2001. We've extended treatment to a million additional veterans, including more than 300,000 men and women returning from

Afghanistan and Iraq. We're building new VA facilities in places where veterans are retiring, so that more veterans can get top-quality health care closer to their homes.

I appreciate the Legion's strong history of care and compassion for your fellow veterans. Earlier this week, I traveled to Mississippi and Louisiana to mark the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Veterans were hit hard by this storm, and American Legion posts all across the United States responded with vital relief. In an hour of suffering, you showed the good heart of our nation, and you showed the world that America can always count on Legionnaires.

I also appreciate the Legion's long history of supporting wise legislation in the Nation's Capital. Earlier this year, the Senate voted on a constitutional amendment to ban flag desecration—we came within a single vote of passing it. The administration looks forward to continuing working with The American Legion to make sure we get this important protection in the Constitution of the United States of America.

Your organization supported another good piece of legislation called the Respect for America's Fallen Heroes Act. This bill ensures that families of fallen service members will not have to endure protests during military funerals.

My administration will also continue to work to locate the men and women in uniform whose fate is still undetermined—our prisoners of war and personnel missing in action. We will not forget these brave Americans. We must not rest until we've accounted for every soldier, sailor, airman, Coast Guardsman, and Marine. And we will always honor their courage.

At this hour, a new generation of Americans in uniform is showing great courage in defending our freedom in the first war of the 21st century. I know that Legionnaires are following this war closely, especially those of you with family and friends who wear our uniform. The images that come back from the front lines are striking, and sometimes unsettling. When you see innocent civilians ripped apart by suicide bombs, or families buried inside their homes, the world can seem engulfed in purposeless violence. The truth is there is violence, but those who cause it have a clear purpose. When terrorists murder at the World Trade Center, or car bombers strike in Baghdad, or hijackers plot to blow up planes over the Atlantic, or terrorist militias shoot rockets at Israeli towns, they are all pursuing the same objective—to turn back the advance of freedom, and impose a dark vision of tyranny and terror across the world.

The enemies of liberty come from different parts of the world, and they take inspiration from different sources. Some are radicalized followers of the Sunni tradition, who swear allegiance to terrorist organizations like al Qaeda. Others are radicalized followers of the Shia tradition, who join groups like Hezbollah and take guidance from state sponsors like Syria and Iran. Still others are "homegrown" terrorists, fanatics who live quietly in free societies they dream to destroy. Despite their differences, these groups form the outlines of a single movement, a worldwide network of radicals that use terror to kill those who stand in the way of their totalitarian ideology. The unifying feature of this movement, the link that spans sectarian divisions and local grievances, is the rigid conviction that free societies are a threat to their twisted view of Islam.

The war we fight today is more than a military conflict; it is the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century. On one side are those who believe in the values of freedom and moderation—the right of all people to speak, and worship, and live in liberty. And on the other side are those driven by the values of tyranny and extremism—the right of a self-appointed few to impose their fanatical views on all the rest. As veterans, you have seen this kind of enemy before. They're successors to Fascists, to Nazis, to Communists, and other totalitarians of the 20th century. And history shows what the outcome will be: this war will be difficult; this war will be long; and this war will end in the defeat of the terrorists and totalitarians, and a victory for the cause of freedom and liberty.

We're now approaching the fifth anniversary of the day this war reached our shores. As the horror of that morning grows more distant, there is a tendency to believe that the threat is receding and this war is coming to a close. That feeling is natural and comforting—and wrong. As we recently saw, the enemy still wants to attack us. We're in

a war we didn't ask for, but it's a war we must wage, and a war we will win.

In the coming days, I'll deliver a series of speeches describing the nature of our enemy in the war on terror, the insights we've gained about their aims and ambitions, the successes and setbacks we've experienced, and our strategy to prevail in this long war. Today, I'll discuss a critical aspect of this war: the struggle between freedom and terror in the Middle East, including the battle in Iraq, which is the central front in our fight against terrorism.

To understand the struggle unfolding in the Middle East, we need to look at the recent history of the region. For a half- century, America's primary goal in the Middle East was stability. This was understandable at the time; we were fighting the Soviet Union in the Cold War, and it was important to support Middle Eastern governments that rejected communism. Yet, over the decades, an undercurrent of danger was rising in the Middle East. Much of the region was mired in stagnation and despair. A generation of young people grew up with little hope to improve their lives, and many fell under the sway of radical extremism. The terrorist movement multiplied in strength, and resentment that had simmered for years boiled over into violence across the world.

Extremists in Iran seized American hostages. Hezbollah terrorists murdered American troops at the Marine barracks in Beirut and Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia. Terrorists set off a truck bomb at the World Trade Center. Al Qaeda blew up two U.S. embassies in East Africa, and bombed the *USS Cole.* Then came the nightmare of September the 11, 2001, when 19 hijackers killed nearly 3,000 men, women, and children.

In the space of a single morning, it became clear that the calm we saw in the Middle East was only a mirage. We realized that years of pursuing stability to promote peace had left us with neither. Instead, the lack of freedom in the Middle East made the region an incubator for terrorist movements. The status quo in the Middle East before September the 11th was dangerous and unacceptable, so we're pursuing a new strategy.

First, we're using every element of national power to confront al Qaeda, those who take inspiration from them, and other terrorists who use similar tactics. We have ended the days of treating terrorism simply as a law enforcement matter. We will stay on the offense. We will fight the terrorists overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

Second, we have made it clear to all nations, "If you harbor terrorists, you are just as guilty as the terrorists; you're an enemy of the United States, and you will be held to account."

Third, we've launched a bold new agenda to defeat the ideology of the enemy by supporting the forces of freedom in the Middle East and beyond.

The freedom agenda is based upon our deepest ideals and our vital interests. Americans believe that every person, of every religion, on every continent, has the right to determine his or her own destiny. We believe that freedom is a gift from an almighty God, beyond any power on Earth to take away. And we also know, by history and by logic, that promoting democracy is the surest way to build security. Democracies don't attack each other or threaten the peace. Governments accountable to the voters focus on building roads and schools—not weapons of mass destruction. Young people who have a say in their future are less likely to search for meaning in extremism. Citizens who can join a peaceful political party are less likely to join a terrorist organization. Dissidents with the freedom to protest around the clock are less likely to blow themselves up during rush hour. And nations that commit to freedom for their people will not support terrorists—they will join us in defeating them.

So America has committed its influence in the world to advancing freedom and democracy as the great alternatives to repression and radicalism. We will take the side of democratic leaders and reformers across the Middle East. We will support the voices of tolerance and moderation in the Muslim world. We stand with the mothers and fathers in every culture who want to see their children grow up in a caring and peaceful world. And by supporting the cause of freedom in a vital region, we'll make our children and our

grandchildren more secure.

Over the past five years, we've begun to see the results of our actions, and we have seen how our enemies respond to the advance of liberty. In Afghanistan, we saw a vicious tyranny that harbored the terrorists who planned the September the 11th attacks. Within weeks, American forces were in Afghanistan. Along with Afghan allies, we captured or killed hundreds of al Qaeda and Taliban fighters; we closed down their training camps, and we helped the people of Afghanistan replace the Taliban with a democratic government that answers to them.

Our enemies saw the transformation in Afghanistan and they've responded by trying to roll back all the progress. Al Qaeda and the Taliban lost a coveted base in Afghanistan; they know they will never reclaim it when democracy succeeds. So they're trying to return to power by attacking Afghanistan's free institutions. And they will fail. Forces from 40 nations, including every member of NATO, are now serving alongside American troops to support the new Afghan government. The days of the Taliban are over. The future of Afghanistan belongs to the people of Afghanistan. The future of Afghanistan belongs to freedom.

In Lebanon, we saw a sovereign nation occupied by the Syrian dictatorship. We also saw the courageous people of Lebanon take to the streets to demand their independence. So we worked to enforce a United Nations resolution that required Syria to end its occupation of the country. The Syrians withdrew their armed forces, and the Lebanese people elected a democratic government that began to reclaim their country.

Our enemies saw the transformation in Lebanon and set out to destabilize the young democracy. Hezbollah launched an unprovoked attack on Israel that undermined the democrat government in Beirut. Yet their brazen action caused the world to unite in support for Lebanon's democracy. Secretary Rice worked with the Security Council to pass Resolution 1701, which will strengthen Lebanese forces as they take control of southern Lebanon—and stop Hezbollah from acting as a state within a state.

I appreciate the troops pledged by France and Italy and other allies for this important international deployment. Together, we're going to make it clear to the world that foreign forces and terrorists have no place in a free and democratic Lebanon.

This summer's crisis in Lebanon has made it clearer than ever that the world now faces a grave threat from the radical regime in Iran. The Iranian regime arms, funds, and advises Hezbollah, which has killed more Americans than any terrorist network except al Qaeda. The Iranian regime interferes in Iraq by sponsoring terrorists and insurgents, empowering unlawful militias, and supplying components for improvised explosive devices. The Iranian regime denies basic human rights to millions of its people. And the Iranian regime is pursuing nuclear weapons in open defiance of its international obligations.

We know the death and suffering that Iran's sponsorship of terrorists has brought, and we can imagine how much worse it would be if Iran were allowed to acquire nuclear weapons. Many nations are working together to solve this problem. The United Nations passed a resolution demanding that Iran suspend its nuclear enrichment activities. Today is the deadline for Iran's leaders to reply to the reasonable proposal the international community has made. If Iran's leaders accept this offer and abandon their nuclear weapons ambitions, they can set their country on a better course. Yet, so far, the Iranian regime has responded with further defiance and delay. It is time for Iran to make a choice. We've made our choice: We will continue to work closely with our allies to find a diplomatic solution—but there must be consequences for Iran's defiance, and we must not allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon.

In Iraq, we saw a dictator who harbored terrorists, fired at military planes, paid the families of Palestinian suicide bombers, invaded a neighbor, and pursued and used weapons of mass destruction. The United Nations passed more than a dozen resolutions demanding that Saddam Hussein fully and openly abandon his weapons of mass destruction. We gave him a last chance to comply. When he refused, we enforced the just demands of the world. Now Saddam Hussein is in prison and on trial. Soon he will have

the justice he denied to so many for so long. And with this tyrant gone from power, the United States, Iraq, the Middle East, and the world are better off.

In the three years since Saddam's fall the Iraqi people have reclaimed sovereignty of their country. They cast their ballots in free elections. They drafted and approved a democratic constitution and elected a constitutional democracy at the heart of the Middle East. Over the same period, Iraq has seen a rise of terrorist and insurgent movements that use brutal and indiscriminate violence to frustrate the desire of the Iraqi people for freedom and peace. Al Qaeda terrorists, former elements of Saddam's regime, illegal militias and unlawful armed groups are all working to undermine Iraq's new democracy. These groups have different long-term ambitions, but the same immediate goals. They want to drive America and our coalition out of Iraq and the Middle East, so they can stop the advance of freedom and impose their dark vision on the people of the Middle East.

Our enemies in Iraq have employed ruthless tactics to achieve those goals. They've targeted American and coalition troops with ambushes and roadside bombs. They've taken hostage and beheaded civilians on camera. They've blown up Iraqi army posts and assassinated government leaders. We've adapted to the tactics and, thanks to the skill and professionalism of Iraqi and American forces, many of these enemies have met their end. At every step along the way, our enemies have failed to break the courage of the Iraqi people; they have failed to stop the rise of Iraqi democracy -- and they will fail in breaking the will of the American people.

Now these enemies have launched a new effort. They have embarked on a bloody campaign of sectarian violence, which they hope will plunge Iraq into a civil war. The outbreak of sectarian violence was encouraged by the terrorist Zarqawi, al Qaeda's man in Iraq who called for an "all-out war" on Iraqi Shia. The Shia community resisted the impulse to seek revenge for a while. But after this February bombing of the Shia Golden Dome Mosque in Samarra, extremist groups mobilized and sectarian death squads formed on the streets of Baghdad and other areas. Our Ambassador reports that thousands of Iraqis were murdered in Baghdad last month, and large numbers of them were victims of sectarian violence.

This cruelty and carnage has led some to question whether Iraq has descended into civil war. Our commanders and our diplomats on the ground in Iraq believe that's not the case. They report that only a small number of Iraqis are engaged in sectarian violence, while the overwhelming majority want peace and a normal life in a unified country. Iraqi leaders from all backgrounds remember the elections that brought them to power, in which 12 million Iraqis defied the car bombers and killers to claim, "We want to be free."

Iraq's government is working tirelessly to hold the nation together and to heal Iraq's divisions, not to exploit them. The Iraqi people have come a long way. They are not going to let their country fall apart or relapse into tyranny. As Prime Minister Maliki told the United States Congress, "Iraqis have tasted freedom and we will defend it absolutely."

America has a clear strategy to help the Iraqi people protect their new freedom and build a democracy that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself. On the political side, we're working closely with Prime Minister Maliki to strengthen Iraq's unity government and develop and to deliver better services to the Iraqi people. This is a crucial moment for the new Iraqi government; its leaders understand the challenge. They believe that now is the time to hammer out compromises on Iraq's most contentious issues.

I've been clear with each Iraqi leader I meet: America is a patient nation, and Iraq can count on our partnership, as long as the new government continues to make the hard decisions necessary to advance a unified, democratic and peaceful Iraq. Prime Minister Maliki has shown courage in laying out an agenda to do just that, and he can count on an ally, the United States of America, to help him promote this agenda.

On the security side, we're refining our tactics to meet the threats on the ground. I've given our commanders in Iraq all the flexibility they need to make adjustments

necessary to stay on the offense and defeat the enemies of freedom. We've deployed Special Operation forces to kill or capture terrorists operating in Iraq. Zarqawi found out what they can do. We continue to train Iraqi police forces to defend their own nation. We've handed over security responsibility for a southern province to Iraqi forces. Five of Iraq's 10 army divisions are now taking the lead in their areas of operation. The Iraqi security forces are determined; they're becoming more capable; and together, we will defeat the enemies of a free Iraq.

Recently, we also launched a major new campaign to end the security crisis in Baghdad. Side by side, Iraqi and American forces are conducting operations in the city's most violent areas to disrupt al Qaeda, to capture enemy fighters, crack down on IED makers, and break up the death squads. These forces are helping Iraq's national police force undergo retraining to better enforce law in Baghdad. And these forces are supporting the Iraqi government as it provides reconstruction assistance.

The Baghdad Security Plan is still in its early stages. We cannot expect immediate success. Yet, the initial results are encouraging. According to one military report, a Sunni man in a diverse Baghdad neighborhood said this about the Shia soldiers on patrol: "Their image has changed. Now you feel they're there to protect you." Over the coming weeks and months, the operation will expand throughout Baghdad until Iraq's democratic government is in full control of its capital. The work is difficult and dangerous, but the Iraqi government and their forces are determined to reclaim their country. And the United States is determined to help them succeed.

Here at home we have a choice to make about Iraq. Some politicians look at our efforts in Iraq and see a diversion from the war on terror. That would come as news to Osama bin Laden, who proclaimed that the "third world war is raging" in Iraq. It would come as news to the number two man of al Qaeda, Zawahiri, who has called the struggle in Iraq, , "The place for the greatest battle." It would come as news to the terrorists from Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Yemen and other countries, who have to come to Iraq to fight the rise of democracy.

It's hard to believe that these terrorists would make long journeys across dangerous borders, endure heavy fighting, or blow themselves up in the streets of Baghdad, for a so-called "diversion." Some Americans didn't support my decision to remove Saddam Hussein; many are frustrated with the level of violence. But we should all agree that the battle for Iraq is now central to the ideological struggle of the 21st century. We will not allow the terrorists to dictate the future of this century, so we will defeat them in Iraq.

Still, there are some in our country who insist that the best option in Iraq is to pull out, regardless of the situation on the ground. Many of these folks are sincere and they're patriotic, but they could not be more wrong. If America were to pull out before Iraq can defend itself, the consequences would be absolutely predictable—and absolutely disastrous. We would be handing Iraq over to our worst enemies: Saddam's former henchmen, armed groups with ties to Iran, and al Qaeda terrorists from all over the world who would suddenly have a base of operations far more valuable than Afghanistan under the Taliban. They would have a new sanctuary to recruit and train terrorists at the heart of the Middle East, with huge oil riches to fund their ambitions. And we know exactly where those ambitions lead. If we give up the fight in the streets of Baghdad, we will face the terrorists in the streets of our own cities.

We can decide to stop fighting the terrorists in Iraq and other parts of the world, but they will not decide to stop fighting us. General John Abizaid, our top commander in the Middle East region, recently put it this way: "If we leave, they will follow us." And he is right. The security of the civilized world depends on victory in the war on terror, and that depends on victory in Iraq. So the United States of America will not leave until victory is achieved.

Victory in Iraq will be difficult and it will require more sacrifice. The fighting there can be as fierce as it was at Omaha Beach or Guadalcanal. And victory is as important as it was in those earlier battles. Victory in Iraq will result in a democracy that is a friend of America and an ally in the war on terror. Victory in Iraq will be a crushing defeat for our

enemies who have staked so much on the battle there. Victory in Iraq will honor the sacrifice of the brave Americans who have given their lives. And victory in Iraq would be a powerful triumph in the ideological struggle of the 21st century. From Damascus to Tehran, people will look to a democratic Iraq as inspiration that freedom can succeed in the Middle East, and as evidence that the side of freedom is the winning side. This is a pivotal moment for the Middle East. The world is watching—in Iraq and beyond, the forces of freedom will prevail.

For all the debate, American policy in the Middle East comes down to a straightforward choice. We can allow the Middle East to continue on its course—on the course it was headed before September 11th, and a generation from now, our children will face a region dominated by terrorist states and radical dictators armed with nuclear weapons. Or we can stop that from happening, by rallying the world to confront the ideology of hate, and give the people of the Middle East a future of hope. And that is the choice America has made.

We see a day when people across the Middle East have governments that honor their dignity, unleash their creativity, and count their votes. We see a day when leaders across the Middle East reject terror and protect freedom. We see a day when the nations of the Middle East are allies in the cause of peace. The path to that day will be uphill and uneven, but we can be confident of the outcome, because we know that the direction of history leads toward freedom.

In the early years of our republic, Thomas Jefferson said that we cannot expect to move "from despotism to liberty in a featherbed." That's been true in every time and place. No one understands that like you, our veterans, understand that. With the distance of history, it can be easy to look back at the wars of the 20th century and see a straight path to victory. You know better than that. You waged the hard battles, you suffered the wounds, you lost friends and brothers. You were there for dark times and the moments of uncertainty. And you know that freedom is always worth the sacrifice.

You also know what it takes to win. For all that is new about this war, one thing has not changed: victory still depends on the courage and the patience and the resolve of the American people. Above all, it depends on patriots who are willing to fight for freedom. Our nation is blessed to have these men and women in abundance. Our military forces make this nation strong; they make this nation safe; and they make this nation proud.

We thank them and their families for their sacrifice. We will remember all those who have given their lives in this struggle—and I vow that we will give our men and women in uniform all the resources they need to accomplish their missions.

One brave American we remember is Marine Corporal Adam Galvez, from here in Salt Lake City. Yesterday Adam's mom and dad laid their son to rest. We're honored by their presence with us today. About a month ago, Adam was wounded by a suicide bomb in Iraq's Anbar Province. When he regained consciousness, he found he was buried alive, so he dug himself out of the rubble. Then ran through gunfire to get a shovel to dig out his fellow Marines. As soon as he recovered from his injuries, Adam volunteered to go back to the front lines. and 11 days ago, he was killed when a roadside bomb hit his convoy.

Here is what Adam's mom and dad said about the cause for which their son gave his life: "Though many are debating the justification of this war, Adam believed in his country, Adam's belief in his country did not waver, even to the point of the ultimate sacrifice. It's our hope and our prayer that people share the same conviction and dedication to our troops and fellow Americans."

Our nation will always remember the selflessness and sacrifice of Americans like Adam Galvez. We will honor their lives by completing the good and noble work they have started. We can be confident that one day, veterans of the war on terror will gather at American Legion halls across the country and say the same things you say: we made our nation safer; we made a region more peaceful; and we left behind a better world for our children and our grandchildren.

Thanks for having me. May God bless our veterans. May God bless our troops. And may God continue to bless the United States of America. *(Standing applause.)*

...The delegates were entertained by Peter Ole.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Let's have a big hand for Peter Ole. He is a long time friend. I've known him for over 34 years. Started out in our little Legion Post in Aurora, Colorado in the 1970s. What a great friend. Thank you, Peter.

Presentation: The American Legion Fourth Estate Award
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, National Commander

We begin this morning by recognizing outstanding achievement in journalism that have a positive impact on a community. The American Legion Fourth Estate Award is difficult to earn. It's a testimony to the demanding nature of the competition and quality of entries. This year's award goes to the Chief of the Madison Bureau of *Post-Crescent* newspaper in Appleton, Wisconsin.

One of the major criteria for selecting the winner of The American Legion Fourth Estate Award is the demonstrated impact of the reporting. Bureau Chief Ben Jones' series entitled, "Have We Forgotten? Wisconsin War Memorials," is a moving and informative look at Wisconsin War Memorials and the poor upkeep they received over the years.

Working with Jaime Mara, the *Post-Crescent* Enterprise editor, Jones revisited the purpose of establishing war memorials and the legacy of reverence these structures of honor hold in their communities. He examined over a hundred war memorials across the state of Wisconsin and found about one-third of them to be in need of repair. These details about the damage and condition of the memorials triggered community movement to restore the memorials across the state. The most noteworthy event was in Appleton, Wisconsin, where members of the city council agreed and voted 16 to 0, without discussion, to award a contract to restore Appleton's deteriorating "Spirit of the American Doughboy" bronze sculpture.

Ben Jones is a sincere friend to veterans. He is donating the $2,000 stipend that he received with this award to the cause that he wrote about, preserving Wisconsin's War Memorials.

Legionnaires and guests, it is an honor to present The American Legion Fourth Estate Award for 2006 to Ben Jones of the *Post-Crescent*, Appleton, Wisconsin.

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion 2006 Fourth Estate Award for outstanding achievement in the field of journalism presented to the Post-Crescent for the special report, "Have We Forgotten? Wisconsin War Memorials." The in-depth investigation of Wisconsin's war memorials uncovered many monuments neglected and in disrepair. The report prompted public resolve to restore the state's tributes to its fallen soldiers. Presented at the 88th National Convention, August 31, 2006, Salt Lake City, Utah.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Commander, for the award and the kind words. This is a great honor and a great day for me and for my newspaper. I truly thank you all. I'd like to tell you a little bit more about the series, if I could.

As Memorial Day approached, we decided to do a story on our state's war monuments. I visited, as the Commander mentioned, more than 100 memorials, traveling all corners of Wisconsin and a lot of hamlets in between. I spent hours behind the wheel with a laptop and camera tracking down these monuments. It wasn't easy. I went through a lot of coffee, but I found them.

The majority were in excellent shape and obviously well-cared for. But other monuments had problems. Some were missing pieces swiped by thieves. Some were marred by spray paint or were littered with trash and garbage. A lot of monuments had simply crumbled in Wisconsin's harsh weather. In all, more than a third of the

monuments I visited had damage due to weather, vandalism or neglect. Sometimes this damage can be pretty expensive to fix. They can cost tens of thousands of dollars to complete repairs on some of these statutes. Experts say such repairs usually only happen if the community gets behind the restoration.

That was the case with the "Old Doughboy" in Appleton. It was erected in 1934 to honor 85 local servicemen lost in the First World War. When I arrived with my camera, the legs of the old doughboy had split completely open. In time, it would have fallen off its base. My newspaper and Appleton Legion Post 38 launched a community effort in order to restore the old statue. It raised more than $25,000. Workers shipped the monument to Omaha for a complete restoration, and a rededication is planned for this Veterans Day.

From what I understand, the statue now looks like new. For years it should continue to be a reminder to the community of the sacrifices of those 85 men and countless others in that war. Hopefully, the restoration will be an example of what can be done to make sure such sacrifices aren't forgotten.

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

NATL VICE COMDR HALL: The Chair recognizes Michael D. Helm of Nebraska, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on Foreign Relations for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations
Michael D. Helm, Nebraska, Chairman

At 8:30 a.m., Sunday, August 27, 2006, 47 delegates and alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations met in the Salt Palace Convention Center, Rooms 254 A and B Salt Lake City, UT, Mr. Michael D. Helm (NE) was elected chairman and Melvin 'Doc' Simon (VT) was appointed secretary.

At this meeting, motions were approved authorizing the Committee Chairman and Secretary to make technical corrections to the resolutions reported out of the committee to ensure proper wording and form without changing the substance or meaning of the resolutions and to sign the report on behalf of the delegates. A total of 22 resolutions were assigned to the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations.

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 Chairman: General Foreign Policy, Chairman Michael D. Helm (Nebraska); and Regional Affairs, Melvin "Doc" Simon (Vermont).

The Ad Hoc Subcommittee reports contain resolutions that will, in conjunction with resolutions previously adopted, provide and effective viable foreign relations program for The American Legion. This 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.

General Foreign Policy

Approved

Resolution No. 26: Interagency Policy Coordination And Cooperation
Origin: Vermont
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations
(As amended)

WHEREAS, Since formation of the Defense POW/MIA Office (DPMO) in 1992, there has been a marked decrease in interagency coordination and cooperation on POW/MIA accounting matters; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the President and the Congress of the United States, to call upon the National Security Council, Department of Defense and Department of State to reenergize interagency coordination in support of criteria for unilateral actions by the Socialists Republic of Vietnam (SRV) regarding POW/MIA issues, as defined by the President of The United States in his certification to Congress in 2002, as reinforced by Secretaries of State Powell and Rice in 2004 and 2005.

Resolution No. 27: Vietnam Underwater Recovery Policy
Origin: Vermont
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations
(As amended)

WHEREAS, Vietnam's Minister of Defense Pham Van Tra stated on November 10, 2003, that use of a U.S. Navy vessel for underwater recovery operations must be the result of agreement between the U.S. Department of State and Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an agreement that his Ministry of Defense would support; and

WHEREAS, There is increasing cooperation between the U.S. and Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) military, and U.S. Navy ships, now routinely make official port calls in Vietnam; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That the American Legion encourages the President, and the Congress of the United States, to call upon the Secretaries of State and Defense to press for agreement by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) to allow U.S. Navy vessels to conduct humanitarian operations related to POW/MIA accounting efforts; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls on all U.S. Government Departments and Agencies with POW/MIA accounting responsibilities, especially Defense POW/MIA Office (DPMO) and Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), to actively press Vietnam for unilateral actions to locate and recover remains and work out procedures for unilateral (SRV) recovery of remains in areas considered sensitive by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Resolution No. 28: Vietnam POW/MIA Policy Objectives
Origin: Vermont
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations
(As amended)

WHEREAS, The Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) government has consistently pledged to provide the U.S. with POW/MIA-related documents and records that could help accounting America's unreturned veterans still missing from the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, President Bush, Secretary of State Powell, and Secretary of State Rice have repeatedly defined the criteria for the SRV leadership to unilaterally provide such cooperation, but the SRV continues to withhold documents assessed by U.S. experts to be readily available; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion calls on the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's leadership to deliver archival records and documents in relation to POW/MIA issues to the U.S. government prior to the President's visit to Hanoi; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That significant unilateral actions regarding POW/MIA issues by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam continue to be priority objectives in efforts to

obtain the fullest possible accounting for U.S. personnel still missing from the Vietnam War; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls on the President and the Secretaries of State and Defense to ensure that the need for unilateral responsiveness on archival records and repatriation of remains is consistently and accurately conveyed to counterpart Vietnamese officials at every level and opportunity.

Resolution No. 29: Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command Funding
Origin: Vermont
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations
(As amended)

WHEREAS, The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) was forced to reduce field operations to account for missing U.S. personnel in early 2006 due to a failure of the Defense Department to provide adequate funding; and

WHEREAS, The mission of JPAC has been expanded by Congress to include investigation and recovery operations dating back to and including unaccounted for WWII personnel and funding levels were not increased to meet this requirement; and

WHEREAS, The headquarters currently utilized by JPAC, previously the headquarters of the Central Identification Laboratory, prior to its merger with the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting to become JPAC, and is no longer capable of housing the expanded command nor the expanded laboratory requirements for forensic identifications; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion calls on the Secretary of Defense to ensure that the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) have at least $60 million in operation funds; and, be it further

RESOLVED, An additional $60 million in military construction funds be included in the DoD budget for FY07 and a minimum of $62 million per year for FY08 through FY10 for JPAC; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls on the Congress to ensure that such funds be approved and restricted for use for no purpose other than those included in the mission statement of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, Hickam AFB, Hawaii.

Resolution No. 35: POW/MIA Priority Policies
Origin: Nebraska
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, Many Americans are reported as missing in action or otherwise unaccounted for from World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War and the war in Southeast Asia; and

WHEREAS, The families of these Prisoners of War and Missing in Action still suffer untold grief and uncertainty due to the lack of any accurate accounting in spite of the heroic efforts of U.S. search teams. Some reports indicate that some of these Americans could be alive in the former enemy areas; and

WHEREAS, It appears that certain information from these areas has been deliberately and cruelly withheld from their families; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is convinced, for example, based on available evidence, that American POWs were detained by Vietnam after Operation Homecoming in 1973, and there is sufficient evidence to lead us to believe that there is still a probability of American POWs still being held in Indochina today; and

WHEREAS, Specific locations of alleged remains of U.S. serviceman have now been identified by the U.S. Government; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes U.S. Government POW/MIA operations are still inadequate, and the President's normalization of relations with Vietnam has not achieved substantially greater progress; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the President of the United States of America and every member of the U.S. Congress to speak out on every occasion to expedite the return of those U.S. servicemen who remain Missing in Action; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continues to exert the maximum effort to account for MIAs from World War II, Korea, Southeast Asia and the Cold War; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes the following priority actions should be taken by the U.S. Government:

- **Continue to provide sufficient personnel and resources so that investigative efforts of World War II, Cold War, and Korean War POW/MIA situations can be broadened and accelerated.**
- **Continue to provide necessary resources so field operations can be conducted at a maximum rate of activity with more timely follow-up of live sighting reports.**
- **Continue to declassify all POW/MIA information (except that revealing intelligence sources or methods) in a form readily available to public review.**
- **Initiate or strengthen joint commissions with Russia, the People's Republic of China, and North Korea to increase POW/MIA recovery efforts.**
- **Establish a joint standing congressional committee on POW/MIA affairs to ensure continued action by the executive branch in addressing the POW/MIA issue.**
- **Take further favorable actions toward Vietnam only after Hanoi provides the fullest possible accounting for POW/MIAs in Vietnam or in areas of Laos and Cambodia it controlled during the Vietnam War.**
- **Take favorable actions toward Laos or Cambodia only after those nations provide the fullest possible accounting for POW/MIAs.**
- **"Fullest possible accounting" is defined as turning over live prisoners, repatriating remains of those who were killed in action or died in captivity, or providing a valid, conclusive report when neither is possible.**

Resolution No. 36: The American Legion's United Nations Policy
Origin: Nebraska
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations
(As amended)

WHEREAS, The American Legion played a significant role in helping to establish the United Nations after World War II, believing it would help prevent the outbreak of future wars; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has remained generally supportive of the United Nations over the succeeding years, although it has been critical of particular ineffective, wasteful or undesirable activities of the United Nations; and

WHEREAS, Although the United Nations in half a century of operation has not fulfilled the lofty purposes of international peace and human betterment envisioned by its founders, it continues to be in the national interest for the United States to function as a member of the United Nations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, that The American Legion urges the U.S. Government to seek the following reforms in the United Nations and to use American leverage to obtain these desired ends:

- **Encourage the United Nations to focus on limited, necessary, achievable tasks that truly better the lot of humankind in a sensible, cost-effective manner.**
- **Encourage the United Nations not to infringe on national sovereignty when operating economic and social programs.**
- **Adopt weighted voting procedures in the General Assembly, allotting voting power in relation to funds contributed by each member nation to the United Nations.**
- **Provide truly independent authority to the Inspector General and ensure that UN agencies become subject to periodic, unannounced auditing, the finding of such audits to be reported to member nations.**
- **Establish an equitable fiduciary relationship between the United States and the United Nations.**

Resolution No. 121: The American Legion Foreign Policy Objectives
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations
(As amended)

WHEREAS, Members of The American Legion, as veterans of wartime service in the defense of liberty, have a special concem for maintaining peace with freedom and recognize that a strong U.S. foreign policy is vital in that regard; and

WHEREAS, The official concem 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 Salt lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion believes that the following objectives should be incorporated into U.S. foreign policy in order to maintain peace with freedom while preserving and promoting democracy:

1. **Recognition that the U.S. has great and multiple responsibilities as a leader of the Free World**
2. **Dedication to achievement of world peace with freedom, secured by a peace through strength posture**
3. **Support for a global fight on multiple fronts to end the scourge of terrorism**
4. **Support for democracy and human rights in other countries when such is consistent with U.S. national interests and national power**
5. **Participation in essential collective security alliances, provided our allies contribute their fair share**
6. **Negotiation of equitable, verifiable arms control agreements, which improve U.S. national security**
7. **Opposition to the spread of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons or long-range ballistic missiles which may be used by terrorists, terrorist organizations, communists or aggressor nations**
8. **Determined opposition to international terrorism and drug trafficking**
9. **Support for responsible international organizations that are consistent with U.S. sovereignty and serve U.S. national interests**
10. **Participation in an increasingly interdependent Free World trading system based on fair and equitable trading practices**
11. **Recognition that the President must be the chief architect of U.S. foreign policy as envisioned in the U.S. Constitution, while Congress performs important functions of advice, oversight and funding**
12. **Support for the appropriate resources to promote and protect U.S. vital national interests world-wide.**

Resolution No. 123: Enhanced Funding For USAID
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The United States Department of State is the first line of defense of the nation in combating the myriad of security threats that face America from abroad, and is charged with a number of missions that are vital to the nation; and

WHEREAS, These missions include: diplomatic relations with foreign nations, promoting peace and stability in regions of vital interest, bringing countries together to address global challenges, creating jobs at home by opening markets abroad, and helping developing nations establish stable economic environments that provide investment and export opportunities; and

WHEREAS, The State Department has been allocated little more than 1% of the total federal budget to accomplish many of these development tasks through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in contrast to the approximately 16% spent on defense; and

WHEREAS, In recent years the State Department's responsibilities have expanded enormously to include combating threats from terrorism, international crime, and narcotics trafficking, and that development programs through USAID are in the frontline to offer solutions and alternatives for emerging states to prevent there economic and democratic failure, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion supports policies and legislation that will enhance funding for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) within the Department of State and seeks use of that funding towards targeted states whose failure to provide for its people could result in the expansion of international terrorism; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That USAID because of its technical knowledge and expertise be given a greater role in the decision making process for the disbursement and usage of funds targeted for reconstruction in nations where our military presence has resulted in the need for infrastructure redevelopment.

Resolution No. 124: Support For US-Russia Joint Commission On POW/MIA
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The American Legion has confidence in the purpose, ability, commitment and unique expertise of the DPMO-based and Moscow-based staff of the US-Russia Joint Commission (USRJC) on POW/MIAs, known as JCSD (Joint Commission Support Directorate); and

WHEREAS, The American Legion commends Representative Sam Johnson (TX) for his long-standing service as the House Majority Commissioner and applauds Senator Saxby Chambliss' recent appointment to serve as the Senate Majority Commissioner, but regrets the slow involvement by the House and Senate Minority Commissioners, and urges greater participation or replacement; and

WHEREAS, General Robert H. 'Doc' Foglesong, USAF (Ret) of West Virginia has been named to be the US Chairman of the US-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the President and Congress to quickly appoint and confirm a qualified, high level and experienced policy person, not currently working in the US Government, to serve as US Chairman of the USJRC; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls on the leadership of the House and Senate to ensure that its representatives on the US-Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs are able to serve actively as US Commissioners in pursuing the

important interests and objectives of the POW/MIA families and our nation's veterans; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls on the leadership of the Russian Federation to increase the responsiveness of their government in the humanitarian mission pursued by the Joint Commission; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the President and Congress provide the necessary and adequate funding needed for the Commission to pursue its mission for full accountability of all our country's servicemembers.

Rejected

Resolution No. 80 (OH): U.N. Membership Withdrawal

Regional Affairs

Approved

Resolution No. 3: Policy Regarding Support Of The Republic Of Korea
Origin: Alaska
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The security of the Korean Peninsula is vital to the stability of the Asia-Pacific region as well as to the security of the United States, and The Republic of Korea (ROK)-United States security alliance based on the ROK-US Mutual Defense Treaty has made, and continues to make, significant contributions to the deterrence of 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 (by North Korea), and (3) promotion of reconciliation and cooperation from the six party talks. In so doing, the ROK Government is pursuing the peaceful coexistence of South and North Korea as well as the dismantlement of the Cold War Structure on the Korean peninsula; and

WHEREAS, Despite serious food shortages and economic failures, it is indicative that North Korea continues to build up its military capabilities, particularly long-range ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction including nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons which weapons of mass destruction pose a grave threat to the peace and stability of Northwest Asia as well as to the security of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The six party talks; the United States, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Russia and The Peoples Republic of China, are negotiating to resolve the nuclear issue, such as access to the suspect underground facility in North Korea and to resolve the issue of North Korea's development, production, deployment and export of missiles; and in addition the talks are being pursued in an attempt to reduce tensions and to build confidence on the Korean Peninsula and to eventually replace the current Armistice Agreement with a lasting peace arrangement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That the government of the United States render prompt and effective assistance to the Republic of Korea to repel any external armed attack against the Republic of Korea in accordance with the ROK-US Mutual Defense Treaty, and to maintain solid ROK-US combined defense readiness, and make efforts toward the long-term development of the ROK-US security alliance; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the government of the United States implement and maintain a determined and effective policy to bear on North Korea to keep its pledge in the US-DPRK Agreed Framework to freeze and eventually dismantle its existing nuclear facilities, by means of faithful implementation to the 1992 "Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula," smooth

implementation of the light-water reactor (LWR) project in North Korea and clarification of the suspect underground construction in North Korea; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the government of the United States increase its efforts to reduce the North Korean threat of weapons of mass destruction and reach an agreement with North Korea on the control of its development, production, deployment, and export of ballistic missiles and to encourage North Korea to participate in international non-proliferation programs including the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and that the US Government take determined steps toward North Korea's missile threats with close consultations with the ROK Government; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Government of the Unites States continue its efforts for the further progress of the Six Party Talks with the thought that positive progress in the Six Party Talks is important to the reduction of tensions and establishment of a peace regime on the Nation edicts until the Armistice Agreement is superseded by a durable peace arrangement.

Resolution No. 5: Taiwan Straits Resolution
Origin: Alaska
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations
(As amended)

WHEREAS, The Republic of China is a long-time friend, allied, and a major trading partner of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Republic of China, closely cooperated with the United States against Japanese Imperialism during World War II and in the fight against Communism during the Cold War; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan is strategically located and is extremely important to the peace, prosperity, and stability of the Pacific Rim; and

WHEREAS, It is in the best interest of all the parties on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to resolve political differences peacefully; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That the United States Government encourages the parties on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to promote peaceful dialogue and avoid any actions by either side to change the status quo, which would lead to military conflict.

Resolution No. 34: Middle East/Gulf States Foreign Policies
Origin: Nebraska
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The end of World War One brought about the dissolution of the Ottman Empire and the arbitrary delineation of middle eastern states of the former Turkish held territories of, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Palestine (Israel), Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Aden, Oman (United Arab Emirates) and the Gulf of Aden states of Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan and to include the sovereign states of Egypt and Libya; and

WHEREAS, Many of these nations continue to struggle with reforming from authoritarian regimes to more democratic and representative forms of governance, and that the call by their own populations to seek greater freedoms and the protection of individual human rights and universal suffrage, and that states which fail to provide the basic needs of their people creates an opportunity for extremists and terrorists to flourish and grow; and

WHEREAS, That as each of these nations strive to reform their governments will need the technical and economic support of more developed and advanced Representative Democracies, and these needs will include: creating diplomatic coalitions with other countries and international institutions, creating jobs, open market reforms,

developing and establish stable economic environments, internal and international security cooperation; and

WHEREAS, The President and the United States Congress have both identified in statements and in proposed legislation and have called for policy that will help promote and assist nations seeking to establish greater democratic reforms in the Middle East; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion supports legislation and foreign policy that specifically targets diplomatic, economic and educational programs to promote greater and peaceful democratic reforms in Countries within the Arabian Gulf and Middle Eastern Region.

Resolution No. 37: Vietnam Human Rights
Origin: Nebraska
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The American Legion recognizes the comradeship and loyalty of the ethnic minorities of Vietnam to include, Montagnards and Hmong hill people, whose assistance was invaluable during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, Members of The American Legion, as veterans of wartime service in the defense of liberty, have a special concem for maintaining peace with freedom and recognize that the protection of Human Rights are vital in that regard; and

WHEREAS, The official concem 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 Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the President and the Congress to support legislation and policies that will compel the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to meet the international standards of Human Rights; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the ethnic and religious minorities within the country of Vietnam be extended those protections and rights to live and worship in peace without threat of imprisonment or retribution from their government.

Resolution No. 120: Policy On Africa
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, Decades of colonization, authoritarian rule, severe economic disparity, internal conflicts, rampant corruption and in many cases great resistance to change has overwhelmed the African continent; and

WHEREAS, Today some African nations are beginning to develop strong economic markets, and are making determined efforts to put the continent towards a solid democratic course with multi-party systems and other significant political changes; and

WHEREAS, Promoting policies that support democracy, conflict resolution, economic development, free and open trade and disease prevention in African countries are in the national interests of the United States, understanding that a major contributing factor to terrorism are failed states; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion supports bipartisan policies and legislation that identify areas and authorize and fund programs where the United States can provide economic, political and social development in Africa; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes that such U.S. policies toward African nations must be intertwined with our nation's overall strategy to promote democracy throughout the world; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That any African nation that clearly demonstrates open democratic reforms, human rights protection and cooperation in the fight against international terrorism, will have the support of the U.S. government.

Resolution No. 122: Taiwan Defense Arms Sales
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations
(As amended)
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 4 (AK))

WHEREAS, The Republic of China is a long-time friend having fought with the United States against Japanese Imperialism during World War II and against Communism during the post-war period; and

WHEREAS, The Republic of China is a major trading partner and democratic ally of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan is strategically located and is extremely important to the peace, prosperity, and stability of the Asia-Pacific region; and

WHEREAS, Under the provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act (Public Law 96-8), the United States is committed to provide defense equipment and defense services, in such quantities that the Government of the Republic of China may maintain a sufficient self-defense capability; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion supports the sales of the latest American weapon systems, including naval vessels, submarines, military aircraft, high-tech electronics, communications equipment and air-defense missile systems to Republic of China of such quality and in such quantities so as to enable the Government of the Republic of China to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion supports the continued sales of sophisticated US weapon systems, including, but not limited to, F-16 fighter aircraft, anti-submarine equipment and torpedoes, anti-aircraft/anti-missile systems, and electronics and communications equipment to Republic of China; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Government of the Republic of China be given preferential pricing for these items but not equal to that given to the U.S. government, to enable the Republic of China to purchase sufficient quantities of these items for their defense needs.

Resolution No. 185: The American Legion's Cuban Policy
Origin: Mexico
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, The communist government of Cuba has ruined the Cuban economy, repressed the Cuban people, provided a base area for forces inimical to the United States, and committed aggression in many lands; and

WHEREAS, Following the demise of the Soviet Union and the liberation of Eastern Europe, Cuba has lost the sources of foreign subsidies that alone sustained its inefficient communist economy; and

WHEREAS, If the Free World remains firm in its rejection of communism in Cuba, many economic, social, and political indicators point to the likely collapse of the Castro dictatorship in Cuba; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the U. S. Government to continue to maintain control of Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, continue intelligence overflights over Cuba, remain firm in opposition to export of

revolution by Cuba, continue broadcasting true news and information to the Cuban people, and encourage the development of democracy and a free market economy in Cuba.

Resolution No. 187: Latin American Drug Interdiction Policy
Origin: Mexico
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, At the Cartagena Drug Summit in 1990 in Cartagena, Colombia called by then President Barco of Colombia, the United States and six Latin American nations (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela) agreed to a comprehensive plan of action to reduce the supply of illegal narcotics and the demand for them within the Western Hemisphere; and

WHEREAS, The Cartagena agreements, reaffirmed and expanded in the San Antonio Drug Summit in February, 1992, in San Antonio, Texas, called by then President Bush of the United States, encompass a vast array of weapons in the battle to stop the devastating traffic in illegal drugs including eradication, crop substitution, education, police training and economic assistance; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the U. S. Government Executive Branch to cooperate fully with Latin American nations to destroy the international traffic of illegal drugs and to provide appropriate economic assistance to aid in this vital endeavor; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the U. S. Congress to provide adequate funds to support this program.

Resolution No. 188: Central America's Democracy Promotion
Origin: Mexico
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, Over the past decade Central America has made great strides toward establishing democratic societies; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has taken a great interest in supporting democracy, development, and security in this area so close to our borders and strategically situated between the naval lifeline between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Panama Canal, and one of our major trading partners, Mexico; and

WHEREAS, In the light of the decreasing threat from subversion in Central America as well as budget restrictions in the United States, it is inevitable that U. S. aid to Central America must be reduced; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the U. S. government to continue economic aid to friendly, democratic Central American nations which are seeking to develop democratic societies with market economies; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion recommends the U. S. Government provide minimal amounts of military aid while urging nations in the Central American region to adopt the model of Costa Rica and Panama, disbanding military forces and relying solely on police forces for internal security, thus freeing funds for development and contributing to peaceful relations in the region.

Resolution No. 191: Social Security Survivor Benefits For Non-Resident Alien Spouses And Dependents
Origin: Mexico
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Foreign Relations

WHEREAS, From its inception The American Legion has been dedicated to guarding the well being of the surviving spouses of members and veterans of the armed services; and

WHEREAS, All Legionnaires pledge themselves to "devotion to mutual helpfulness"; and

WHEREAS, The survivors of veterans living in countries where appreciable numbers of U.S. military forces are based benefit from treaties and administrative agreements which are not applicable to other foreign domiciled "nonresident alien beneficiaries"; and

WHEREAS, Existing Public Law and administrative regulations of the Social Security Administration require Mexican and Central American nationals who claim survivor benefits to provide proof of physical presence inside the territory of the United States either:

a) 30 days every six months or

b) one day per month every month of the year,

but such physical presence may not be required of Social Security beneficiaries of other nationalities when residing outside the United States depending upon whether or not the Social Security Administration has entered into international agreements with the governments of those beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, Establishing a physical presence in the United States requires considerable expense and disruption of family life when a Mexican or Central American beneficiary lives anywhere except along the US-Mexico border; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), a bureau of DHS (formerly the "Immigration and Naturalization Service" or "INS") exercises the ability to legally deny entry to non-U.S. citizens even when such persons hold valid visas issued by the U.S. Department of State; and

WHEREAS, Since the events of September 11, 2001 the INS and USCIS have increased the level of its control of persons attempting to enter the United States; and

WHEREAS, The USCIS and INS have denied entrance into the United States by visa-holding surviving beneficiaries of veterans based solely upon their apparent lack of means of support even though they would have enjoyed a decorous level of income once they had met the physical presence requirements of the law; and

WHEREAS, The regulations implementing Public Law relating to Social Security Survivor Benefits are inherently unfair because they impose different conditions upon surviving spouses which may vary according to the location of that person's domicile; and

WHEREAS, Existing law allows an individual USCIS officer to be the arbitrator as to whether or not a potential recipient may enter the U.S. for the purpose of meeting the physical presence requirements of the Social Security legislation; and

WHEREAS, Proposed new Department of Homeland Security regulations would limit visitor visas to a period insufficient to establish physical presence under the requirements of the Social Security legislation; and

WHEREAS, Mexican and Guatemalan surviving spouses of American veterans have requested that The American Legion assist them in gaining relief from these unfair and country-specific regulations; and

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion petition The Social Security Administration's "Office of International Programs" to expedite the negotiation of international agreements with the governments of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama necessary to permit the rescission of the nonpayment provisions of Section 404.460 of the Social Security Act, thereby allowing the payment of survivors' benefits and any other legally accrued benefits to the non-resident alien spouses and children of U.S. veterans residing in the above named countries; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That such expedited negotiation apply only to the matter of survivor benefits payments and that other matters related to interests of the Social Security Administration not be included if such inclusion would delay the

realization of bilateral agreements relating to survivor benefits payments; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress establish uniform eligibility requirements applicable to all persons receiving Social Security Survivor Benefits and specifically that all foreign nationals receiving such benefits shall be subject to the same eligibility requirements regardless of the location of the recipient's domicile.

Referred to the Standing Commission on Foreign Relations

Resolution No. 186 (MX): U.S. Mexico Education Scholarship Program

Mr. Commander, as a Delegate to this Convention from the Department of Nebraska, I move the adoption of this entire report.

NATL VICE COMDR HALL: Do I hear a second?

...Second from the floor.

All in favor so indicate by the usual sign. Opposed? Commander, the report of the Foreign Relations Committee is adopted.

...At this time National Commander Bock resumed the Chair.

NATL COMDR BOCK: We have a special presentation. This is an incredibly large-hearted organization. I call Mr. John Wiemstahl, Jr., Lieutenant Colonel of the United States Air Force Auxiliary, retired from Old Town, Florida to the podium for a presentation. He's a Service Officer in the Department for the 3rd District.

The American Legacy Scholarship Fund has raised $175,000. Pretty good start for a couple of days work.

MR. WIEMSTAHL: On behalf of my Post No. 383, District 3, great state of Florida, I'm giving you my personal check for $5,000. One other thing. I challenge somebody else to come up and donate some more. It's a great cause here for The American Legion, and it just hurts for a couple seconds.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Thank you, John.

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

NATL VICE COMDR HALL: The Chair recognizes Clarence Hill of Florida, Chairman of the National Convention Committee on National Security for the purpose of making a report.

Report: Convention Committee on National Security
Clarence E. Hill, Florida, Chairman

At 9:00 a.m., Sunday, August 27, 2006, 243 delegates and alternates assigned to the Convention Committee on Security met initially in Ballroom F, Lower Level, of the Salt Palace Convention Center. 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. Mr. Clarence E. Hill (Florida) was elected Chairman and Paul Martel (Florida) was appointed Secretary.

General Security Ad Hoc
Nancy L. Carder, Illinois, Chairman
Kenneth E. Krizan, Iowa, Secretary
Conservation of Natural Resources
Donavon R. Mason, South Dakota, Chairman
Mary Lepley, Georgia, Secretary
Aerospace
Daniel M. Dellinger, Virginia, Chairman
Terry Huisman, Alaska, Secretary
Homeland Security and Defense

Civil Preparedness
Erwin Gus Williams, Connecticut, Chairman
Melvin L. Goslar, Iowa, Secretary
Law and Order
George W. Wehrli, Florida, Chairman
Dale Movius, Washington, Secretary
Merchant Marine
Charles Moreland, Florida, Chairman
Charles P. Powell, Jr., Virginia, Secretary
Military Affairs
Clayborn Lofton, Illinois, Chairman
Marie Rhyne, Virginia, Secretary
Naval Affairs
Gerard W. Cheffer, Ilinois, Chairman
William H. Lienhop, Georgia, Secretary

On Sunday afternoon, August 27, 2006, the delegates again assembled in Ballroom F, Lower Level, in the Salt Palace Convention Center for a final meeting of the Convention Committee on Security. Reports of all Convention Committees were read and their recommended actions on resolutions considered. A total of 69 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. The Convention committee authorized the Chairman and Secretary to sign the report of the Convention Committee on National Security on behalf of its delegates.

General Security Ad Hoc Committee
Nancy L. Carder , Illinois, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 81: National Security Principles
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Over two centuries ago, our distinguished forefathers wrote the Preamble to the Constitution which began with the words: "We the People" shall "provide for the common defense…" and by so doing, they established the principle that protecting our nation from hostile threats was the fundamental purpose of the Government of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion since its founding in 1919 has always supported a strong national defense which is reflected in its own Preamble to the Constitution, namely, "To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America," and "to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;" and

WHEREAS, Although the threat posed by the former Soviet Union is diminished, the United States is faced with a myriad of short and long term threats and challenges which are far more complex, perplexing and difficult to deal with than was the more predictable and unified threat posed by the former Soviet Union; and

WHEREAS, It is urged that the Department of Defense conduct a global posture review; and

WHEREAS, Although the two-war National Security Strategy has been amended, the Armed Forces are fighting the war on terrorism, maintaining homeland security and conducting peace enforcement operations with a reduced strength of 1.5 million and active military force structures composed of only 10 Army Divisions, 12 active Navy aircraft carriers and 13 Air Force fighter wing equivalents; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion upholds the following national security principles as fundamental to the best interests of the United States:

1. **The National Security Strategy needs to be reassessed so that missions and resources are more closely aligned.**

2. **The credibility of the United States in an unstable world needs to be maintained by retaining the requisite military capabilities. Such a strategy requires that the Armed Forces be more fully structured, equipped and budgeted to achieve this strategy. Active military end strengths should be increased to an absolute minimum of 1.6 million for the foreseeable future. At least twelve full-strength Army Divisions or 70 Brigade equivalents, 11 or 12 deployable Navy aircraft carrier battle groups, 3 Marine Corps Expeditionary Forces, and 13 or more active Air Force fighter wing equivalents should be retained as the minimum baseline foundation.**
3. **The National Guard and Reserves must be realistically manned, structured, equipped, trained, fully deployable and maintained at high readiness levels and not over-utilized in order to accomplish their increasing and indispensable missions and roles in our national defense.**
4. **Peacetime Selective Service registration should be retained so as to maintain our capability to rapidly reconstitute forces in the event of emergencies or war.**
5. **Force modernization for the Services needs to be realistically funded, and not further delayed, or the United States is likely to unnecessarily risk American lives in the years ahead. Production of airlift and sealift assets needs to be expedited.**
6. **The American people expect that whenever U.S. forces are committed, that they will be committed only when America's vital national interests are threatened and only as a last resort after all reasonable alternatives have been explored and tried.**
7. **Peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peace-making and humanitarian operations detract from our declining combat power and readiness and our capability to wage the sustained war on terrorism. Such operations should be limited, congressionally approved and separately appropriated on a case-by-case basis.**
8. **The honorable nature of military service should be upheld as it not only represents fulfillment of American patriotic obligation but is also a privilege and responsibility that embodies the highest form of service to the nation.**
9. **The United States Government must honor its obligations to all service members, veterans, military retirees and their families, and lasting compensations and incentives should be equitable.**
10. **Major incentives for military service to include an enhanced GI Bill for education and training, improved quality of life features, and a reduced operational tempo in order to recruit and retain a quality and fully-manned force which is professionally-led.**
11. **Urge the United States Government to retain the necessary deployed forces worldwide to accomplish both short term as well as long term commitments and contingencies.**

Resolution No. 83: Foreign Investments In The American Defense Industry
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, In this era of changing technology, the United States must maintain ownership and control of critical defense industries so that U. S. technological secrets can be protected and adequate production facilities can be maintained to meet any national emergency; and

WHEREAS, The generally declining strength of the dollar and the downsizing of our industrial base in the 1990s have made it very lucrative for foreign entities to purchase U.S. firms, including those involved in national defense production; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, three of the largest 36 foreign business investments in the United States were manufacturers of electronics and semiconductors, both of which are areas of vital importance to maintaining U. S. national security; and

WHEREAS, The Administration's waiver of sales of space satellite technology to the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) as well as proposed sales of supercomputers and aerospace technology to that potential adversary needs to be thoroughly investigated; and

WHEREAS, Some Allies of the United States, which lease or purchase U. S. advanced technology, may transfer or resell to actual or potential enemies of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Such proposed actual sales threaten the security of sensitive U. S. military technologies and U. S. technological superiority; and

WHEREAS, The alleged theft of unclassified nuclear information at the White Sands Laboratories could endanger the national security of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the U. S. Government to ensure that foreign entities are not permitted to own critical industries, especially those involved in producing defense items; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion opposes the transfer and sales of sensitive technologies which may endanger our national security and economic interests; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Congress to thoroughly investigate the sales of aerospace and satellite technology to the PRC, or any actual or potential adversary of the United States, which could seriously jeopardize national security interests of the U. S. and her allies.

Resolution No. 84: Rebuilding America's Defense Industrial Base
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Past defense budget share included limited funding for technological research and development which resulted in a production shortfall in a time of national emergency; and

WHEREAS, Developing new technologies for the Armed Forces can be hindered by budget shortfalls despite the fact that the U. S. is currently the world leader in development of new technology, thereby disrupting materiel development vital to national security; and

WHEREAS, Much of our defense industrial base, including weapons production and revitalization of the ship-building industry, has been eroded by plant closures and layoffs; and

WHEREAS, The United States fighting forces must be equipped with state-of-the-art technological advances such as armored Humvees to assure their capability to win on the modern battlefield, whether on land, sea, or in the air; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the Administration and the Congress to rebuild America's industrial base by continuing to adequately fund research, development and acquisition budgets to assure that our military production can meet national requirements especially when U. S. military power is committed.

Resolution No. 85: Support For The American Battle Monuments Commission
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

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 Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, 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. 86: Combating Cyberspace Threats
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The security of the United States is being challenged increasingly by non-traditional threats which may extend the fields of battle and terrorism to computer cyberspace and in which inexpensive nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, including disease as a weapon of war, may be employed; and

WHEREAS, The President of the United States unveiled the formation of a comprehensive and integrated system of federal agencies, including the Armed Forces, law enforcement, intelligence and public health, to detect, deter and defend against cyberspace threats to critical government and private infrastructures; and

WHEREAS, The President also has appointed a National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counterterrorism; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the Congress to appropriate the necessary funding and resources to combat the continuing cyberspace and other threats to the United States in the 21st Century; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion also urges the American public to be vigilant of cyberspace attacks, and that all efforts be made to detect, deter and defend against the threats of cyber warfare, and to prosecute violators to the fullest extent of the law.

Resolution No. 87: Ensure A Strong National Defense
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the United States faces a myriad of worldwide diverse and difficult threats and challenges to include the War on Terrorism and Homeland Security and 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. During the War on Terrorism, the United States must continue to be 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 serious 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 and the current 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 has increasingly responded to terrorist attacks and worldwide regional and ethnic disputes, while previously reducing its military forces and defense budgets and reprogramming budgetary resources for domestic programs; and

WHEREAS, Defense economists have 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; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah on August 29, 30, 31, 2006, 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 defense budgets which call for enhanced military quality of life features for the Active and Reserve Components and closing the pay gap with the private sector, an improved Tricare military healthcare system, improved benefits under the Reserve Montgomery G.I. Bill and reducing the operations tempo.**
- **Defense spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product needs to be maintained at about five percent annually during time of war and about four percent during time of peace.**
- **Defense and supplemental budgets must continue to cover the escalating costs of the War on Terrorism.**
- **The mismatch between resources and ever-increasing military peace enforcement missions or humanitarian mission 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 further**

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.

Resolution No. 88: Uniformed Services University Of The Health Sciences
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion has supported the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS), since its establishment in 1972 as the Nation's Federal Academic Health Center dedicated to providing uniquely educated and trained uniformed officers for the United States Army, Navy, Air Force and the Public Health Service; USUHS alumni are currently serving over 20-year careers and thus providing continuity and leadership for the Military Health System (MHS) as physicians, advanced practice nurses, and scientists; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense (DoD) and the United States Congress have recognized that the extensive military-unique and preventive health care training provided in the multi-Service environment of USUHS ensures Medical Readiness and

Force Health Protection for the MHS; USUHS is recognized as the place where students receive thorough preparation to deal with the medical aspects of chemical, radiological and biological (CBRNE) terrorism or catastrophe; USUHS announced the release of the first phase of its CBRNE/WMD Collaborative Medical Readiness Training Initiative in April of 2006; this tuition-free training and relevant information, which offers continuing education credit, is available via the Internet at: http://opep.usuhs.edu and provides quality training on the response to a radiological dispersal device ("dirty bomb"); USUHS is also uniquely qualified and experienced in simulation technology, education and training; and the USUHS Graduate School of Nursing provides critical military and public nursing workforce education; and

WHEREAS, USUHS, recognized by DoD as the Academic Health Center for the MHS, has graduated 3,916 uniformed physician officers who represent approximately one- quarter of the total physicians on active duty in the Armed Forces; the current Secretary of Defense refers to the USUHS alumni as the backbone of the Military Health System; in addition, the USUHS Graduate School of Nursing has conferred 265 Masters of Science in Nursing Degrees to uniformed, critically required advanced practice nurses during the current Nation-wide nursing shortage; and, the University has conferred 943 Master and Doctoral Degrees through its Graduate Education Programs in essential areas requested by the MHS; and

WHEREAS, USUHS is scheduled to begin construction in 2006 of a new Academic Program Center providing much needed classroom space, distance learning capability and a home for the Graduate School of Nursing, the first new construction in over 25 years; and

WHEREAS, with the establishment by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD of a Joint Medical Command in Fiscal Year 2008 with plans to establish the WRNNMC by 2011 and the close collaboration between the Flags and the President of USUHS to create a world class military academic health center, expanding the role of USU; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah on August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the Congress to: continue its demonstrated commitment to USUHS, as a national asset, for the continued provision of uniquely educated and trained uniformed physicians, advanced practice nurses, and scientists dedicated to careers of service in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the United States Public Health Service; support timely construction at the USUHS campus during Fiscal Year 2006-2007; continue funding the University's collaborative effort for sharing its CBRNE expertise and training; support development of the USUHS Immersive, Wide Area Virtual Environment (WAVE) Simulation for CBRNE/WMD Medical Readiness Training; support funding for the Graduate School of Nursing Teaching/Educational Programs and, encourage continued close collaboration and progress towards the OSD-proposed Joint Medical Command, the WRNNMC with USUHS as the core academic health center.

Resolution No. 89: Buy American
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of veterans which pledges to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense contracts with large corporations for the construction and repair of military hardware to include ground systems, armament, aircraft and other systems for all of our military branches; and

WHEREAS, These large corporations must rely on subcontractors for the production of, and overhaul, of individual components and subsystems to be used in the construction of these pieces if equipment; and

WHEREAS, The corporation constructing a system or systems may choose to enlist

the services of subcontractors located in foreign countries over those which have comparable equipment and comparable costs; and

WHEREAS, The choices made by the corporation not only can affect the security of our Nation as well as the employment of many Americans and veterans who may work at these subcontractors at both the originating and overhaul facilities located in the United States; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges Congress to require government contractors to utilize American-made components and subsystems in construction of their equipment over those made by foreign subcontractors for use by the United States military services to ensure the defense of the country as well as the continued employment of Americans and veterans at subcontractor facilities.

Resolution No. 90: National Missile Defense System
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty of 1972 between the United States and the Soviet Union had placed a cap on deploying missile defense systems and limited more advanced research on such defensive systems; and

WHEREAS, The Bush administration in January 2002 had given Russia and our allies the required six-months notice of U.S. intent to withdraw from the 1972 ABM Treaty and did so this past June; and

WHEREAS, Work on the underground silos for the first missile interceptors in Alaska began in June 2002 which reflected the urgency to begin moving on a missile defense system; and

WHEREAS, As unreliable, hostile nations such as North Korea and Iran seem determined to acquire the capability to deliver a nuclear strike over long distances, including striking the continental United States, the need for a national missile defense as an essential ingredient of our Homeland Security for the continental United States has become as urgent as ever; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the United States Government to develop and continue to deploy a national missile defense system which is in the national interest of the United States and the American people and an essential ingredient of our Homeland Security.

Resolution No. 91: The Armed Forces Retirement Homes
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home (USSAH) and the United States Naval Home (USNH), jointly called the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH), are continuing care facilities which were created more than 150 years ago to offer retirement homes for distinguished veterans who had served as soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines in our Nation's conflicts; and

WHEREAS, The AFRH system, which is available to retiree veterans from all the Armed Services whose active duty was at least 50 percent enlisted or warrant officer, has been supported by a trust fund resourced by 50 cents a month withheld from active duty enlisted and warrant officer paychecks as well as from fines and forfeitures from disciplinary actions, resident fees and interest income; and

WHEREAS, The extensive downsizing of the Armed Forces has resulted in a 39 percent decrease in revenue and, coupled with rising nursing home care costs, the Homes have been operating at a $8-10 million annual deficit which would reportedly require both Homes to close their doors; and

WHEREAS, The Congress has authorized the Department of Defense to raise

servicemembers' assessments from 50 cents to $1.00 per month which has yet to be exercised; and such an increase could raise revenues by about $7.5 million annually; and

WHEREAS, Even if these potential sources of income reach fruition, they will not likely provide the permanent, long-term funding which is vital to assure the solvency and viability of the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home and the U.S. Naval Home; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the Congress to support and fund those measures, to include annual Congressional appropriations, which will provide for the long-term solvency and viability of the United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home and the reconstruction of the United States Naval Home.

Resolution No. 92: Transformation Of The Armed Forces
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The current national security strategy, contained within the Quadrennial Defense Review, establishes a new strategy for American's defense that would embrace uncertainty and is premised on the idea that to be effective abroad, America must be safe at home; and

WHEREAS, A central objective of the strategy is to shift the basis of defense planning from a "threat-based" model to a "capabilities-based" model for the future; and

WHEREAS, The strategy requires adapting existing military capabilities to new threats and circumstances, while experimenting with the development of new capabilities or the transformation of U.S. forces, capabilities and institutions to extend America's asymmetric advantages well into the future; and

WHEREAS, Transforming America's defense for the 21st Century will require a long-standing commitment from our Country and its leaders, but the challenges are here and now: They include protecting our critical bases of operation, including the U.S. homeland, and projecting and sustaining U.S. forces in distant environments as well as preemptive actions to confront threats before they emerge; and

WHEREAS, Transformation includes assuring our information systems and providing persistent surveillance, tracking and rapid engagement of adversarial forces by U.S. and allied joint operations; and

WHEREAS, Over time, the promise of transformation will be realized as resources translate into new concepts, capabilities and organizations that maximize our warfighting effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2002, confirmed the Government's strategic direction as well as the soundness of such planning principles to include its emphasis on homeland defense, on offensive action against global terrorism, on surprise, on preparing for asymmetric threats like terrorism, on developing new concepts of deterrence, and the need to balance the different dimensions of risk; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge the United States Government and our Armed Forces, as we contend with the difficult challenges of the war on terrorism, to continue to proceed on the path of transforming America's armed forces into a modern force capable of providing for the security of all Americans, strengthening and expanding military capabilities, and in honoring America's commitments worldwide as well as on the home front.

Resolution No. 93: Support And Appreciation For The Armed Forces And Their Families
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The United States Armed Forces and allied forces are performing their missions with great courage and distinction in carrying out air, land and sea attacks against Iraqi military targets; and

WHEREAS, The ability of the Armed Forces to successfully perform their mission requires the support of their nation, community and families; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion commends and expresses the unequivocal support and appreciation of the Legionnaires here assembled, to the members of the United States Armed Forces who are carrying out their missions with excellence, patriotism, and bravery; and to the families of the United States military personnel who are providing support and prayers for their loved ones currently engaged in military operations.

Rejected

Resolution No. 282 (AR): Support for National High Speed Railway Networks

Conservation of Natural Resources
Donavon R. Mason, South Dakota, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 9: Domestic Energy And Production
Origin: Utah
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The United States' continued reliance on foreign sources of energy places our national security and economic well-being as a nation at risk during times of crisis; and

WHEREAS, The United States continues to import approximately 50 to 60 percent or more of its oil while its domestic production continues to drop to its lowest levels in over 24 years, thus further compounding our foreign trade deficit at a time when our energy demands continue unabated; and

WHEREAS, The war on terrorism and the continuing conflict in the volatile Middle East has brought into sharp focus the heavy reliance of the United States on imported foreign oil which necessitates a re-evaluation of our current and long-range energy policies; and

WHEREAS, Like our domestic oil and gas resources, nuclear energy is a safe resource where price and supply are not subject to manipulation by foreign countries; and nuclear energy is our second-largest source of electricity in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Congress has denied petroleum exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Region even though such exploration could have reduced our reliance on foreign sources of energy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion National Office urge the Congress and the administration to pursue further development of domestic sources of energy to include:

1. **Increasing U.S. petroleum exploration and production in an environmentally sensible manner so as to reduce America's reliance on foreign petroleum.**
2. **Building new nuclear energy plants and renovating America's electrical grid.**
3. **Implementing domestic oil and gas exploration.**
4. **Development and implementation of sources to separate and recycle domestic recyclable materials thus reserving our natural resources for future generations.**
5. **That the provisions of the Energy Act of 1992 be fully implemented and carried out as mandated by the Act; and**

6. That conservation of energy and natural resources be more actively pursued in the American private and public sectors.

Resolution No. 11: Recycling Spent Nuclear Fuel Rods
Origin: Utah
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Our national nuclear power plants are running out of space to store used nuclear fuel rods when nuclear power plants in the United States will need to increase their record breaking production of billions of kilowatt hours of electrical power to fill the increasing needs of a growing population; and

WHEREAS, Due to increasing air environmental population standards coal fired plants are under heavy regulation along with shortage of natural gas supplies for those generation facilities; and

WHEREAS, Our nations climbing rate of dependence for foreign import of oil and gas continues to grow compounded by an overwhelming balance of trade deficit with foreign producers; and

WHEREAS, Presently there are a number of nations in the would that are expanding their nuclear power with programs in place to research and implement spent fuel rod recycling for an additional energy source helping to alleviate some of the problems of long term spent fuel rod storage; and

WHEREAS, Domestic nuclear power plants will continue to produce an increasing number of unwanted used fuel rods that no state or territory wants to accept including the Yucca Mountain Storage Center along with Utah's Desert area, both option only move the problem, not solve it; and

WHEREAS, Technology for spent nuclear fuel rods has existed since the 1960s to reprocess an additional energy source for spent fuel rods but congress and Department of Energy has not made research a top priority in the past; and

WHEREAS, In a news release November 11, 2005 President Bush stated we should move toward recycling, not burying spent nuclear fuel rods, that congress tentatively agreed to approve 50 million dollars on recycling initiatives in 2006; and

WHEREAS, Fifty million dollars is a first step but under present world energy problems congress should make spent fuel rods, other energy development, and conservation a top priority to help alleviate Americans reliance on foreign supplies of energy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion petition the President and Congress to provide adequate funding without delay to implement comprehensive scientific research and engineering programs for recycling spent nuclear fuel rods to produce an additional energy source to help solve some of America's energy needs and also resulting in the reduction of the persistent long term storage problems of nuclear waste.

Resolution No. 13: Alternative Energy Resources
Origin: Utah
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The need for development of alternate sources of energy is critical and vital to America's maintaining competitive advantage in the world economy; and

WHEREAS, Our growing dependence on foreign oil adversely affects the United States and world economics as was discovered during the oil embargo in 1973 and interruption in the supply of foreign oil during the years of conflict between Iran and Iraq; and

WHEREAS, The United States has the opportunity to take the initiation and lead in developing new and alternate sources of energy; and

WHEREAS, There is a growing need for creating new employment for the American people and developing new skills especially for our veteran population, as well

as for removing the dangers now attendant to continued use of nuclear power by development of further safeguards; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the Congress and our industrial complexes that it favors legislation or plans for funding research and development of all alternative sources of energy including the utilization of our coal reserves and our vast supply of natural gas and/or methanol and ethanol as well as nuclear energy so as to ensure that our Nation will never be an economic hostage; and we can always meet the ever growing competition of Japan and other Far Eastern industrial complexes and the European Common Market; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That our Federal Government be strongly encouraged to substantially expand its incentive to industry, either through tax incentives or through research and development grants, in a greatly expanded effort to develop and use alternative energy resources, including substitute power and heating supplies.

Resolution No. 18: Energy Conservation
Origin: Utah
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, War and conflict in the Middle East coupled with the rising world oil prices are giving rise to renewed domestic oil and gas exploration; and

WHEREAS, Despite these noted concerns, excessively high energy consumption continues unabated in the United States; and

WHEREAS, It is in our national interests to develop and utilize diversified alternate sources of energy so to conserve our primary source of energy and to minimize any potential disruption of energy sources targeted by terrorist attacks on our Homeland Security; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge the Administration and the Congress to encourage energy conservation by accomplishing the following, as an example:

1. **Continuing to require the production of fuel efficient automobiles**
2. **Continuing to encourage through tax incentives better insulation in new homes and other building and upgrading insulation in existing structures**
3. **Maintaining and expanding mass transit systems**
4. **Encouraging research, along with greater practical usages, of solar and nuclear energy**
5. **Encouraging the continued development and usage of efficient, cost beneficial, coal gasification and liquefactions process**
6. **Expand research and possible development of new technology to find possible uses in the energy consumption field.**

Resolution No. 19: Nuclear Energy And Nuclear Waste
Origin: Utah
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Nuclear energy has contributed greatly to U.S. energy independence, having displaced over 4.6 billion barrels of oil and saved over $145 billion in oil payments since the 1973 Arab oil embargo; and

WHEREAS, Oil imports remain the single largest contributor to the U.S. trade deficit; and

WHEREAS, The United States must have a secure reliable supply of energy to fuel our economy and to protect our national security; and

WHEREAS, A growing supply of electricity is essential to U.S. economic growth, U.S. industry and the general well-being of the American people; and

WHEREAS, With a moderately growing economy, the U.S. will still need about 200,00 megawatts of new generating electrical capacity by 2010; and

WHEREAS, The virtues of using a diversity of energy sources including nuclear energy, to produce our electricity are well-recognized; and

WHEREAS, Nuclear energy is our second largest source of electricity providing 20 percent of our electricity supply safely, reliably and without damage to the environment; and

WHEREAS, The nuclear power plants operating in the United States continue their record-breaking electricity production performance by generating billions of kilowatt-hours of electricity; and

WHEREAS, The National Energy Policy Act of 1992 calls for new, safer, plant design and standardization, as well as Nuclear Regulatory Commission certification, continued studies of proposed sites, and modernized licensing procedures; and

WHEREAS, Over $14 billion has been committed to the Nuclear Waste Fund, and DOE has indicated it is unwilling to accept used fuel until at least 2010, and perhaps as late as 2015; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Court of Appeals has ruled that the federal government has a legal responsibility to take used fuel from the nation's commercial reactors; and

WHEREAS, Nuclear power plants are running out of space to store used fuel and at least 27 of the nation's 109 nuclear power plants will run out of on-site storage space. By 2010, 80 nuclear plants will have no space to store fuel; and

WHEREAS, Re-licensing of nuclear power plants is subject to a rigorous program of Nuclear Regulatory Commission oversight, inspection, preventive, and corrective maintenance and extensive equipment testing ensuring required safety safeguards are met; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion calls on the President and Congress to compel the Department of Energy to comply with the requirements of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act by establishing a process to develop an integrated used fuel management system and find sites for interim, centralized storage; making timely progress in the characterization of any proposed repository sites at various locations; and increasing funding to allow critical science and engineering studies to proceed on schedule; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the local government directly affected by interim storage and/or permanent disposal should be involved in planning and receiving appropriate benefits from such facilities.

Aerospace Committee
Daniel M. Dellinger, Virginia, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 70: Support For The United States Air Force
Origin: Virginia
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, People are the United States Air Force's top priority: the Air Force is the world's premier aerospace force because its great people-active-duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian-continue to serve selflessly as a total force under increasingly difficult circumstances, and in order to grow the force, recruiting and retention are among its highest priorities; to continue attracting and retaining dedicated men and women, the Air Force recognizes that it must continue its efforts to improve pay, benefits, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, In the past four years, America's Air Force has accelerated its post-Cold War high operations tempo despite a 40 percent force size reduction since 1986; and to maintain this pace while minimizing the adverse impact on its people,

equipment, and infrastructure, the Air Force; and

WHEREAS, To meet the challenges of adversaries at home and abroad, Air Force strategy calls for a capabilities-based approach to defense planning; this enables the Service to answer a broad range of challenges posed by potential adversaries, while also developing the capabilities it needs for the future; and

WHEREAS, In assessing existing and potential adversaries' capabilities against our own, the Air Force is developing Task Forces for a variety of mission requirements, from strategic response to homeland security: For example, Global Strike, Task Force, which describes how we will operate in an anti-access scenario, is the next step in the journey to fully achieve Air Force missions, while also opening doors to adaptive and innovative operational plans, and relevant organization structure; and

WHEREAS, Continued investment in the core competencies of aerospace power-aerospace superiority, global attack, precision engagement, information superiority, rapid global mobility, and agile combat support-will continue to be the key to preserving the Air Force's ability to respond to threats to America's national security whenever and wherever they occur; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006 That The American Legion urge the Congress to appropriately support the United States Air Force's commitment to attract, retain, and train quality people and to mold them into an expeditionary aerospace force capable of flexibly responding to threats to America's national security; to enhance readiness through its continued focus on total force integration and the integration of air and space systems; and to build and implement a transformation and modernization program that will maintain America's dominance in air and space well into the 21st Century.

Resolution No. 71: Funding National Aeronautics And Space Administration Budgets

Origin: Virginia

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, In the pioneering days of aviation, this nation recognized the important values for aeronautics research. Therefore Congress established the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA the predecessor to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration NASA), with follow-on investment in national aeronautics research laboratories and wind tunnels, which amounts to billions of dollars since 1915. The result was that every US aircraft used NASA technology; and

WHEREAS, The aeronautic advances we currently enjoy have provided this nation with leading edge technology, world leadership and air superiority in the civil and military arena, some of which has taken 10 to 20 years of extensive research. Now the Nation's aeronautics research programs are in serious decline and NASA aeronautics research appropriations have declined about 45% since FY 1994. The proposed FY07 budget request further reduces to approximately a mere $724 million out of the agency's $16.7 plus billion; and

WHEREAS, The September 11 terrorist attacks resulted in a complete shutdown of the US air transportation system for several days. The impact emphasizes just how dependent we all are on air transportation. Air travel has now returned to pre9/11 levels, and the capacity of our air transportation system is again approaching its maximum capability. Continued U.S. economic growth is dependant on further expansion of air transportation system which requires further investments and aeronautical research. In addition, the stunning success of air power in Afghanistan and Iraq is the result of research performed a decade or more ago and reminds us that continued emphasis on military aviation R&T is essential to future US air superiority; and

WHEREAS, NASA's top priority, the space exploration initiative (SEI), threatens to consume even larger portions of the agency's budget with potentially disastrous consequences for the aeronautics research program. A recently published National

Research Council (NRC) report, "Decadal Survey of Civil Aeronautics: Foundation for the Future", re-emphasizes the importance of aeronautics research to the nation and recommends 51 high-priority R&T challenges. Unfortunately, at current budget levels, NASA will not be able to develop these technologies to a sufficient level of technical maturity to hand them off to U.S. industry ready for commercial application; and

WHEREAS, In civil air, less than 10 years ago Boeing and McDonnell Douglas had more than 70% of the world market. Europe's AirBus now has more than 50% and is focused on 60-70% with a goal of total domination of global aeronautics. This Nation needs to awaken to the fact that competitive nations have recognized the importance of aeronautics for economic and technology reasons and have built new wind tunnels and have greatly expanded their research; and

WHEREAS, Critics who view aeronautics research as "corporate welfare" do not recognize the long-lead-time research and technology advances vs. market realities or the national stake (economy, jobs, trade, balance, prestige) in this technology. NASA's aeronautics laboratories have the research facilities, including wind tunnels and technical expertise to conduct the cutting-edge scientific inquiry need to advance the state-of-the-art military and civil aircraft. In addition, much of the research is directed toward issues of protecting the environment, maintaining safety and security, and expanding the national airspace system, which are all govemment responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, In April 2005, the National Institute of Aerospace issued its report "Responding to the Call: Aviation Plan for American Leadership". The report was developed by over 250 of the nation's top engineers from industry and academia at the request of Congress. It defines the most important technical need and provides specific program goals, milestones, and budget recommendations required to meet these needs. It is important for Congress to act now to ensure that the essential first steps are taken to implement these recommendations. NASA must be directed to develop a national program plan to realize the technologies needed to achieve these goals; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the Congress to restore full funding to the NASA budget and mandate an amount equal to ten percent of NASA's budget for aeronautics research programs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress direct NASA to achieve the national aeronautics-related outcome goals and 51 challenges announced in the recent NIA and NRC reports, and that Congress mandate that all military aircraft research, engineering and development be performed within the boundaries of this Nation while upgrading research facilities of this Nation and encouraging civil-aero testing within these facilities; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That with the decline of the United States global commercial aircraft market of 90% to below 50%, the aging of our military aircraft, and the increased investment by other countries in aeronautics, that the NASA aeronautics budget be fully restored to 1994-1995 funding levels to meet the challenges of the 21st Century in military and civil aeronautics and NASA commit 10% of budget directly to aeronautics; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion shall employ maximum effort to make this Nation and the Congress rectify the serious decline in aeronautics research which is critical to the Nation's continued world leadership prosperity and military superiority.

Resolution No. 72: Supporting The National Space Program
Origin: Virginia
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The national security, technology and economic welfare of the United States are of paramount importance to the people of America; and

WHEREAS, U.S. progress in aerospace research has had a profound impact on our Nation's quality of life and its economic, social, environmental and political institution and made possible communication on a global scale; and

WHEREAS, The dissemination and use of space systems technology, the research programs on which it is based, and the spin-off products, techniques and services derived from the U.S. space program are vital components of the nation's economy and the well-being of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. space program has kept the nation on the leading edge of the technology frontier, has created jobs, improved communications, electronics, material, diagnosis and treatment of medical care for veterans and all Americans, fostered new scholastic interest in space science, provided insight into the evolution of the universe and current state of the earth, its environment and its solar system, and has provided visions and objectives for the future for business, industry and academia and the nation's youth; and

WHEREAS, In view of changes in domestic and international priorities in the areas of geopolitics, foreign policy, national security, economics and science, affirmation of new long range and lasting objectives are required for the manned and unmanned U.S. national security, civil and commercial space programs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the Congress to adopt the following objectives with regard to the National Space Program:

1. Full funding support for the president's Space Exploration Initiative (SEI) including NASA's other important roles in aeronautics research and science; and

2. A balanced NASA program that maintains U.S. preeminence in science and aeronautical technologies as a high priority while returning to the Moon and exploring Mars. Aeronautics research and science should not be sacrificed in order to meet an arbitrary date for return to the Moon; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes that as we move into the 21st century, we must continue to support science, aeronautics research and venture beyond and into the promises of space.

Resolution No. 73: Aeronautical And Space Exploration
Origin: Virginia
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The United States has been the world leader in aeronautics for almost 90 years, since the creation of the Nation's first aeronautical research laboratories; and

WHEREAS, The United States has become the global pacesetter in military and commercial aircraft and space technology through long-range research and development; and

WHEREAS, U.S. progress in aviation and space research has had a profound impact on our Nation's quality of life and its economic social and political institutions; and

WHEREAS, U.S. advancements in aeronautics and space technology have made all areas of our earth more accessible and made possible communication on a global scale; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has committed itself to the advancement of aeronautics and space exploration and the necessary research, engineering and development to propagate these technologies by creating within the National Security Commission an Aerospace Committee; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion deems it imperative that the United States, in the face of increasing competition, maintain its hard won status as the world leader in aeronautics and aircraft production and in

space exploration and research. To realize this goal, we urge the Congress to provide:

1. **Adequate funding for the nation's civilian and military aerospace research and development programs to maintain U.S. technological leadership.**
2. **Adequate funding to build, upgrade and enhance the nation's civilian and military aerospace research facilities and wind tunnels.**
3. **A renewed national commitment to education involving academia in aeronautical and aerospace engineering research and technologies insuring a state of the art educated work force.**
4. **Overwatch and investigating functions and related activities with respect to the transfer of American aerospace technology abroad; and, be it finally**

RESOLVED, That the Nation must sustain its commitment to aerospace engineering research and development if it is to maintain its role as the world leader as we move into the next century.

Homeland Security and Civil Preparedness Committee
Erwin Gus Williams, Connecticut, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 94: Funding Homeland Security
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on American soil have made Americans painfully aware of their vulnerability to violence from international terrorism; and

WHEREAS, These terrorists were able to carry out their attacks because previous emphasis by the U.S. Government on homeland security and intelligence collection, while improving over recent years, had been inadequate and incapable of preventing such attacks; and

WHEREAS, The National Defense Authorization Act of 2003 established the new Department of Homeland Security as well as a new cabinet position designed to be the single source of authority, at the highest levels, for all homeland defense programs and policies; and

WHEREAS, Although the Congress has appropriated funding for the Department of Homeland Security and its numerous agencies and functions, appropriations continue to be required to fund homeland security tasks and functions at regional, state and local levels across the Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the Congress to fully fund the Department of Homeland Security so as to harmonize the many agencies and offices with Homeland Security responsibilities into a viable and credible deterrent to those who seek to inflict violence on the United States and the American people; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Congress also fully fund those homeland security tasks and functions being performed at regional, state and local levels.

Resolution No. 95: Support For Homeland Security And The War On Terrorism
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on American soil have made Americans painfully aware of their vulnerability to violence from international terrorism; and

WHEREAS, These terrorists were able to carry out their attacks because emphasis by the U.S. Government on homeland security and intelligence collection, while

improving over recent years, have been inadequate and incapable of preventing such attacks; and

WHEREAS, The multiple federal and local government agencies responsible for safeguarding the United States homeland are disjointed, have had multiple chains-of-command, inadequate communications links and were incapable of effective coordination; and

WHEREAS, On September 20, 2001, President Bush announced the establishment of the Office of Homeland Security, a new cabinet position designed to be the single source of authority, at the highest levels, for all homeland defense programs and policies; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion supports the War on Terrorism and the Department of Homeland Security and urges the United States Government to make the security of the United States the top national priority; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Congress to arm the Department of Homeland Security with the legal powers and fiduciary tools to harmonize the many agencies and offices with Homeland Security responsibilities into a viable and credible deterrent to those who seek to inflict violence on the United States and the American people; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That our national intelligence agencies be fully funded and that their efforts and data collection be expanded and coordinated; and that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) be more effectively organized, and the Armed Forces be authorized a more prominent and immediate role in responding to major natural and manmade disasters.

Resolution No. 96: Support For The Non-Federal Roles Of The National Guard
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Members of the National Guard swear dual allegiance to support and defend the United States as well as the individual states in which Guardsmen reside and serve; and

WHEREAS, In the history of our country, activated National Guard units have served with distinction in all of our Nation's wars, and in combination with Reserve units, composed 50 percent of the total United States' forces deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, National Guard units also perform such invaluable non-federal roles as quelling domestic civil disturbances to include, for example, the employment of Guardsmen in the Los Angeles rioting; providing relief assistance in man-made or natural disasters as in Hurricane Hugo, the California earthquakes and the Mississippi River floods; as well as civil defense and drug interdiction functions, and other vital missions as determined by state authorities; and

WHEREAS, National Guard units are often the first relief or rescue forces to provide immediate on-scene response in the event of such emergencies; and

WHEREAS, Past rioting and looting on the order of that in Los Angeles and the reoccurrence of large scale natural and man-made disasters could be repeated across the country requiring the immediate intervention of military units to supplement and assist state and local authorities and our citizenry; and

WHEREAS, With the extended deployment of National Guard units, and their increasing employment in numerous overseas missions, their participation in these traditional non-federal roles may be severely limited or even eliminated in some cases; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the Congress to retain National Guard units at reasonable readiness levels so that in

addition to their active duty missions they may continue to provide civil disturbance and natural and man-made disaster assistance; perform civil defense and drug interdictions functions as well as other essential state or federal roles as required to include border security.

Resolution No. 97: The American Legion Role In Homeland Security
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Since before September 11, 2001, our Nation has been at risk to the new and changing invisible threat of terrorism launched from abroad; the United States, even during the War on Terrorism, has no more important mission than protecting the homeland and her citizens from future terrorism; and

WHEREAS, The National Strategy for Homeland Security aligns and focuses homeland security functions into six critical mission areas, namely, intelligence and warning; border and transportation security; domestic counterterrorisms; protecting critical infrastructure; defending against catastrophic terrorism; and emergency preparedness and response; and

WHEREAS, The responsibility for providing homeland security is shared between federal, state and local governments, and the private sector; many homeland security activities, such as intelligence gathering and border security, are properly accomplished at the federal level: In other circumstances, like first responder capabilities, it is more appropriate for state and local governments to handle these responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, After the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, Presidential and Congressional budgets identified four priority areas for additional resources and they included: Support first responders, defend against bioterrorism, secure America's borders and to use 21st century technology to secure the homeland; and

WHEREAS, Although there are Homeland Security appropriations committees in the United States Congress, there are no Homeland Security authorizing committees; and

WHEREAS, According to the Council for Excellence in Government, the greatest resource the United States has for enhancing homeland security-which has been largely untapped thus far-is the American people; and

WHEREAS, Polls have indicated that over 62 percent of Americans say they would be willing to spend time volunteering with homeland security planning, training and practicing drills in their communities, yet some 84 percent of Americans and first responders polled admitted to low awareness of federal, state and local emergency preparedness plans; and

WHEREAS, As former members of the Armed Forces trained in vigilance and security, who would be more qualified citizens than veterans to assist in many homeland security activities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah on August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges its Legionnaires, Posts and Departments to assist in Homeland Security efforts in communities for example, by developing emergency kits and plans; by remaining informed and assisting families, schools, workplaces and communities in developing emergency plans and checklists; by reporting suspicious activity, or working with local councils of the Citizen Corps or community-based organizations; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Congressional leadership authorize the formation of Homeland Security authorizing committees to facilitate the Homeland Security budgeting process.

Resolution No. 98: The Citizen Corps
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion is composed of grassroots Posts across the Country which have had experience in community civil preparedness; and

WHEREAS, In his 2002 State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush announced the creation of the USA Freedom Corps, which is an effort to foster a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility through volunteerism; and

WHEREAS, Citizen Corps, a component of USA Freedom Corps, is a locally-driven initiative to have every American become an active participant in preventing, preparing for, and responding to crime, natural disasters and other emergencies; and

WHEREAS, The Citizen Corps Affiliate Program expands the resources and materials available to states and local communities by partnering with Programs and Organizations that offer resources for public education, outreach, and training; represent volunteers interested in helping to make their community safer; or offer volunteer service opportunities to support first responders, disaster relief activities, and community safety efforts; and

WHEREAS, Citizen Corps Affiliates Program support Citizen Corps Council activities by helping to establish training and information delivery systems for neighborhoods, schools, and businesses, and by helping with family preparedness and crime prevention initiatives in a community or across a region; and

WHEREAS, The programs of Citizen Corps are jointly managed by the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice and Department of Health and Human Services; and

WHEREAS, Citizen Corps Councils help drive local citizen participation by coordinating Citizen Corps programs, developing community action plans, assessing possible threats and identifying local resources; and

WHEREAS, The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. Using their training; and

WHEREAS, The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Program strengthens communities by helping medical, public health and other volunteers offer their expertise throughout the year as well as during local emergencies and other times of community need; and

WHEREAS, An expanded Neighborhood Watch Program (NWP) Program incorporates terrorism awareness education into its existing crime prevention mission, while also serving as a way to bring residents together to focus on emergency preparedness and emergency response training; and

WHEREAS, Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) Program works to enhance the capacity of state and local law enforcement to utilize volunteers; and

WHEREAS, The Fire Corps Program has the goal of providing support and supplementing resource-constrained fire departments through the use of civilian volunteers for non-fire suppression related activities, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That all Departments and Posts of The American Legion are encouraged to become involved in their local Citizen Corps activities, and establish their own programs under an affiliation with Citizen Corps; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion reaffirm its Citizen Corps affiliation, and that the Congress be urged to support and fully fund all components of Citizen Corps.

Resolution No. 99: Financial Anti-Terrorism Law Enforcement
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The United States Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, U.S. Customs, Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service are the first

line of defense of the nation in combating the financial security threats that face America from both home and abroad, and is charged with a number of missions that are vital to the security of the nation; and

WHEREAS, These missions include: policing, investigation and enforcement of the financial laws to ensure the integrity and stability of our nation's banking and financial institutions from both foreign and domestic abuse or manipulation, and to ensure a stable economic environment that provides for legal investment and export opportunities; and

WHEREAS, These Agencies are charged with the role of securing both the physical and cyber borders of our nation, and while mindful of the constitutional rights of individuals; and

WHEREAS, Financial investigations and prosecutions by the Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigations and Internal Revenue Services have uncovered illicit financing schemes and revenue accounts of listed terrorist organizations through knowing or unknowing individuals, investment development groups, associations, charitable and other legitimate organizations; and

WHEREAS, These Agencies must have the ability to use every legal tool and policy at their disposal to ensure that terrorist organizations do not have the ability to be financed through our domestic and the international financial systems; and

WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee adopted this resolution at its Spring 2005 meeting; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion supports legislation that strengthens the abilities of the United States Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, U.S. Customs, Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service to police, investigate and prosecute financial institutions or individuals within the parameters of the U.S. Constitution that use legitimate and illegitimate financial means to help support both domestic and international terrorism.

Resolution No. 119: Support For The United States Coast Guard In Homeland Security

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, By public law the United States Coast Guard is at all times one of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Coast Guard was able to respond to the terrorism attacks of September 11, 2001, within hours and its homeland security missions have doubled; and

WHEREAS, Included in the numerous peacetime and wartime missions of the Coast Guard are law enforcement in its many facets to include drug interdiction and interception of illegal aliens; environment protection, maritime safety including search and rescue responsibilities and inspecting and licensing Merchant Marine ships; and National Security to include port security and serving as an essential wartime and peacetime partner of the U.S. Navy; and

WHEREAS, Each year the Coast Guard saves about $2.5 billion in property, saves 4,000 lives, repaying to the American taxpayer about seven times their annual operating budget for search and rescue. During 1999, the Coast Guard seized drugs worth more than $3.9 billion-five times more than the Coast Guard's annual operating expense budget for drug interdiction. This kept 28,872 pounds of marijuana and a record-level 111,689 pounds-506 million doses-of cocaine from reaching our nation's streets and school yards; and

WHEREAS, The Coast Guard was transferred from the Department of Transportation to the Department of Homeland Security, these homeland security missions will continue during the War on Terrorism; and

WHEREAS, To carry out these critical missions, it is essential that highly skilled and motivated men and women continue to be attracted and retained by the Coast Guard and its Reserves and that cutters, aircraft, and required facilities be fully funded; and

WHEREAS, Without adequate resources, the United States Coast Guard will be unable to meet its national and international commitments to the detriment of the American people and other democratic nations; and

WHEREAS, The Coast Guard has proposed an "Integrated Deepwater System" to modernize and recapitalize its deepwater assets that was strongly endorsed by the President's Interagency Task Force on Coast Guard roles and missions as a "near-term national priority." The Deepwater Program compromises the acquisition of integrated surface, air, sensors and communication assets that will allow the Coast Guard to efficiently and effectively support national maritime security interests well into the 21st century; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the Administration and the Congress to fully fund the United States Coast Guard budget so it can achieve its numerous vital missions including homeland security, law enforcement, environmental protection, maritime safety and other missions as assigned as well as the funding of its "Deepwater" initiatives; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion also urges the annual Congressional passage of the Coast Guard Authorization Act; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Congress and the Department of Homeland Security to support pay and benefits equity for Coast Guard men and women as well as the same quality of life features as authorized for the other Armed Forces of the United States.

Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security

Resolution No. 261 (CA): Dispersing Homeland Security Funds

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 288 (MA): Continued Support for the American Legion Blood Donor Program

Law and Order Committee
George W. Wehrli, Florida, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 82: Second Amendment
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees each law-abiding American citizen the right to keep and bear arms of his or her choice; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that over 60 million individuals, representing over half of the households in America, have chosen to exercise that right by owning one or more firearms; and

WHEREAS, Gun bans, registration, and licensing of firearms and their owners of has had little or no effect in such urban areas such as New York City, Califomia and Washington D.C. and has not prevented violent criminals from obtaining firearms illegally and committing crimes; and

WHEREAS, The restriction of firearms purchases by law-abiding citizens will create a black market in illegal firearms and incur further governmental costs to enforce such restriction; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah on August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion reaffirms its recognition that the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees each law-abiding American citizen the right to keep and bear arms; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the membership of The American Legion urges our nation's lawmakers to recognize, as part of their oaths of office, that the Second Amendment guarantees law-abiding citizens the right to keep and bear the arms of their choice, as do the millions of American veterans who have fought, and continue to fight, to preserve those rights, hereby advise the Congress of the United States and the Executive Department to cease and desist any and all efforts to restrict these rights by any legislation or order.

Resolution No. 100: Combating Crime In America
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, One of the major principles contained in the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion is "...to maintain law and order"; and

WHEREAS, Although the United States in its history has endured previous periods of high crime rates. Americans in recent years have been experiencing crime waves characterized by escalating and senseless violence and perversion which have permeated all communities and affected all age categories and walks of life; and

WHEREAS, Statistics show that four out of every five Americans will become a victim of violent crime at least once in their lives, and a violent crime occurred once every 22 seconds in 1993; and

WHEREAS, Violent offenders serve on the average only 37 percent of their sentences, so that at any given time approximately 75 percent of convicted criminals are either on probation or parole; and

WHEREAS, The link between federal funding and state performance is vital as 95 percent of all violent crime is covered by state, not federal statutes; and the "war on crime," with a hope of victory, will require a get-tough federal-state partnership to apprehend criminals, put them in prison, and keep them there; and

WHEREAS, The deterrent effect of the current judicial system of punishment and reprisal from society have become less intimidating to would-be criminals, and the elevation of the rights of criminals has surpassed the rights of their victims and survivors; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that the time has come for the Federal and State Governments to implement stiffer and more consistent penalties that are as tough and distasteful as the crimes inflicted upon innocent victims; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion recommends that the following measures be considered by municipal, state and federal authorities for application to repeat youthful offenders:

1. **More frequent charging of juveniles as adults.**
2. **Separate prison facilities for chronic, violent juvenile offenders.**
3. **Mandatory sentences for gang-related crimes and for violent crimes committed with firearms.**
4. **More jail time for certain first-time offenders.**
5. **Holding parents responsible for fines imposed on youthful offenders, as appropriate.**
6. **Establishing more boot camps for youthful offenders; and, be it further**

RESOLVED, That The American Legion further recommends that the current system of paroles and probations be drastically revised; that parole for first degree murder be abolished; that the system of endless appeals and delays for executions be more realistically curtailed; that "good time" and community service paroles be eliminated for violent felony convictions; that more drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs be established in adult and juvenile prison systems; and that the criminal justice system work faster and more effectively, and that convicted criminals be required to make monetary restitution to their victims or to surviving family members, as appropriate; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion firmly believes that these types of penalties can impact on reducing repeated criminal activity; and in the final analysis, we are convinced that the most effective deterrent to crime is the strong influence of families and family-oriented programs that foster, strengthen and transmit family and societal values to young adults.

Resolution No. 101: Department Fire Fighter of the Year Award
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The Preamble of the Constitution of The American Legion includes as one of the objectives "...to maintain Law and Order" and fire fighting as well as law enforcement contributes to America's intemal security; and

WHEREAS, Over 200 New York City fire fighters perished during their attempt to rescue the victims of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center; and

WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee at the Spring 1970 meetings adopted Resolution No. 13, "Certificate of Commendation for Law Enforcement Officers and Fire fighters," authorized the issuance of suitable Certificates of Commendation to outstanding fire fighters by Posts and Departments; and

WHEREAS, According to National Security Commission surveys of Departments conducted after September 11, 2001, fifteen of the responding Departments have programs at Department and Post levels and have a Department Fire Fighter of the Year Award Program; and

WHEREAS, According to The American Legion's 2002-2003 Consolidated Post Report, which represent nearly 56 percent of all reporting Post Reports, over 1,717 Posts have fire prevention programs; and

WHEREAS, The presentation of Department Fire Fighter of the Year Awards reflects great credit on fire fighters, communities and states and on The American Legion; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge all Departments to establish an annual Department Fire Fighter of the Year Award which may be presented at Department Conventions or other American Legion meetings as deemed appropriate; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That as Department Fire Fighter of the Year Award programs continue to grow, The American Legion will consider establishing a National Fire Fighter of the Year Award.

Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security

Resolution No. 151 (CT): The American Legion Junior Law Cadet Program

Merchant Marine Committee
Charles F. Moreland, Florida, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 102: Support For The Jones Maritime Act And Related Cabotage Laws
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion has always stressed that maintaining a viable U.S.-Flag Merchant Marine and its supporting infrastructure is essential to the economic, national, and environmental security of this nation; and

WHEREAS, The maritime policy of the United States, as articulated in the 1936 Merchant Marine Act, states that "it is necessary for the national defense and development of its foreign and domestic commerce that the United States shall have a Merchant Marine"; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is concerned about the continued decline of the U.S.-Flag Merchant Marine and the shortage of trained American mariners; and

WHEREAS, At the beginning of 1998, the privately owned ocean-going U.S.-flag fleet consisted of only 259 active ships, which includes 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 U.S. imports and exports are carried in U.S.-flag ships which is economically unwise and militarily imprudent; and

WHEREAS, The Jones Act which is critical to United States national security and to America's economic well-being should be reaffirmed as should the continuation of the annual appropriations needed to fund the maritime Security Act of 1996; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support the Jones Act and related Maritime cabotage laws critical to America's maritime infrastructure, and therefore, to the United States national defense.

Resolution No. 103: Commercial Shipbuilding For Defense
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The United States emerged as the worlds foremost economic power and trading nation after the Cold war, and America's policymakers have neglected to use these advantages to sustain the nation's naval and maritime power; and

WHEREAS, Less than 3 percent of America's import and export tonnage is carried in U.S. Flag ships, and American ships represent less than 1 percent of world commercial tonnage, compared to 9 percent 20 years ago; and

WHEREAS, The 600-ship navy envisioned by President Reagan would have kept the ship yards busy; today, with a Navy only one-third as large and declining further, America's shipyards are in trouble; and

WHEREAS, In 1999, only 6 U.S. shipyards had contracts to build large ocean-going ships, down from 11 in 1993, and the industry, as a whole, has seen its work force decline by 30 percent since 1991; this undermines the ability of the United States to rebuild and expand its naval and maritime forces; and

WHEREAS, China has been expanding its shipbuilding and now accounts for 7 percent of the world total, but short of their 10 percent target for 2000; Beijing is restructuring the industry into two regional corporations answerable to the government; and

WHEREAS, There are only about 260 U.S. Flagged merchant ships, and by comparison, the Chinese-Flagged merchant fleet numbers over 1,500 ships; more than 400 of these ships, carrying 30 percent of China's trade, are operated by the China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO), a state-owned conglomerate with close ties to Beijing's military and routinely provides shipping support to Chinese military and naval exercises; and

WHEREAS, U.S. commercial build rates are also not large enough to provide the strategic sealift needed in an emergency, or to support a shipbuilding industry large enough to meet future U.S. naval needs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge the Congress to vigorously act to stop the further erosion of our vital maritime capability; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the President and Congress to boost naval budgets, promote commercial shipbuilding, expand the use of U.S. flagships in world commerce, and resist foreign actions that would further damage America's defense industrial base.

Military Affairs Committee
Clayborn Lofton, Illinois, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 77: DD214s For Activated Guardsmen And Reservists
Origin: Ohio
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The Veterans Health Administration has issued VHA Directive 2002-049 which "establishes policies and procedures for offering hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care to recent combat veterans for a 2-year period beginning on the date of the veteran's discharge for any illness, notwithstanding insufficient medical evidence to conclude that their illness is attributable to their military service"; and

WHEREAS, VHA Directive 2002-049 includes the men and women of the National Guard and Reserves that have been mobilized to Active Federal Service for operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and other conflicts; and

WHEREAS, Upon their demobilization the National Guard and Reserve Personnel are experiencing delays in receiving their discharge (DD 214); and

WHEREAS, The DD 214 is essential to the finalization of disability claims, hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care and other benefits; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion strongly urges the Department of Defense to expeditiously issue DD 214's to activated National Guardsmen and Reservist personnel upon their demobilization.

Resolution No. 78: The Total Force Policy
Origin: Ohio
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security
(As amended)

WHEREAS, The National Guard of this Country has served as the bedrock for our defense and its service predates the Nation's founding; and

WHEREAS, Under the Total Force Policy, National Guard and Reserve units have been easily integrated into Active Force structures; however, as we are seeing, there have been numerous problems involving pay, supply and equipment and timely healthcare problems that indicate their integration is not seamless; and

WHEREAS, The reality of smaller Active Forces strengthens the imperative for fully manned and combat ready National Guard and Reserve Forces which are completely integrated into the Total Force; and

WHEREAS, During the present War on Terror, activated National Guard and Reserve personnel comprise 40 percent of deployed United states forces, thereby, representing both the first and second line of America's defense capabilities; and

WHEREAS, The National Guard, besides serving our national interests in Federal capacities, also performs invaluable State missions to include natural disaster assistance, civil disturbance and law and order missions, participating in drug interdiction, and numerous community service programs; and

WHEREAS, Our National Military Strategy is primarily oriented toward regional conflicts of short duration. Extended conflicts however, have required the full employment of the National Guard and Reserves, and even the reinstatement of conscription may be considered to meet manpower needs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges that the National Guard and Reserves be realistically manned, structured, equipped, trained, fully deployable and maintained at high readiness levels in order to accomplish the missions and roles indispensable to our national defense; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the full range of active duty retention bonuses and recruiting incentives, pay, promotions and health care quality of life be applied to the activated National Guard and Reserve.

Resolution No. 79: Military Commissaries
Origin: Ohio
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense has evaluated options to downsize or privatize the Military Commissary System by seeking reduced federal funding, reducing the number of operating military commissaries, and evaluating the privatizing of military commissaries; and

WHEREAS, The value of commissaries in the quality of life equation for junior enlisted families and military retirees and others is indisputable: Military commissary usage has ranked second only to medical health care in the non-pay compensation package according to surveys conducted among active duty and retired beneficiaries as commissaries save patrons on the order of 26 percent in food costs; and

WHEREAS, The nearly $1 billion in subsidized congressional appropriations permit commissaries to sell items virtually at cost, and the removal of this funding would drastically raise food costs which would effectively cause commissaries to close; and

WHEREAS, Contrary to popular belief, military commissaries are not competitive with civilian grocery chain stores as commissary sales represent only 1.7 percent of total U.S. grocery sales; and

WHEREAS, Without commissary savings, pay compensation for active duty and military retirees would have to rise and retired as well as drilling Reservists and National Guardsmen are now authorized to use the Commissaries; and

WHEREAS, With the downsizing of the military to include reductions in force and military benefits, any effort to reduce or dismantle the integrity of the military commissary system would be seen as a serious breach of faith with a benefit system that currently serves as a mainstay for the active and reserve components, military retirees and military survivors, military personnel involuntarily discharged or released from active duty, and 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans and others; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the Department of Defense and the Congress to continue full federal funding of the military commissary system and to retain this vital non-pay compensation benefit system which is essential to the morale and readiness of the dedicated men and women who have served, and continue to serve, the national security interests of the United States; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion oppose any efforts to institute "variable pricing" or to privatize the military commissary system or to dismantle or downsize the Defense Commissary Agency.

Resolution No. 104: Department Of Defense Healthcare For Military Beneficiaries
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The promise of free health care for life in exchange for 20 or more years of creditable military service was contained in recruiting and retention and was recognized as such by active duty personnel, Reservists and military retirees and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, The passage of TRICARE for Life and the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Programs for Medicare-eligible military retirees and their dependents has essentially fulfilled the promise of lifetime military healthcare; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has had a number of concerns with TRICARE healthcare programs to include, for example, TRICARE business practices and benefit portability need to be improved; claims processing reform is direly needed; and reimbursement rates to providers need to be increased; and

WHEREAS, That The American Legion recommends that the following guidelines be incorporated as part of the Department of Defense healthcare package for military retirees, dependents and military survivors:

1. Administrative barriers to an effective TRICARE system to include raising TRICARE provider reimbursements; program portability between TRICARE regions; reducing delays in claim payments; and increasing electronic claims processing need to be removed. Improve TRICARE enrollment procedures, beneficiary education, decrease administrative burdens, eliminate non-availability requirements and eliminate unnecessary reporting requirements.
2. That the TRICARE programs to include the TRICARE for Life and the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy programs which are used by 1.3 million Medicare-eligible military retirees and their dependents be fully funded annually.
3. Restore TRICARE reimbursement policy to pay up to what TRICARE would have paid had there been no other health insurance as was the policy before 1993.
4. That dual eligible disabled retirees continue to receive health care from both military treatment facilities and VA medical centers. TRICARE Prime Remote should be included for military retirees, dependents and military survivors.
5. That all military beneficiaries be authorized to receive dental and visual care at military treatment facilities.
6. That retired Reservists and their dependents be eligible for TRICARE coverage when they become eligible to receive retirement pay. The American Legion urges that all discharging servicemembers, active and Reservists be required to have discharge and retirement physical examinations, physicals should not be optional or abbreviated.
7. That adequate military medical personnel, to include graduates of the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences and members of the Commissioned Officer Corps of the Public Health Service, should be retained on active duty to provide health care for active duty and retired military personnel and their dependents.
8. That the Federal Employee Health Benefits Plan (FEHBP) be authorized as an alternative to TRICARE for those military retirees and dependents who can afford such premiums.
9. That Tricare fees not be increased except as authorized by Congress, not by the Department of Defense.
10. That military construction funding be authorized for the construction of Walter Reed Military Medical Center and the Ft. Belvior Army Community Center; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges Congress to fully fund military and VA healthcare programs for beneficiaries as well as a permanent TRICARE program for Guardsmen and Reservists.

Resolution No. 105: Listing Of Veterans Service Organizations For Discharging Service Members
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Members of The American Legion all veterans of the United States Military; and

WHEREAS, Our Legionnaires would like to share with recent veterans of the United States, the veterans services available to these newly discharged service members; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion members would recommend to the United States military branches, and benefits that a separation package be supplied to each of these veterans being discharged; The American Legion would recommend that discharge packets contain the names and addresses of all major veterans organization in the United States by state; and

WHEREAS, American Legion recognizes that the transition from military life to civilian life is sometime difficult and recognizes that association with fellow veterans and access to services is available to veterans which is highly beneficial in their efforts to become productive citizens; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion respectfully requests each military service include such a package of information in the separation process from the military; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion support legislation to insert a clause into the briefing of discharging service men and women that make specific reference to veterans organizations such as The American Legion in their civilian communities.

Resolution No. 106: Military Funeral Honors
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

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 850,000 in the reserve components and, coupled with worldwide military deployments, has further strained the availability of manpower resources for veterans funerals; and

WHEREAS, A number of state National Guard organizations such as in Maryland, Missouri, New York and others, have expended state funding for funeral honors without receiving federal assistance; 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 nearly 100,000 funerals in recent years and nearly 35 percent of these military honors rendered consisted of single representatives; and

WHEREAS, Veterans service organizations have played a significant role in rendering military-like honors at veterans funerals; but just as the military has downsized, the membership of veterans service organizations has also been declining due to the passing of its own veterans, and The American Legion has performed an estimated 200,000 veterans funeral honors per year; and

WHEREAS, The Fiscal Year 2000 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) recognized the national obligation to demonstrate the Nation's gratitude to veterans who

defended our Nation during times of war and peace; and it mandated the Military Services to provide funeral honors at veterans burials, upon request by the next of kin, with a minimum of two uniformed members, one in the service of the deceased, to be provided for flag-folding and presentation along with the playing of Taps; and

WHEREAS, The FY 2000 NDAA authorized that members of veterans service organizations like The American Legion who participated in military funeral honors "may", not "will", be reimbursed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion reaffirms that the Congress mandate and appropriately fund the Department of Defense and the Military Services, to include reimbursing the National Guard, so as 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 American Legion Posts and Departments continue to participate with the military in the rendering of funeral honors to veterans; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Defense implement equitable and expedient reimbursement procedures for members of the veterans service organizations who participate in military funeral honors; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That veterans of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard be authorized to receive military funeral honors from those Military Services.

Resolution No. 107: Reducing The Reserve Retirement Age
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Reserve and National Guard forces are an integral part of the defense posture of our Country; and

WHEREAS, With reduction in the manpower of our Active Component forces, service in the Reserve and National Guard forces is no longer a part-time commitment; and

WHEREAS, There are presently more than 220,000 Reserve/Guard forces on active duty in support of Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom; and

WHEREAS, The continued usage of the Reserve and National Guard in support of peacekeeping missions and the war against terrorism demonstrates that members of these components are truly a vital part in our National Defense; and

WHEREAS, Reserve/Guard soldiers who have served at least 20 years and are eligible for retirement must wait until they reach a minimum of sixty years of age to draw their retirement; and

WHEREAS, Congressmen Jim Saxton of New Jersey has introduced legislation to amend Title 10, United States Code, to reduce the age for receipt of military retired pay for non-regular service from 60 to 55; and

WHEREAS, Joann Davis, Virgil Goode, Bob Goodlatte and Tom Davis from Virginia along with over 70 cosponsors have signed on in support of this legislation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That the American Legion reaffirms support legislation which reduces the age requirement from age 60 in order to receive Reserve retirement pay sooner.

Resolution No. 108: Military Quality Of Life
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion has always supported quality of life features for members of the Armed Forces and their dependents as well as military retirees, as people are the foundation of our Nation's fighting forces; and

WHEREAS, Without highly qualified, dedicated men and women, even the most sophisticated weaponry will not provide the deterrent force necessary for this Nation to remain at peace; and

WHEREAS, Military compensation is only one factor in the quality of life equation as to whether a good service member and his family remain in the service: Other major factors include fair treatment, career stability and regular promotions, adequate quarters, adequate health care and commissaries, and day care facilities, all of which ease the numerous sacrifices that are demanded of service members and their families; and

WHEREAS, Over 30,000 Reservists had been activated for homeland security and the war on terrorism and with Reservists performing active duty missions for longer periods of time, their benefits need to be significantly expanded and improved; and

WHEREAS, Our military retirees and their dependents and military survivors are deserving and rightfully entitled to adequate health care treatment, concurrent receipt and regular cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) to military retirement pay and survivor benefit plans; and

WHEREAS, That The American Legion urges the Congress and the Department of Defense to support and fund such quality of life features including but not limited to, the following:

1. Military pay comparability for the Armed Forces and regular increases in the Basic Allowances for Quarters; renovation and construction of military quarters and increased funding for child day care centers are direly needed. Pay raises must be competitive with the private sector;
2. Adequate medical, mental and dental health services; morale, welfare and recreational facilities; and non-privatized exchanges and commissary facilities. The Defense Commissary Agency (DECA) and its functions should be retained and not relegated to the military services;
3. Preserving an attractive retirement system for the active and reserve components and annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) paid at the same rate and concurrently with other Federal retiree COLAs; oppose any changes to the military retirement system, whether prospective or retroactive, that would violate contracts made with military retirees and would undermine morale and readiness;
4. Requiring that the Services perform mandatory physical examinations, without waivers, for all separating veterans;
5. Fully funding the concurrent receipt of military retirement pay, military separation pays, and VA disability compensation as well as Special Compensation pays for disabled military retirees;
6. Amending Public Law 99-145 as to eliminate the automatic age 62 offset of Survivors' Benefits Plan benefits with Social Security benefits and the offset of Survivors' Benefits with DIC benefits, particularly for those survivors who have earned Social Security benefits in their own right. Also, SBP premiums should be paid up after payment for 30 years or until age 70 whichever comes first;
7. TRICARE for Life and the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy program for Medicare-eligible military retirees, their dependents and military survivors, should be adequately funded; and regular cost-of-living adjustments to military retirement deployment pay, capital gains tax exclusions, tax-free and increased death gratuity payments, and combat zone tax exclusions for service in South Korea;
8. For the active duty military, increasing danger pay and family separation pay, deployment pay, capital gains tax exclusions, tax-free and increased death gratuity payments, and combat zone tax exclusions for service in South Korea;
9. Congressional re-enactment of Impact Aid to fund the local public school education of military dependents;

10. Adequately protecting the American public and the Armed Forces from the actual or potentially harmful effects of friendly and hostile chemical, biological and nuclear agents or munitions;
11. Urging the Congress to extend and improve additional quality of life benefits, allowances and privileges to the National Guard and Reserves involved in Homeland Security and other missions so as to more closely approximate those of the active force. Military retirement pay and TRICARE healthcare for members of the Reserve Components should be authorized less than age 60. Hazardous duty and incentive pays for Reservists should be the same as active duty; tax credits to private businesses that pay the difference between military and civilian salaries to mobilized Reservists and restore travel exemptions for Reserve and Guard members for expenses associated with attending drills;
12. Military health care should also be provided to members of the Reserve Components and their dependents, who become injured while on active duty status regardless of the number of days served on active duty, to the same degree as active duty members under the same circumstances;
13. Whenever a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) is conducted, The American Legion will urge that certain base facilities such as base medical facilities, commissaries, exchanges and other facilities be preserved for use by active duty and Reservist personnel and military retired veterans and their families;
14. That Congress enact Traumatic Injury Insurance protection for use during the War on Terrorism;
15. That the Walter Reed Military Medical Center be rebuild at Bethesda Navy Hospital and that the Army Community Medical Center be expanded at Ft. Belvior, Virginia;
16. That the numerous, recurring and serious pay problems experienced by the Active and Reserve Components be immediately resolved; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urge the Congress and the Department of Defense to support and fund quality of life features for Active Duty, National Guard and Reservists as well as military retiree veterans and their dependents and military survivors.

Resolution No. 109: The American Legion's Position On The Department Of Defense's (DOD) Force Health Protection (FHP) Program

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, After the 1991 Gulf War, returning military personnel began to report suffering from unexplained multi-symptom illnesses, commonly referred to as Gulf War veterans' illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Although thirteen years have passed and over 200 hundred government-funded research projects are in various stages of completion, costing more than $200 million; many questions regarding the possible causes of Gulf War veterans' illnesses remain unanswered; and

WHEREAS, Numerous examples of lost or destroyed medical records have been identified, vaccination records were often unclear or incomplete, pre and post deployment examinations were not comprehensive and information regarding troop movements/locations and possible environmental hazard exposures was severely lacking; and

WHEREAS, The lack of such baseline data and other information is commonly recognized as a major limitation in the evaluation and understanding of potential causes of Gulf War veterans' illnesses; and

WHEREAS, To avoid the procedural problems encountered both during and after the 1991 Gulf War, "lessons learned" precipitated the enactment of legislation and policies designed to create a concept of Force Health Protection; and

WHEREAS, Although these policies appeared to correct previously identified problems in theory, reports by the Institute of Medicine and the United States General Accounting Office identified several deficiencies in the implementation of Force Health Protection laws and policies; and

WHEREAS, Controversial vaccines and pre-treatment drugs, such as smallpox, anthrax, and the anti-malaria tablet Lariam, are part of the Department of Defense's overall Force Health Protection plan; and

WHEREAS, Despite the fact that pyridostigmine bromide, an investigational new drug used as a pre-treatment for the nerve agent soman during the 1991 Gulf War, has not been definitively ruled out as a possible cause of Gulf War veterans' illnesses, the Food and Drug Administration granted full approval just prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom, clearing the way for the Department of Defense to use the drug without restriction under the umbrella of its Force Health Protection program; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion continue to actively monitor the Department of Defense's implementation of Force Health Protection policies and urge continual congressional oversight to ensure that all Force Health Protection laws and policies, including thorough pre- and post-deployment physical and mental examinations, are being properly implemented in a consistent manner by all military branches; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the Department of Defense to actively track and follow-up, with proper medical care, adverse reactions to vaccinations as well as any and all health-related complaints associated with the ingestion of controversial drugs such as pyridostigmine bromide and Lariam; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the military continually improve its treatment of service personnel who have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Resolution No. 111: The American Legion Policy On The Use Of Depleted Uranium
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The military services have come to depend on depleted uranium, a toxic and radioactive heavy metal as a kinetic energy penetrator fired from tank and aircraft cannons against enemy armor; and

WHEREAS, Depleted uranium burns after hitting a target, releasing aerosolized uranium particles into the air, exposing troops who come in contact with the target; and

WHEREAS, The scientific community and the Armed Forces do not have adequate medical or exposure information to determine the exact health effects caused by exposure to aerosolized depleted uranium particles; and

WHEREAS, Depleted uranium munitions were fired at, and destroyed, thousands of Iraqi tanks and vehicles during the Gulf War, scattering tons of depleted uranium throughout the theater of operations; and

WHEREAS, A 1993 United States General Accounting Office report found that most American ground troops were inadequately informed about the use and danger of depleted uranium munitions, and as a result, entered destroyed Iraqi tanks and vehicles and were exposed to depleted uranium particles; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That the Department of Defense require commanders to institute proper protective measures for personnel working with or around depleted uranium munitions; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Defense ensure that Commanders adequately inform their personnel about the dangers of approaching targets that have been destroyed by depleted uranium munitions; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Defense immediately conduct peer-reviewed scientific studies to determine the extent of fallout near targets struck by depleted uranium munitions.

Resolution No. 112: Support For The Selective Service Registration System Program

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The American Legion has given long-standing support to universal military training; and despite the success of the All-Volunteer Force, Selective Service registration continues to serve as our defense manpower insurance policy; and

WHEREAS, Despite the end of the Cold War, American servicemen and women are deployed world-wide to include their participation in peace enforcement missions in Bosnia and Kosovo and engaging in the war on terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan, and homeland security; the unpredictability and volatility of worldwide tensions urge us to think in terms of continued preparedness; and

WHEREAS, The current reality of small Active Forces only reinforces the need for combat-ready National Guard and Reserve units and for the capability to reconstitute our forces in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, World War I and II began long before our country became involved, allowing the United States the benefit of abundant time to accomplish registration before troops were actually committed-a luxury that we cannot expect to enjoy in today's unpredictable environment; and

WHEREAS, The Selective Service Registration Program has enjoyed remarkable success as more that 90 percent of our 18-25 year olds have registered and there is virtually no resistance to the Program; and

WHEREAS, Registration is one of the few remaining obligations our nation requires of its young men and removing this "rite of passage" for all men would reduce each man's level of consciousness about military service and the obligation to defend our nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah on August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion supports the retention of the Selective Service Registration Program as being in the best interests of all Americans, and its maintenance is a proven cost-effective, essential, and rapid means of reconstituting the required forces to protect our national security interests.

Resolution No. 113: TRICARE Eligibility For Members Of The Reserve Components And Their Dependents

Origin: Maryland

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense (DoD) created TRICARE to augment its Military Medical System; and

WHEREAS, TRICARE largely consists of regional Federally-contracted, for-profit health care providers; and

WHEREAS, DoD's utilization of Reserve Components in the performance of traditionally active duty missions continues globally; and

WHEREAS, Many members of the Reserve Components, when activated to perform full-time duties, can no longer afford their civilian health care coverage for themselves and their dependents. Also, numerous activated Reservists have been non-deployable due to health or dental problems; and

WHEREAS, Many members of the Reserve Components are among the 40 million Americans with no health care coverage for themselves and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, The Reserve Components continue to experience recruiting and retention challenges; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the Congress to authorize and fund the Department of Defense (DoD) in providing permanent TRICARE healthcare for members of the Reserve Components and their dependents.

Resolution No. 114: Reforming The Military Absentee Voting System
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security Committee

WHEREAS, The 1986 Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (Public Law 99-410) streamlined the procedures for overseas absentee voting; authorized a back-up write-in overseas ballot if the voter did not receive one requested from the state; Postal Service was to ensure that balloting materials were "carried expeditiously and free of postage;" and the overall intent was to ensure "maximum access to the polls" by both uniformed and civilian overseas voters; and

WHEREAS, The 2000 General Elections demonstrated numerous problems exist not only in Florida, but nationally as well, concerning uniformed and overseas citizens absentee balloting procedures; and

WHEREAS, Although a Presidential Election is held on the same date across the United States, it is composed of 50 separate state elections; and the Constitution of the United States grants the responsibility for the conduct of elections to the states; and

WHEREAS, Many states have difficulty printing and mailing ballots to overseas military voters in a timely manner, thus, posing a real challenge for military members and their family members to vote and return ballots within deadlines; and other states will not accept ballots received 30 days before general elections making it difficult, particularly, for military personnel deployed overseas; and

WHEREAS, Absentee ballots from forward deployed military members entitled to free postage in locales like the Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia often are not postmarked at mailing but, many times, are postmarked enroute resulting in late postmarking in CONUS; and

WHEREAS, Military voters should be protected from disenfranchisement based on technicalities that are beyond their control such as postmark discrepancies, missing notarized signatures and confusion on residency requirements; and

WHEREAS, States are not solely to blame due to complacency on the part of military units which also compounds military absentee voting: voting assistance in the military is often an additional duty relegated to the most junior officers; and special vigilance is often not given to handling election mail; and

WHEREAS, A worldwide Internet voting pilot was recently tested by a Department of Defense contractor using digital signatures and ballot encryption, however, it was rejected for security reasons; and

WHEREAS, Forty-six states now allow the fax transmission of absentee voting materials; and

WHEREAS, Despite progress made after more than a decade by the Department of Defense cooperatively working with the states, on the average, some 30 percent of all military absentee ballots are still not counted in Federal elections; and

WHEREAS, National defense is uniquely a constitutional mandate that gives the Federal government the authority and responsibility to ensure that military personnel and their families are not disenfranchised by the circumstances of their service and, thereby, necessitating Federal legislation as the states have not resolved the problem for nearly half a century, and a more adequate uniform and consistent system, not 50 unique systems, is needed; and

WHEREAS, The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws promotes drafts of uniform and model acts, and it could offer uniform formats for the states to follow on military absentee voting; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion ensure that satisfactorily drafted uniform acts and/or regulations pertaining to the Military Voting Absentee System, are made available to all appropriate state and local election entities; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges that appropriate laws and guidelines be developed at Federal, state and local levels with the intent that all military absentee voters and their families will have their votes counted in every election; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the sending and receiving of blank and completed military absentee ballots be accomplished electronically as much as possible; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion take an advocate role on this vital issue at National, state and local levels.

Resolution No. 115: Burial Eligibility For Arlington National Cemetery
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Arlington National Cemetery is our Nation's most sacred shrine representing an embodiment of the sacrifices that were made to uphold our country's ideals and freedoms; and

WHEREAS, More than 250,000 veterans and their dependents are buried here on 612 acres of land; and

WHEREAS, Arlington is one of more than 100 National Cemeteries but, unlike the others, Arlington Cemetery is administered by the Department of the Army; and

WHEREAS, In spite of restrictive regulations (Title 32, CFR), there have been numerous waivers in recent years, falsification of military records to gain interment at Arlington and even an unprecedented Presidential requested waiver and reservation; and

WHEREAS, Eligibility criteria for burials at Arlington need to be codified in order to assure compliance and fairness and to assure that the remaining space at Arlington is judiciously used; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, The American Legion urges the Congress to codify eligibility criteria for burial at Arlington National Cemetery and that such burial be restricted to servicemembers who die on Active duty; to our most decorated veterans to include recipients of the Purple Heart; former members of the armed forces separated from the military with a physical disability of 30 percent or more before October 1, 1949; and to veterans who spent full careers in uniform, and to their spouses and eligible children; to former prisoners of war; and for the President or former Presidents as Commanders in Chief of the Armed Forces; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion believes there should be no waivers for unqualified persons except under unique and compelling circumstances which comport with codified non-partisan waiver procedures as established by the Congress; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That eligibility for interment of cremated remains of honorably discharged veterans in the Columbarium at Arlington should also be codified.

Resolution No. 116: Status Of Forces Agreements
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 190 (MX))

WHEREAS, A portion of the compensated benefits of military retirees is considered to be the use of military facilities, such as PX, BX, Post Exchange, Commissary, healthcare, recreational facilities, mail, and other U.S. military facilities worldwide; and

WHEREAS, As a direct result of the Status of Forces Agreements between the U.S. Government and host countries many of these benefits are usually denied to retired military members and their families/dependents residing or visiting U.S. military facilities located outside the U.S.; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That all future Status of Forces Agreements negotiated, renegotiated, or revised with host countries should allow for the unimpeded use of all U.S. military facilities by retired U.S. military members and their dependents, and that U.S. military personnel be more fairly treated in the court system in the Republic of Korea and Okinawa.

Resolution No. 117: Concurrent Receipt Of Military Retired And Severance Pays And Disability Compensation For Disabled Retirees
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security
(Consolidated with Resolution No. 302 (MN))

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, Sections 5304 and 5305, has prohibited the concurrent receipt of both military retirement pay for longevity from the Department of Defense and disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, Disabled military retirees have been entitled to receive disability compensation only by "wavering that portion of retired pay as is equal in amount to such compensation," so that disabled military retirees essentially fund their own disability compensation which is not subject to taxation; and

WHEREAS, Federal civil service employees, as well as other Federal government workers, may concurrently receive retirement pay for longevity and disability payments; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that it is inequitable and unfair to authorize one group to receive federal retirement pay and disability payments while prohibiting disabled military retirees from receiving both; and

WHEREAS, According to the Department of Defense, the rationale for this disparity is that "VA disability compensation is (meant) for disabled veterans who have left the service before completing a career and before qualifying for retired pay...disabled military retirees did not experience a reduction in eaming potential during their military career"; and

WHEREAS, Such rationale, which continues to this day, defies both logic and the facts: There are approximately 640,000 disabled active duty and reservist military retirees (rated 0% - 100%), who were retired for longevity and who qualified for military retirement yet, during their military careers, sustained non-career-ending injuries, combat wounds and other ailments; and

WHEREAS, There are also over 100,000 non-careerist military disability retirees who were retired for severely disabling injuries, wounds or ailments who are awarded military retirement disability pay as a percentage of their base pay (30% and above) and who are not authorized to concurrently draw VA disability compensation: In order to draw VA disability compensation, they must waive their military retirement disability pay, which is inequitable for those disabled warriors who were unable to complete military careers; and

WHEREAS, The Fiscal Year 2003 National Defense Authorization Act authorized a Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) for those disabled military retirees for longevity whose VA-rated disabilities totaled 60 percent and higher due to combat, combat-related training, hazardous duty or the instrumentalities of war; and

WHEREAS, The Fiscal Year 2004 National Defense Authorization Act authorized the concurrent receipt of taxable military retirement pay and VA disability compensation

for disabled retirees rated at 50 percent or higher, to include disabled retired Reservists with at least 20 years of service who were drawing retirement pay, as well as veterans who retired under Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA); and

WHEREAS, The FY 2004 NDAA also expanded CRSC for disabled retirees with 20 years of qualifying service who have a combined, combat-related disability of 10 percent or more; this Enhanced CRSC, which is tax-exempt, did not include TERA retirees nor non-careerist military disability retirees; and

WHEREAS, Eligible retirees may not receive both concurrent receipt and CRSC but may choose between the two options during an annual "open season"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion expresses its gratitude to the Congress for the authorization of both Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) and partial concurrent receipt for over 200,000 disabled military retirees but urges the Congress to authorize and fund full concurrent receipt for all disabled military retirees to include those rated at 40 percent and below; to authorize and fund CRSC for Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA) retirees, as well as the CRSC payment of military disability retiree pay and VA disability compensation for those disabled military retirees; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to eliminate the phase-in of provisions in PL 108-136 so as to accelerate restored retired pay in fewer than 10 years; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion also urges the Congress to authorize the concurrent receipt of military severance pay for less than 30 percent disabled servicemembers and VA disability compensation.

Resolution No. 153: Requesting Military Funeral Honors
Origin: New Jersey
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion is the largest veteran's organization in the world comprised of war time era veterans; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion was created as a fraternity based upon firm comradeship, born of war service, and dedicated to equitable treatment for all veterans, particularly the disabled, their widows and their orphans; and

WHEREAS, A problem presently exists concerning veteran's rights and privileges as guaranteed to them by Section 578 of Public Law 106-65; and

WHEREAS, The problem is a mere misinterpretation or misrepresentation as presented in the current wordage of Section 578 of Public Law 106-65; and

WHEREAS: Section 578 of Public Law 106-65 pertains to the Department of Defense Titled Program "Honoring Those Who Served"; and

WHEREAS, The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2000 mandates military honors at funerals for all eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, The problem, as currently understood is; Funeral Directors are mandated to honor the wishes of the family of a veteran requesting military honors at the time of the funeral of their family member; and

WHEREAS, Many families of veterans are unaware of this service that is available to them in honor of their family members service; and

WHEREAS, As currently written the law requires the funeral director to only fulfill the request when made by the family member; to have a military honor guard at the internment; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That action to be taken to change the wordage, as currently written in Section 578 Public Law 106-65 to: That any and all funeral directors performing services for any veteran of The United States armed forces shall be required to ask the veteran's family member or other interested

party if military honors are requested, at no expense to the family, rather than placing the burden upon the veteran's family at this time of bereavement.

Resolution No. 169: Support For The War On Terrorism
Origin: Convention Committee on National Security
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of wartime veterans created by an act of the United States Congress in 1919; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's membership is composed of veterans of all wars, the majority of which are Vietnam veterans who have endured the consequences of a nation divided in time of war; and

WHEREAS, Warriors, above all other people, pray for peace, for they must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war; and

WHEREAS, Because of the very nature of war, the warrior cannot be separated from the war itself; and

WHEREAS, The United States of America was suddenly, and without provocation, attacked by terrorists on September 11, 2001, resulting in the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians and members of the military of the United States; and

WHEREAS, This tragic event does not stand alone, but is a continuation of a long series of unprovoked terrorist attacks aimed at destroying American lives, and the very basic core values of freedom, democracy and respect for human life; and

WHEREAS, In response to this despicable act of cowardice, a united Congress in a bipartisan manner authorized the use of armed force against the global armies of terrorism no matter where they reside; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing that the global war on terrorism is as deadly as any war in which the United States has been previously engaged, the President and Congress did authorize military actions in both Afghanistan and Iraq; and

WHEREAS, The global war on terrorism is a just war, aimed at protecting the very foundations of freedom and freedom-loving people everywhere; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion agrees with our Commander in Chief that the acts of terrorism mentioned heretofore were aimed at "the heart and soul of the civilized world, and the world has come together to fight a new and different war, the first, and we hope the only one, of the 21st century-a war against all those who seek to export terror, and a war against those governments that support or shelter them"; and

WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee meeting in pre-Convention session on August 22, 2005, in Honolulu, Hawaii, adopted this resolution and recommended that the 87th National Convention meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii, August 23, 24, 25, 2005, adopt this resolution; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion fully supports the President of the United States, the United States Congress and the men, women and leadership of our armed forces as they are engaged in the global war on terrorism; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges all Americans and freedom-loving peoples everywhere to stand united in their support of the global war on terrorism, and united in their support of the troops who are engaged in protecting our values and way of life; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the National Commander be, and is hereby authorized, to use whatever means at his disposal to disseminate accurate information about this war on terrorism, and to engage whatever means necessary to ensure the united support of the American people.

Resolution No. 229: Oppose Proposed TRICARE Increases
Origin: South Dakota
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The American Legion recognizes the debt owed to the entire military retirement community for their sacrifices and hardships endured in honorable military service to this nation; and

WHEREAS, The Administration and Defense leaders are seeking to impose very large health care fee increases on military retirees and their families; and

WHEREAS, The proposed fee increases are inappropriate and out of line with career service members' unique sacrifices; and

WHEREAS, Military medical and retirement benefits must be markedly better than civilian benefits because they are the primary offsets for enduring decades of extraordinarily arduous service conditions; and

WHEREAS, Military retirees careers have entailed unique and arduous service conditions few other Americans are willing to endure for 20 or 30 years including hazardous duty, service in foreign countries often in hostile environments, extended family separations, just to mention a few; and

WHEREAS, These proposed increases in premiums are targeted to a select group of military medical care beneficiaries-those military retirees and their families under age 65; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion opposes these increases and sees this proposal as an erosion of quality of life benefits from a grateful nation for honorable military service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion shall prevail upon this Administration and the Department of Defense to reconsider their proposal to implement any increases in the military retirees' TRICARE enrollment fees, deductibles or premiums.

Resolution No. 366: Key Military Issues Involving State And Local Governments
Origin: Convention Committee on National Security
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, In colleges and universities throughout the United States, military members and their families are often required to pay in-state tuition, where assigned, and only 28 states permit some form of in-state tuition; and

WHEREAS, Local and State licensing requirements often inhibit career teaching and other aspirations of military spouses, and only five states accept Alternative Teaching Licensure; and

WHEREAS, Many states review military spouses leaving jobs due to military reassignments as "voluntary," not qualifying for unemployment compensation, and only 14 states provide unemployment compensation to trailing spouses; and

WHEREAS, Payday lenders often prey on service members on and off military bases, yet only 14 states have payday lending limitations in place; and

WHEREAS, Although military voter participation set a new record in 2004, the number of states that allow transmission of absentee ballots and only twenty-three jurisdictions permit electronic or fax transmissions of completed ballots; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah on August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion through its grassroots legislative efforts, work with those identified states in accomplishing in-state tuition for the active duty military and their dependents, licensure and unemployment compensation for military spouses, increasing the number of states that actively restrict interest rates for payday lenders and increasing the number of states that allow electronic transmission of military absentee ballots.

Resolution No. 367: Boots On The Ground-The United States Army
Origin: Convention Committee on National Security
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The United States Army is serving a nation at war and, as America's strategic and decisive land and expeditionary combat force, is a proud member of the Joint Force providing combatant commanders with relevant and ready campaign power; and

WHEREAS, The Army's compelling needs include providing landscape power, training and equipping soldiers and adaptive leaders for the rigors of war, sustaining the All-Volunteer Force, and providing the infrastructure and support systems to ensure the Army is able to execute its missions; and

WHEREAS, The momentum of Army transformation and modernization needs to be maintained so as to deal with irregular, catastrophic, disruptive and traditional challenges; and

WHEREAS, The Army vision is to remain the preeminent land power, the ultimate instrument of national resolve, that is both ready and relevant to the challenges of the dangerous and complex 21st century security environment; and

WHEREAS, Support and funding is required to achieve critical recruiting and retention goals for all Army components; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah on August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That the Army's budget and wartime demands be fully funded and that supplemental funding is required for combat and contingency operations and to reset and replace battle losses of equipment; and, be it further

RESOLVED, The Congress will ensure that the Army is fully staffed, trained, and equipped to achieve victory in the War on Terrorism; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress enable the Army to maintain the momentum of key programs while accelerating transformation.

Referred to the Standing Commission on National Security

Resolution No. 110 (MD): The Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program
Resolution No. 216 (TX): Space Available Travel for Military Survivors
Resolution No. 259 (CA): Illegal Immigrants and Selective Service Registration
Resolution No. 268 (NY): Leaking Abu Gharib Photographs
Resolution No. 269 (NY): National Junior ROTC Cadet of the Year Program
Resolution No. 283 (NY): Making the Combat Action Badge Retroactive to World War II

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 277 (FL): Transporting and Honoring of Military Remains
Resolution No. 278 (FL): Military Worship

Naval Affairs Committee
Gerard W. Cheffer, Illinois, Chairman

Approved

Resolution No. 118: Fully Funding The United States Navy And Marine Corps
Origin: Maryland
Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, Our national security depends to a large extent on the ability of the United States to maintain sea superiority as well as strategic combat capabilities of the United States Navy and Marine Corps; and

WHEREAS, The Navy and Marine Corps have continually shown the ability of the United States to maintain a forward posture, projecting U.S. power overseas, when and where needed around the world to uphold our national security; and

WHEREAS, To maintain force readiness, the Navy and Marine Corps must balance priorities of manpower, current and future readiness, quality of service and alignment; and

WHEREAS, Balancing critical combat readiness with future navy requirements is essential to U.S. Naval superiority; and

WHEREAS, A 21st century Navy requires rapid technological advancements in the areas of command and control, which will require judicious upgrades of its systems; and

WHEREAS, The programs that will be the core of Navy and Marine Corps forces in the 21st century require substantial investments; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion urges the Administration and the Congress to fully resource the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps to provide credible combat power from the sea.

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.

Awards: National Blood Donor

Category I—Departments with 100,000 or more members
Post participation - Department of Florida
Individual Participation - Department of Minnesota
Category II—70,000 to 99,999 members
Post and Individual participation—Department of Maryland
Category III—40,000 to 69,999 members
Post and Individual participation—Department of Nebraska
Category IV—25,000 to 39,999 members
Post and Individual participation—Department of Tennessee
Category V—10,000 to 24,999 members
Post and Individual Participation—Department of Montana
Category VI—less than 10,000 members
Post and Individual participation—Department of Alaska

The results of the competition for the Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy are as follows:

Most of the fifty Departments participated in the ROTC Awards Program this year. A total of over 14,000 Medals were awarded to deserving cadets in Senior ROTC and Junior ROTC Units. The winning Departments for 2005-2006 are the Departments of Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana and Tennessee which speaks well for these Departments and The American Legion in their recognition of the youth of America enrolled in ROTC programs.

Mr. Commander, as a Delegate to this Convention from the Department of Florida, I move the adoption of this report.

...Second from the floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: It's been regularly moved and seconded all those in favor indicate so by the usual sign. 'Aye.' Opposed. The report of the National Security is adopted. I need to call for discussion.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Microphone No. 1. Commander.

MICROPHONE NO. 1: Yes, I didn't get here in time. Can Resolution 19 be pulled from that report? My name is Ron Gutzman, I'm a delegate from the Department of Nevada.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Just a second Ron, the report has been approved. We have to pull it before it gets approved. Ron, sorry about that.

DELEGATE GUTZMAN: All right.

NATL COMDR BOCK: We're running out of time, the seconds are ticking. Before we move on, though, you met my family yesterday and the great support they had. But there's another group that I want to thank just before I leave and that's the Colorado delegation. Thank you, guys. *(Applause.)* They did a stellar job of getting me here and it's been an incredible ride.

Now we are calling on our National Vice Commanders to come here. National Vice Commanders: Bill Coffey, Sebastian Roll, T.J. Trevino, Mike Harris and Jimmy Hall. Aren't they great? *(Applause.)* They have been there doing it all. We're just so darn proud of the closeness of this team and the power that they have had. They have visited everywhere they needed to be and made me real proud. So, I have just a little parting gift for each of you. Are you in alphabetical order according to height? *(Laughter.)*

...At this time National Commander Bock presented gifts. *(Applause.)*

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

NATL VICE COMDR COFFEY: Commander Tom, as you complete a fantastic year of leading this great organization and you go back to Colorado and try to unwind and get back to a normal life, the Vice Commanders want to present to you this token of our appreciation for having served, with what we believe, is the greatest Commander that this organization has had. We present this so you can buy some new golf clubs. Go out and enjoy yourself and have a good time when you're back in the wonderful state of Colorado.

...At this time photographs were taken.

...At this time National Commander Bock resumed the Chair.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Johnny Keel, please come up. I believe that he had to catch a plane. Chaplain Steven Wright. Steve, I could not have asked for a better Chaplain. He's been there for us the whole time and has been a comfort to me. Steve, God bless you.

National Commander Aide Douglas Wooddell. According to my watch you have 45 seconds; then you're off the payroll, buddy! *(Laughter.)*

And here is Jim Parker, National Sergeant-at-Arms.

We went clear off script. It says 2 minutes each for the National Vice Commanders to talk. *(Laughter.)* I call on the National Adjutant Mr. Robert Spanogle.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Commander Bock, you have been a very able, talented leader with a great temperament. You've been to all of the Departments of The American Legion, you've been to the White House, you visited our young men and women in Iraq, you went to Guantanamo Bay with the Chairman of our National Security Commission, Paul Morin. You are an outstanding Commander.

We of your staff want to take just this moment to thank you as a great leader, as our National Commander, but also as a comrade, a buddy, and, above all, our friend. We of the staff are going to present you with a gift which you already have because you carried it all over this great nation and all over the world. Each of our Directors of The American Legion and your Executive Staff have chipped in a few bucks so, we are going to present you with your laptop computer that you most ably used to keep in communication with the leadership of the nation and The American Legion family. So, that's are gift to you. Take it back to Aurora, Colorado. We would appreciate your use of it to provide us the advice and guidance that we might need. Thank you so much. *(Standing applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: This is an incredible honor. That laptop means a lot to me. I've got some personal pictures on there.

National Vice Commander T. J. Trevino, will you please take the gavel and preside over the next order of business?

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

NATL VICE COMDR TREVINO: You wouldn't let us say anything, but Tom, those thousand dollars do not include golf lessons. *(Laughter.)*

After serving this year as your National Vice Commander, I am honored to represent all members of The American Legion in presiding over the next order of business. This is the time when we present to our National Commander Thomas L. Bock of Colorado, a plaque and colors of his year in office. I now call on Past National Commander John H. Geiger of Illinois to present the plaque to our outgoing National Commander.

Presentation: Plaque and Colors to Outgoing National Commander
John H. Geiger, Past National Commander (Plaque)
Daniel A. Ludwig, Past National Commander (Colors)

PNC GEIGER: National Commander Tom Bock, you are entering the final minutes of your term as our National Commander. This 2006 National Convention now pauses to honor you for your leadership and strong personal efforts that you have demonstrated throughout this year of challenges to The American Legion and the war veterans of America.

I'm honored here today to be speaking on behalf of all of your comrades of the Legion, the officers and members of the American Legion Auxiliary, and the devoted Sons of The American Legion, your loyal family and Colorado teammates. The nation salutes you.

Tom, your professional leadership skills perfected in your long career with AT&T has provided intense focus for our comrades on the vital issues we are now facing. The American public and our political leaders have been alerted to our fundamental concerns for our national security and for those who have and do defend us. The American Legion family has been energized to protect our nation's flag, to preserve our Constitution, and to proclaim our faith in God.

...At this time PNC Geiger rapped the gavel 3 times.

Would the audience please rise and participate in the national oath of office to our Commander. Past National Commander Thomas L. Bock of Colorado, the officers, delegates and guests at this 88th National Convention rise to join in a sincere salute to you for your service, loyalty and sincerity. Our best wishes go to you, Elaine and your family for every good health and many years of comfort and success.

Tom, this impressive plaque is presented to you by this Convention and by the entire American Legion so you can bring it back to your home or office, into your community so that everyone can see that this demonstrates the love and respect that your Convention has had for you. Every Legionnaire joins in this presentation to you, Past Commander Bock.

NATL VICE COMDR TREVINO: I call on Past National Commander Daniel Ludwig of Minnesota to present the colors.

PNC LUDWIG: I now call on the 2nd District Color Guard from Portage, Indiana to present National Commander Tom Bock's Colors.

Color Guard. Hand salute. Two!

...At this time the delegation rendered a right-hand salute to the Colors.

Commander Tom, if you would join me, please. One year ago in Honolulu, you embarked on an exciting journey. It has been, I know, an extraordinary time for you, your wonder wife, Elaine, your family, the good people of Colorado, and, indeed, the entire American Legion family.

You know, for an Air Force guy from Colorado who does not like horses, you are one hell of a Rounder. *(Laughter.)* You made Rounders of us all. By your magnificent communication, motivation and inspiration, you led us in our support on the war of

terror. You led us in supporting our troops and their families. You led us in caring for veterans in need. You led us in loving and protecting our children. And you led us to within one vote in our quest to protect 'Old Glory'. *(Applause.)* You have been more than our Commander. You have been an effective, exemplary leader, a leader whom we all wanted to follow. For this, we all owe you a deep debt of gratitude.

Commander Tom, I am privileged and proud to present these Colors, your Colors, to you. I present them on behalf of the entire Legion family who love and respect you for your commitment and courage, your service and sacrifice, and your love and loyalty for God and country. My friend, may God always bless you and your family. Commander Tom, your Colors. *(Standing applause.)*

...At this time National Commander Bock resumes the Chair.

NATL COMDR BOCK: So, I can take as long as I want?

PNC LUDWIG: I think you ought to do it now. *(Laughter.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: Color Guard, retire my Colors.

...At this time the Color Guard retired his Colors. Hand salute. Two!

...The delegation stood and rendered a right-hand salute to the Colors.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Thank you, Dan. A real friend.

We have now come to a special order of business, the election of National Officers. The National Judge Advocate Phillip Onderdonk of Maryland will read the Rules of the Convention governing the nomination and election of officers.

Special Order of Business: Election of National Officers

NATL JDGA ONDERDONK: Rules for election for National Officers as they appear in the Uniform Code of Procedure for the Organization of National Convention of The American Legion.

Rule 15, last 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 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 of candidates receiving a majority vote shall be declared elected and a new ballot shall be taken for the remaining number of places to be filled. The candidate receiving the lowest number of votes on the preceding ballot shall be disqualified; except should two candidates remain to fill one place, a new ballot shall be taken.

Rule 22. The Convention will nominate and elect a National Commander, and five National Vice Commanders, in this sequence.

Rule 23. At the conclusion of balloting on National Vice Commanders, each Department Delegation Chairman shall deliver a written ballot to the tellers. Such ballots shall be in the hands of the tellers before communication is made to the National Commander for announcement of the results.

Mr. Commander, this completes the reading of the rules for election of National Officers.

Election of the National Commander of The American Legion

NATL COMDR BOCK: As Chairman of this Convention, I now appoint as Judge of the Election Charles 'Pat' Smith, Adjutant of Colorado. And as Tellers of the election John A. Demer, Adjutant Department of Iowa; Leslie McKittrick, Jr., Adjutant Department of Massachusetts; and Terry L. Woodburn, Adjutant Department of Illinois.

Will the Judge and the Tellers of the election please come forward? National Adjutant Robert Spanogle will now call the roll of the Departments. The purpose of the roll is to receive nominations for the National Commander of The American Legion.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Would you please turn on all the microphones and lights. Alabama.

(The National Adjutant calls each Department in turn.)

DELEGATE FRAZIER (AL): My name is Willis Frazier, Department Commander for the great state of Alabama. I rise before you today for the purpose of yielding to the gentleman from the great state of Massachusetts so that he may make a nomination.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Alabama passes to Massachusetts. Massachusetts.

DELEGATION CHRMN JIMMO (MA): Comrade Chairman, Steve Jimmo, Delegation Chairman and Commander for the great Department of Massachusetts, home of Plymouth Rock; Boston Common where the fire shot around the world was heard; Nathaniel Hall where the beginning of the Revolutionary War was planned. I ask the Chair to recognize Past National Commander John P. 'Jake' Comer for the purpose of nomination.

NATL COMDR BOCK: The Chair recognizes Past National Commander Comer.

PNC COMER (MA): I have been given the singular honor that I've been waiting for, for almost 20 years, to nominate for the office of National Commander, a Legionnaire of great promise, of stature in our Commonwealth, and one that you will know 365 days from now, to be one of the finest National Commanders who has ever graced this podium.

Paul Morin joined The American Legion upon his discharge, and as a proud second generation member of this Aldenville American Legion Post in Chicopee, Massachusetts. His dad, Gene, the World War II veteran, was a Charter Member, and Paul's mom, Laurie, is a member of the Unit Auxiliary; she's with us here today. And Paul was honored by his Post that conferred upon him a Gold Life Membership in 1987.

We have come to know Paul for his natural abilities and leadership when he served in his present position as Superintendent of one of our two soldiers homes in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. With that said, I would like to read a letter that was presented to Paul today by four members of his association who are here from around the nation.

> Dear Paul,
>
> Congratulations. On behalf of the National Association of State Veterans Homes. We wish you the very best as you begin the prestigious position of National Commander of The American Legion.
>
> We are proud of you; grateful for all you do for NASVH, American Legion, and our heroes.
>
> Sincerely, Doris Neibart,
> President and member of their association.

It's not an easy task to be in a leadership position, especially when you have to deal with the legislature in Massachusetts, and the Federal government. Paul, as Superintendent, has a budget of about $18 million and the control of 400 employees. We saw when he went to the State House in the Capitol in Massachusetts and worked for a

three million dollar grant to air condition the buildings so that the deserving veterans that live there could live in comfort.

When he took office there, we saw an old abandoned nurses' quarters. He opened it up for an assisted living facility. That took a long, hard task through the legislature. He did that with the help of his secretary who has been part of our whole campaign. Laurie is also with us here today. Truly a great family, family tradition.

Paul Morin will be a strong leader and an effective voice as we have had this past year with Commander Bock. He will meet with the President of the United States will pledge to him the same voice, the same power of The American Legion that's deserving of you, your credits. He will stand up for the flag of our nation, and will work to try to get a constitutional amendment to protect that flag. Through his efforts in legislation and VA&R, and as a Superintendent of the soldiers homes, his whole life is to our Preamble; to our very emblem which is for the veterans and their orphans.

So, ladies and gentlemen, this great American, has the heart and soul to do this job so very well. As he will travel throughout the world meeting with foreign dignitaries and with all of you in your various states and visits to your legislatures, and yes, into the federal government, they will witness a man who is not afraid to stand up and look them right in the eye and say, "This is what the veterans need, The American Legion way." And he will be successful, I am sure.

I am proud, as I've called him my son, as he served with me in 1987-88, as one of my Department Commanders. We've been grooming him ever since, and he's been doing it well. I'm proud to place in nomination another great son of Massachusetts, Paul A. Morin, for National Commander. *(Applause.)*

DELEGATE CHRMN SMART (AK): The Delegation from Alaska requests the Chair to recognize Jimmie Foster, for the purpose of a second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: The Chair recognizes Jimmie Foster from Alaska.

DELEGATE FOSTER (AK): It is an honor and privilege to stand before this distinguished body today and second the nomination of Paul A. Morin as our next National Commander.

Paul has a long history of selfless dedication to our great organization. Paul began his American Legion service after his discharge from the United States Army in July of 1974. He then became a member of Aldenville Post 337 in Chicopee, Massachusetts.

Paul has held most offices within his Post and was elected Post Commander in 1979. He also served as Hampden County Commander in 1993 and ultimately became the Department Commander of Massachusetts 1987-1988. Paul is well-versed on the programs of The American Legion. He knows through experience the importance of our National programs. He has worked in his Post, his District and Department on such programs as Boys State; Americanism; Children and Youth; Scholarship; Public Relations; and one that's near and dear to his heart, Homeless Veterans.

Paul's service at the National level reflects his ability to lead our great organization. He has served on Children and Youth; Convention; Foreign Relations; Public Relations; Legislative Council; Citizens Flag Alliance; Membership; Employment and Veterans Planning and Coordination Committees or Commissions. He has chaired the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and Legislative Commissions on the National level.

After serving with Paul on the Legislative Council and the Legislative Commission, I can confidently say that he is a good listener, a firm decision maker, and a strong and fair leader. The best interests in the future of our great organization are the defining factors in Paul's decisions. Paul's passion for legislative and veterans' needs and benefits will enable The American Legion to continue its proud history of effecting positive changes for our Americans veterans.

Paul is not one to shy away from any opportunity to discuss the importance of veterans issues with any member of Congress, and advance the goals and purposes of The American Legion. His selfless dedication to improve the lives of America's veterans is indeed a qualifier for his nomination as our National Commander, as National

Commander Paul will carry on the great traditions of all of our Past National Commanders, as a true advocate and do what is right for America's veterans.

I, Jimmie L. Foster, a Delegate from the Department of Alaska, proudly seconds the nomination of Paul A. Morin, as our next National Commander. *(Applause.)*

DELEGATE CHRMN COX (AZ): Larry Cox, Delegate Chairman from the great state of Arizona, proud to host the 90th Annual Convention in 2008, yield to our good friend from the state of Nebraska for the purpose of a second.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Arizona yields to Nebraska. Nebraska.

DELEGATE CHRMN LANDKAMER (NE): Jerry Landkamer, Delegation Chairman for the great state of Nebraska. I request that the Chair recognize Michael Helm, a duly elected delegate to this Convention at the podium for the purpose of a second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: The Chair recognizes Michael Helm.

DELEGATE HELM (NE): I am Michael D. Helm, a duly elected delegate to this Convention from the Department of Nebraska.

It is with great honor, pride and privilege that I stand before you today to second the nomination of Paul A. Morin to the high office of National Commander of The American Legion, America's largest veterans organizations.

Paul and I have served Past National Commander 'Jake' Comer as Department Commanders in 1987-1988. Having known him all these years has given me opportunity to watch him ascend in this great organization as he comes to this day. While he has served on many commissions and committees, he has never been just a member filling the position. He was always on his feet promoting an idea or presenting a solution to a problem.

While his many positions make a long list of accomplishments, I believe the flag ship of all those efforts is in his work in Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitations. Veteran health care needs are near and dear to Paul's heart. He brings a unique blend of The American Legion to the care of the veteran, as his position as Superintendent of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Soldiers Home in Holyoke shows. His work there and with the State Veterans Service Office as a Field Investigator, and on the Governor's Veterans Advisory Board, has served him well as he headed the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission from 2002 to 2004. He has continually been recognized for his efforts in this field.

In 2002, he was awarded the Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award by the Sampson World War II Navy Veterans. In 2004, he received the Outside Award from the Massachusetts Veterans Service Officer Association. In 2001, Paul was honored by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Anthony Principi, with the Secretary's Award for Service to our nation's veterans while he was President of the National Association of Veterans Homes.

The cornerstone of this organization is to care for the veteran who shall have borne the battle. There is no more qualified Legionnaire to carry that burden whether in the halls of Congress or the halls of our veterans facilities. It is truly a system worth saving, and Paul is prepared to lead that effort.

And so my fellow delegates, I proudly second the nomination of Paul A. Morin from the Department of Massachusetts for Commander.

...At this time a demonstration in support of National Commander Elect Morin, ensued.

(The National Adjutant continues the roll.)

DELEGATE CHRMN WAMBLE (AR): Delegate Chairman Bob Wamble proudly endorses Paul A. Morin for Commander.

DELEGATE ESKRIDGE (CA): Charlie Eskridge, Delegate to this convention, proudly endorses Morin for National Commander.

DELEGATE BOZELLA (CO): Ralph Bozella Delegate to this convention proudly endorses Paul Morin for National Commander.

DELEGATE CARNEY (CT): Ed Carney, Jr., Department Commander for Connecticut. The Department proudly endorses Paul Morin.

DELEGATE WHITE (DE): Don White from the first State and the Wonder State, Delaware, with a hoarse voice from riding 2,598 miles on the bike for the first annual Legion Legacy Ride, proudly endorses Paul Morin for Commander.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: District of Columbia.

DELEGATE SOHNS (DC): Ernest Sohns, duly elected and delegate to the convention, proudly supports and will vote for Paul A. Morin, our next National Commander.

DELEGATE WHITE (FL): Larry White, delegate from the All-Time High Department of Florida, casts its vote for our next National Commander, Paul Morin.

DELEGATE DUHEY (FR): Robert Duhey, Department of France, the birthplace of The American Legion, endorses Paul Morin for next National Commander.

DELEGATE CHRMN FRENCH (GA): Delegate Chairman, State of Georgia, home of the Little League Series winners, Columbus, Georgia, casts its vote for Paul A. Morin.

DELEGATE CHRMN JOHNSON (HI): Delegate Chairman Andrew Johnson, State of Hawaii, seconds the nomination of Paul A. Morin from Massachusetts.

IPDC DAVID E. SHERIDAN (ID): Idaho, the state that gave this organization Allen G. Lance, Past National Commander, proudly endorses the nomination for Paul Morin for our next Commander.

PDC EUGENE THOMPSON (IL): Illinois, land of Lincoln proudly seconds the nomination of Paul Morin for National Commander.

DELEGATE DELANEY (IN): Jim Delaney, Commander from Indiana, proudly seconds the nomination.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (IA): Iowa proudly endorses Paul Morin for National Commander.

DELEGATE CHRMN COOPER (KS): Ernie Cooper, Delegation Chairman from the great state of Kansas, proudly endorses Paul Morin as the next National Commander.

DELEGATE COFFMAN (KY): Randall Coffman, Delegate from the Department of Kentucky, home of Fort Knox, Fort Campbell and all those young men and women who are proudly protecting our country on the War on Terrorism, proudly seconds the nomination.

JR. PDC RAYMOND WALTERS (LA): Louisiana proudly endorses the nomination of Paul Morin for next National Commander.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE (ME): Maine proudly endorses Paul A. Morin.

DELEGATE SCHAAF (MD): David Schaaf, Department Delegation of Maryland, will proudly endorse Paul Morin as our next National Commander.

NEC JOHN HAYES (MX): The Department of Mexico, which stretches from Rio Grande, Panama Canal and includes posts in the countries of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, and Panama, a region of majestic mountains beautiful beaches, awesome archeological sites and spectacularly gorgeous senoritas, is pleased to second the nomination of Paul A. Morin.

DELEGATE CHRMN SKINNER (MI): John Skinner, Delegation Chairman of the great Department of Michigan, proudly endorses Paul Morin.

DELEGATE COX (MN): John Cox, Department Commander for the State of Minnesota, the land of the 10,000 lakes, proudly endorses Paul Morin.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Mississippi.

...no response from Mississippi.

DELEGATE CHRMN NEGER (MO): John Neger, Delegation Chairman of the sovereign state of Missouri. The Department of Missouri, the home of the first United States President Harry Truman to be a Legionnaire and the home of Past National Commander Joe Frank does second the nomination of Paul Morin for National Commander.

DELEGATE GUNDERSON (MT): Mervin Gunderson, Commander, Department of Montana. We proudly, from the Big Sky country, cast all of our delegate votes for the next Commander, Mr. Paul Morin.

...At this time there was a drop of balloons on to the convention floor and a celebration in support of Paul A. Morin.

DELEGATE VAUGHN (NV): Tony Vaughn, Department Commander of Nevada, the Silver State, host to next year's convention, proudly endorses Paul Morin as our next National Commander.

DELEGATE CHRMN SMITH (NH): Charles Smith, Delegate Chairman from the state of New Hampshire. Home for many years of the Old Man of the Mountain until his tragic fall in May 2003. No one, not even the king's men, could put him together again. I proudly endorse and second the nomination of Paul A. Morin for our next National Commander.

DELEGATE CHRMN GUGLIUZZA (NJ): Joe Gugliuzza, the Delegation Chairman from the Garden State, New Jersey. We proudly second the nomination of Paul Morin.

NEC BRUCE JERGENSON (NM): The great state of New Mexico, land of enchantment, proudly endorses Paul Morin for National Commander.

DELEGATE CHRMN CLARK (NY): Delegation Chairman for Department of New York proudly seconds the nomination.

DELEGATE HEDRICK (NC): Jerry Hedrick, NEC North Carolina, proudly seconds the nomination of Comer's clan Paul Morin for National Commander.

DELEGATE WAYNE SATROM (ND): North Dakota proudly endorses Paul Morin in the home of National Vice Commander Seb Roll.

DELEGATE CHRMN BALSER (OH): Bill Balser, Delegate Chairman from Ohio, the home of Past National Champion Ohio State University and Brutus Buckeye, proudly supports Paul Morin for National Commander.

DELEGATE LONGENBAUGH (OK): B. J. Longenbaugh, Commander of Oklahoma, proudly nominates Paul Morin the next National Commander. Oklahoma's also the state of the greatest political comedian ever born, Will Rogers.

DELEGATE HEALY (OR): Bernie Healy, Department Commander state of Oregon. The great state of Oregon proudly endorses Paul Morin National Commander.

DELEGATE JUNKERMAN (PA): George Junkerman, Commander of the great state of Pennsylvania, also known as the Keystone State. We have the Little League World Series, plus the Pittsburgh Steelers for our National Championship. Our 232 delegates from the State of Pennsylvania second the nomination for Paul Morin.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Philippines.

... no response from Philippines.

DELEGATE RODRIGUEZ (PR): Alberto Rodriguez, Department Commander Puerto Rico. We proudly second and all delegates cast our vote with Paul Morin as National Commander.

DELEGATE PYTKA (RI): James Pytka, NEC, Rhode Island. Having caucus and voted, we commit its entire delegate strength to the candidate from our neighbor, Massachusetts home of the New England Patriots, which consistently beats Pittsburgh.

DELEGATE CHRMN WALSH (SC): Delegation Chairman Richard Walsh proudly cast all our delegate votes for the next National Commander, Paul Morin.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: South Dakota.

DELEGATE BAATRUP (SD): Gunner Baatrup, Department Commander Department of South Dakota, birthplace of American Legion Baseball and the location of Mount Rushmore, shrine of Democracy, proudly seconds the nomination of Paul A. Morin.

DELEGATE CHRMN MITCHELL (TN): I am Randall Mitchell, Delegation Chairman and Commander from the great state of Tennessee, known to be the Volunteer State home of the Oratorical Champion for 2006, and the Tennessee Titans. We proudly endorse and cast all of its eligible votes for National Commander Paul Morin.

DELEGATE SPARKS (TX): Butch Sparks, Department Commander for the State of Texas, the home where we sent the Titans from Houston. We're also the home of two great Past National Commanders, Joe L. Matthews and John Brieden, and our first lady of Texas, Kathryn Morris, Past President. We highly endorse the young man from the small state of Massachusetts, Paul Morin for National Commander.

DELEGATE FISHER (UT): Richard Fisher, Commander of the Department of Utah. We proudly endorse Paul Morin for National Commander. We thank you all for coming to Utah for our convention. *(Applause.)*

DELEGATE HOWE (VT): Les Howe, Commander from the state of Vermont, the Green Mountain State and home Calvin Coolidge, proudly casts all its votes for Paul Morin.

DELEGATE CHRMN REISTAD (VA): Brett Reistad, Delegation Chairman Department of Virginia. The Department of Virginia proudly endorses Paul A. Morin of the Department of Massachusetts for our next National Commander.

DELEGATE ANGELL (WA): Jim Angell, Alternate NEC Department of Washington, the Evergreen State home of Boeing, Microsoft and Starbucks Coffee, proudly seconds the nomination of Paul Morin for National Commander.

DELEGATE GRAHAM (WV): Joe Graham, Past Department Commander of the great state of West Virginia. The home of three Past National Commanders proudly casts our entire delegate vote for Paul A. Morin for our next National Commander.

DELEGATE COONEY (WI): Chuck Cooney, Department Commander, delegation of the state of Wisconsin proudly endorse Paul Morin for the office of National Commander.

DELEGATE MILLER (WY): Terry Miller from the Department of Wyoming, home of Devil's Tower, the very first National Monument of the United States, proudly endorses Paul Morin for our next National Commander

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Mr. Commander that completes the roll call.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Thank you Mr. Adjutant. Microphone No. 2.

DELEGATE NYLAND: I would like to poll No. 1, since they gave me the challenge of removing Microphone No. 2. Kathy Nyland, Department Service Officer and a proud delegate to the 88th National Convention of The American Legion, representing the beautiful Evergreen State of Washington. Mr. Commander, in view of the fact that there is but one candidate for National Commander, I move that we suspend the rules of this convention, close nominations and that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote for the entire delegate strength of this convention, and that Mr. Paul A. Morin, Department of Massachusetts, 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.

NATL COMDR BOCK: There's a motion before us to suspend the rules of this convention pertaining to the election of the National Commander and the nomination and election of the National Vice Commanders, which rule 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. All those in favor of the motion signify by saying 'aye.' Those opposed 'no.' Motion carried. Microphone No. 1.

MICROPHONE NO. 1: Mr. Commander, I move that nominations for the office of National Commander be closed.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Is there a second?

...Second from the floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: The motion to close nominations is a non-debatable motion and requires a two-thirds vote. All those in favor signify by saying 'aye.' Opposed say 'no.' Motion carried. Microphone No. 1.

DELEGATE RUST (WY): Mr. Commander, Julie Rust from the Department of Wyoming. As a delegate to this convention, I move that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this convention, and that Paul A. Morin be elected National Commander by acclamation.

...Second from the floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Hearing a second. There's a motion before us that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this convention, and that Paul A. Morin be elected National Commander by acclamation. All those in favor of this motion signify by saying 'aye.' Those opposed say 'no.' Motion carried. National Adjutant.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: As National Adjutant, I cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this convention for the election of Paul A. Morin of Massachusetts as the National Commander of The American Legion. *(Applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: I now declare Paul A. Morin of Massachusetts the National Commander of The American Legion. Will the Sergeant-at-Arms assist the new National Commander of The American Legion to the platform? His sons, Paul and Pat Morin, escort him, as well as his grandson Jacob and son-in-law Brian St. Pierre and friend Jim Peetz.

...At this time a demonstration in support of National Commander Elect Morin ensued.

NATL COMDR BOCK: The Chair recognizes Past National Commander John Geiger 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
John H. Geiger, Illinois, Past National Commander

Congratulations to you, Legionnaire Paul A. Morin, upon your nomination and election as the National Commander of The American Legion for 2006-2007. This event forges a lifelong memory for your proud family and the dedicated and faithful members of your Department of Massachusetts.

The delegates of this convention recognize your long devotion to America's war veterans, to The American Legion and to your state and community. Your strong leadership skills, planning and energy must now be directed to reinforcing and advancing our great organization throughout the United States.

The principle objectives of your term of office and leadership will be defined by the mandates of this convention and, increasingly, by events throughout the world. Every officer of The American Legion, our national staff, and the members of the Legion family must be alert and prepared for your calls for action. When you let them know, they should be able to react and perform as we expect. Each of us here in Salt Lake City and at home should join in a personal pledge to actively support you in this high responsibility of service to our God and country.

Paul Morin, if you do agree to assume this high office, please step forward to pledge your oath of office. Commander Morin, raise your right hand and repeat after me giving your full name loudly and proudly.

...National Commander-elect Paul A. Morin repeated the Oath of Office following the lead of Past National Commander Geiger.

PNC GEIGER: Congratulations National Commander Paul Morin.

...Standing Applause.

PNC GEIGER: I think there's a red cap up here somewhere, but Elaine's a little nervous. Now the daughter's have brought the pins, they know how to put them on.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Ladies and gentlemen, the 2006-2007 National Commander of The American Legion, Paul A. Morin. *(Standing applause.)*

Acceptance Speech: Newly Elected National Commander
Paul A. Morin, Massachusetts

Thank you all for your vote of confidence in electing me as your 88th National Commander. Thank you to my Post, the Aldenville Post 337, and to my early mentor in The American Legion, Rainey 'Sparky' Harnish, a World War II veteran from the greatest generation. To Paul and Joe and Post Commander Glenn for being here today, also our Past Unit President and Past Department President Jackie Larishell, thank you for being here. Thank you to the mighty 3rd District for the many years of support to the Department of Massachusetts, and especially to Team Massachusetts for all they've done on my behalf to make this day a reality.

A special thanks to Joe and Nancy, Mark and Joyce, Bob and Caroline, Mike and Carol, Leo and Marie, Past Department Commanders Milton Jim and Commander Steve and Department Adjutant Whiting. Thank you to Past National Commander Geiger for administrating the oath of office and shortly, to Past National Commander Joe Frank who will be presenting me my Colors.

And to Jake, I give a special thanks for his years of guidance and mentoring though he might say, suffering, and for placing my name in nomination today. Jake and I have no doubt in our mind that Eileen, a very special lady to Jake, to the Department of Massachusetts, and to The American Legion and to me, is looking down on these proceedings with pride.

Thanks to my colleagues Phil, Bob, his son Jackson, Duane and Barry who are here today representing the National Association of State Veterans Home, the largest provider of long-term care to American veterans. Special thanks to the Department of New York Adjutant Dick Pedro for his friendship and guidance. To Past National President Pearl and her husband Bing for the years of friendship. Thank you for being here.

To the Past Department Commanders and Presidents of the class of 1987-1988, thanks for your years of support and friendship. Thank you to the Past National Commanders for their friendships and guidance, many of whom are here on this stage with us today. Many thanks to our national staff for their assistance through the years and their dedication to the greatest veterans organization in this world.

Please join me in a special thanks to a special circle of friends who form the backbone of our national organization and their wives who give so much to us. To our National Adjutant, a great friend and leader of our organization and to his wife, Ruth Spanogle. To John and Nancy Sommer, to Dan and Cathy Wheeler, and Ron and Drusilla Brooks for all they do for us.

To a lady, as I mentioned in my nomination speech, who has been by my side, working along very diligently on this campaign, and who is also my right-hand. She is my administrative assistant at our state veterans home in Holyoke. Lorie, thank you for all you've done for me.

I would also like to introduce, whom you've already met, a very special group who have given of themselves in so many ways on my behalf in service to my fellow veterans and family. She is a special lady who gave of herself to her children and taught each of us that service to others and to one's faith was a way of life: my mother, Laurie Morin.

God has blessed Elaine and I with six wonderful children. We are both so proud of each of them and are so grateful they have taken the time to be with us through this convention. To daughter Stacy and Son-in-Law Brian and our first grandchild Jacob, who has truly been an angel. To son, Paul, and his friend Amy, to sons Jim and Pat, to our daughter Pam who could not be with us, and to dad's princess, Page, thank you for all being here.

I definitely would not be realizing this dream today without the love and sacrifice of my best friend and confidant who has supported me in all my journeys and has never wavered my love, my life, Elaine.

Please welcome my American Legion family. I have asked them to come forth. Our newly elected National President JoAnn, the National Sons of The American Legion

Commander Earl, please come forth. Together, we have made a pledge to work as one in all we do for America and for The American Legion family. We ask you to join with us in raising millions of dollars for the National Emergency Fund, for the National Child Welfare Foundation, and for the Veterans Creative Arts Festival. I know together we can achieve those goals.

Thank you to all the Departments that I had the honor of visiting and for the courtesies extended to me by each of you. When I had to honor of speaking at your Department conventions, you heard me say that the guiding light of my service is representative in the two outer rings in the Emblem of our organization: to care for our fellow veterans and the children of our nation. As I pledged earlier, I know that, as a family, we will raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Creative Arts Festival. We will continue to volunteer and to work with the VA and the state veterans homes. I promise you that as your Commander I will fight with every last breath for assured funding for VA medical care and medicare reimbursement so eligible veterans can take their medicare benefits to the VA. I will work hard to prevent the reduction of the VA budget. I will work to improve accessibility to the quality of health care provided by the VA and to ensure that compensation is provided in a timely manner and not six months to a year.

I ask you to join me in supporting our newest program to help our newest era of veterans who have suffered the ravishes of war: Heroes to Hometowns. Secretary Rumsfeld recognized the need to assist severely injured servicemembers once they returned to their hometowns and he has also recognized the need to partner with The American Legion. To make this program successful together, the national staff and the Departments and the Posts will provide direct assistance to severely injured servicemembers when they return to their hometowns. I will be visiting our office in the Pentagon in the next few days. The staff and I will also be going to two very special places: Walter Reed and Bethesda Hospital, along with my National [Auxiliary] President, to visit with the young servicemen who are now our hometown heroes.

I have every intention to provide a strong voice for our organization. Yes, Mr. President, Mr. Secretary, and members of Congress, you will not stop this Commander from speaking for what is right for America's veterans. We have earned it, they deserve it and The American Legion will fight for it, I promise you that. *(Applause and cheers.)*

The children of America will not be forgotten under my watch. The American Legion will continue to lead the way with the Child Welfare Foundation. We'll continue our proud tradition of offering programs that foster youth leadership like The American Legion Baseball, the Oratorical Program, Boys and Girls Nation. We will continue to award millions of dollars as you do so well to the youth of America.

We will fight together for what is right for America. We will stand against the ACLU. We'll stand for preserving "Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance and "In God We Trust" on our currency. We will stand with the Boy Scouts of America and fight for the re-acceptance on our military bases. We will stand firmly against terrorism. We will stand in support of our military troops. We will send them off with honor and welcome them home with pride. We will fight so they have the resources they need to defend freedom globally and return safely home. And we will take care of their families when they are away.

Sustaining and increasing membership is a very important issue. In my year as Commander, I only ask that you equal your membership plus one, that each Post creates a buddy system. Together we will increase our membership. I ask each of you to mentor someone in and through our great organization to help secure its future. Yes, members of the United States Senate, we will not go away. We will be back until the day you pass a Constitutional Amendment to protect flag. *We the people have the right to vote for a Constitutional Amendment to protect 'Ole Glory' and you will not deter this Commander from pursuing that goal.* Yes, Mr. President, I need you to be by my side as you promised us this morning, that the constitutional amendment will happen. *(Applause.)*

I need your help this year in reporting all the good that you do on the Post Consolidated Report. Last year we only had 50 percent reporting. If we work together to raise that total to 75 percent, we truly will let Congress know whom we must report to, that yes, we are the best at what we do. I ask you to be by my side in making that pledge to increase those reports to 75 percent. I know we can do it.

My motto this year is what I believe where we need to be, "back to basics" and together we win. I pledge I will improve access to quality health care for our veterans. I pledge that we will continue to nurture the spirit of our nation's children. And I further pledge that The American Legion will do what's right for America and with those accomplishments, our ranks will grow.

As your Commander, I pledge to serve with honor and respect for our great organization and those who have come before me. I also promise to carry the voice of the American veterans through the halls of congress. I need you, our National President needs you, and our National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion needs you. If we are going to accomplish these goals, to take the torch that has been given to you and I, a torch of a great legacy, and to leave it to the next generation, we need you to walk by our side together as one in our service to the American way of life. Are we ready to do that? Yes! *(Applause.)*

Thank you for your trust and for your dedication to our great organization. May God keep us in the palm of His hand until we meet again in service to America. Thank you and God bless. *(Applause.)*

NATL COMDR BOCK: Microphone No. 1.

DELEGATE SPARKS (TX): Buzz Sparks, the Department Commander from Texas. 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.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Is there a second?

...Second from the floor.

NATL COMDR BOCK: All those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed, same sign. Motion carried. We will now entertain nominations for the office of National Vice Commander from the floor. Microphone No. 1.

DELEGATE TURNER (AL): Wayne Turner, Department of Alabama NEC. I ask that the Chair recognize the Department Commander from Alabama, Mr. Willis Frazier, for the purpose of making a nomination.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Willis Frazier from Alabama.

DELEGATE FRAZIER (AL): It is a pleasure and an honor for me to stand before you today to place in nomination for this prestigious position of National Vice Commander for an outstanding Alabamian from the great Department of Alabama.

Byron White is a 21-year member of The American Legion. He has served multiple years as Post Adjutant, Post Commander, District Commander and Department Executive Committeeman. He has risen through the chairs to Department Commander. Along the way, he served on and chaired numerous commissions and committees. At the national level he is noted for his ideas and suggestions. He was appointed to the Trophies Awards and Ceremony Committee. After his first meeting, he was appointed as vice chairman.

As an army retiree, he began as an infantry private, rose in the ranks as Sergeant Squad Leader, and then was accepted to OCS. He served two years in Viet Nam as an infantryman earning the Combat Infantry Badge; Silver Star; Soldier's Medal; five Bronze Stars, two with valor; five Army Commendation Medals, two with valor; and five Purple Heart medals. He also eamed many other awards and decorations, retiring after 20 years and achieving the rank of Major.

Byron was a junior ROTC instructor at Hope High School in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. His unit was rated number one in Alabama, and one of the top five units in the nation. He had remarkable success in salvaging at-risk students through his tough love policy and teaching responsibility and requiring excellence. No excuse.

Byron has a degree in history from Phifer College in North Carolina, a Masters in International Relations from Boston University and graduated from the United States Army Command residence course. Noted for his community service, Byron served on two advisory boards at the Tuscaloosa VAMC. He has been President of the Kiwanas Club, organized and served as Adjutant and Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 11, Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He is also a member of the VFW, DAV, VVA and the CIA. He has been named Veteran of the Year and Citizen of the Year in Tuscaloosa, and was honored as a special veteran during pre-game activities at the University of Alabama football games.

From any prospective, American Legion activities, service to veterans, service to community, state and nation, Byron White is superbly qualified for the position of National Vice Commander.

Mr. Chairman, I place in nomination Byron White, a friend of mine from the great state of Alabama, for the prestigious position of National Vice Commander.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Microphone No. 1.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Mr. Commander, request that the Chair recognize David O. Warnken for the purpose of a nomination.

DELEGATE WARNKEN (KS): My name is David Warnken. I'm the National Executive Committeeman for the Department of Kansas, a duly registered delegate to this National Convention.

It is my great honor to place in nomination for National Vice Commander from the Department of Kansas, our own Elgin Wahlborg.

Elgin has served most recently as the Alternate National Executive Committeeman from the Department of Kansas. He has served that position with distinction and honor. He has served as the Department Commander of Kansas 2001-2002, leading the membership to its first increase in many years. As a member of our Kansas City, Kansas, Post No. 18, he served many offices, including a term as Post Commander. During that term, he led his membership to exceed 100 percent, earning the Gold Brigade for his efforts. He didn't stop there. He has continued to serve his Post as finance officer and has always been there to help cook the meals and even cleanup after the functions at the Post. At the District level, Elgin served as Commander and Vice Commander prior to serving as Department Commander. He spent a year as Department Vice Commander and Membership Chairman.

Elgin earned his eligibility to belong to our American Legion through his service in the United States Army. He also served in the Kansas National Guard. In his hometown of our Kansas City, he served as Governor Administrator of the Moose Lodge, Director of the local Chamber of Commerce and Chairman of the Board of the local rural water district for 25 years. He is a member of the Presbyterian Church. He enjoys beating his opponents in a game of pool, is an avid fisherman and shoots a mean game of golf. Elgin is now retired and can devote all of his time as National Vice Commander. Elgin and his lovely wife, Margaret, have one son and one daughter and are blessed with one granddaughter and one grandson.

It is a special privilege for me to nominate my good and loyal friend, Elgin Wahlborg, for the office of National Vice Commander 2006-2007.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Microphone No. 1.

NEC OWEN (ME): Robert Owen, National Executive Committeeman from the Department of Main, requests the Chair recognize Past National Commander Anthony Jordan for purposes of a nomination.

NATL COMDR BOCK: The Chair recognizes Anthony Jordan.

PNC JORDAN: It is my honor to nominate a U.S. Navy veteran who served from 1965 to 1969. The Department of Maine candidate has been an active Legionnaire at all levels of The American Legion.

I come before you today to place in nomination an outstanding, dedicated, sincere and devoted Legionnaire for the high office of National Vice Commander, who has made a total commitment to The American Legion. The candidate I'm speaking about got

involved with The American Legion many years ago while attending American Legion Boys State in 1964.

He was born in 1947, raised in the great state of Maine, educated in the Caribou School System, graduating from high school in 1965. He furthered his education by receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from Husson College in 1979.

Maine's candidate I'm presenting is a 31-year member of The American Legion and member of the Thomas O. Cyr Post 147 in Madawaska, Maine. He served in many positions within the Post, including three years as Post Commander, two of those years his Post had an all-time high in membership. He served as a County Commander for three years and as a District Commander, receiving a national award for membership that year. On the Department level, he was appointed Judge Advocate for the state of Maine. For three years he served as Department Americanism officer, served as a Second Vice Commander, Department First Vice Commander, and as Department Commander from the year 2005-2006. Our candidate has served on many Department committees and also on the national level: Vice Chairman of National Security Council from 1999 to 2002; National Veterans Preference Committee for a three-year term.

He has served on many community and civic organizations, also to include the 40&8, a life member of the VFW, honorary life member of ANAVICUS.

When he makes eye-to-eye contact with you or shakes your hand, he is sincere. He is a good listener and usually greets and leaves you with a smile. He is a good communicator with great leadership ability, and I'm glad to call him my friend. Lloyd and his wife, Linda, reside at Madawaska Lake in Stockholm, Maine. They have three daughters, one son, three granddaughters and five grandsons.

As a Delegate to this National Convention, it is my high honor to place in nomination the name of Lloyd H. Woods from Stockholm, Maine, to serve as National Vice Commander for the year 2006-2007.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Microphone No. 1.

DELEGATE LORING (TN): J. B. Loring from the state of Tennessee. I'm about to miss my plane flight, so I yield to our Commander, Randall Mitchell.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Chair recognizes Randall Mitchell.

DELEGATE MITCHELL (TN): I come before you today to place a true Legionnaire, a 52-year member of the Summers Whitehead Post 14 in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Our candidate for National Vice Commander joined the United States Army in 1951 upon graduating from the University of Chattanooga, where he continued to serve in the Army Reserve until his retirement in 1974.

Our candidate for National Vice Commander has served in about every post position one can imagine, including Vice Commander and Post Commander. He served District 3 as a District Commander, and was elected to the high office of the Department Commander in 1968, serving in 1968 and 1969. Later, he was elected as the Alternate National Executive Committeeman for the great state of Tennessee in 1994 to 1996. He was then elected as our National Executive Committeeman for the years 1998 to 2000. He continues to serve The American Legion in many ways in our Department offices, as well as numerous national appointments.

Bob is married to a great lady, Ellen. They reside in Chattanooga, Tennessee. They have three children and are expecting their seventh grandchild in September.

Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure to place in nomination for the high office of National Vice Commander, a true friend, a true member of the great state of Tennessee, the Volunteer State, a veteran Legionnaire, Robert Lahiere.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Microphone No. 1.

DELEGATE JENSEN (UT): Thad S. Jensen, Chairman Utah delegation, requests that the Chair recognize Bill Christoffersen, senior NECman from Utah, for the purpose of a nomination.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Chair recognizes William Christoffersen.

DELEGATE CHRISTOFFERSEN (UT): I'm a delegate from the Department of Utah.

It is a great honor for me to be able to stand here and nominate a young man who I've known for many years who, when he was born, I was there practically. This young man and his family have been a Legion family since day one.

Al Setterberg was a son of the Legion right after he was born, and stayed that way and was active with his mother and dad in The American Legion.

He's a Vietnam vet. He served in the Army. When he got back, he joined The American Legion in 1968. Since that time this young man has done many things. First of all, in his own Post, which was somewhat active, he got involved and held all the offices to Second Vice Commander. He's still the Adjutant. So, bless his heart, he's at the grass level. In the District, as has been Second Vice Commander, First Vice Commander, and Commander two times in a row in the District.

And at the Department level, Alan has served very honorably for our great Department. He was Area Commander three times and a Vice Commander. And when he was Commander, he and his wife, who was Auxiliary President, traveled our state extensively. He hit an all-time high for Utah in membership that year, something we're all proud of.

In addition to that, he's been Chairman on our Americanism programs, the oratorical contest. We in Utah still have a beauty pageant, and we're proud of that. We've had some great queens. They've represented us well at the VA Hospital. Alan has always been there.

It's a high honor for me and I humbly place the name of Alan Setterberg for your next National Vice Commander from the state of Utah.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Microphone No. 3.

DELEGATE GOVERNOR (NY): I have moved here from No. 4. Ken Governor, duly elected delegate to the convention from the Empire State of New York. Mr. Commander, I move the nominations for the offices of National Vice Commander be closed.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Is there a second?

...Second from the floor.

It's non-debatable. All those in favor, give their consent by saying, 'aye.' Opposed say, 'no.' Motion carried.

Microphone No. 1.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: I move that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote for the entire delegate strength of this convention, and that Byron W. White from Alabama, Elgin Wahlborg from Kansas, Lloyd H. Woods from Maine, Robert C. Lahiere from Tennessee and Alan C. Setterberg from Utah be elected National Vice Commanders by acclamation.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Is there a second?

...Second from the floor.

Hearing a second, all those in favor give their consent by saying, 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Mr. Adjutant.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: As National Adjutant, I cast one vote representing the entire delegate strength of this convention for the election as National Vice Commanders of The American Legion: Byron W. White, Alabama; Elgin Wahlborg, Kansas; Lloyd H. Woods, Maine; Bob Lahiere, Tennessee; Alan C. Setterberg, Utah, as National Vice Commanders of The American Legion.

NATL COMDR BOCK: I now declare that Byron W. White, Alabama; Elgin Wahlborg, Kansas; Lloyd Woods, Maine; Robert C. Lahiere, Tennessee; and Alan Setterberg, Utah, are elected National Vice Commanders of The American Legion.

Will the new National Vice Commanders come to the platform to be introduced.

DELEGATE FRAZIER (AL): I introduce to you a great and outstanding Legionnaire from the Department of Alabama, Byron White, who is our National Vice

Commander for 2006-2007.

DELEGATE WARNKEN (KS): It's my privilege to introduce to you National Vice Commander from Kansas, Elgin Wahlborg.

PNC JORDAN (ME): It is my pleasure to introduce to you Lloyd H. Woods, from the Department of Maine, serving as National Vice Commander for the ensuing year.

DELEGATE MITCHELL (TN): It is my pleasure, Bob, on behalf of the Department of Tennessee to pin you and introduce you to this convention.

NATL VICE COMDR LAHIERE: I'm most proud of the confidence that you have given me to represent this great organization as National Vice Commander. I'm very pleased to serve in that capacity, and I will serve and back this new National Commander, Paul Morin, 100 percent. I will follow the mandates of the National Executive Committee of this great organization.

DELEGATE CHRISTOFFERSEN (UT): Delegates and everyone to this convention, it's my high honor to introduce to you this young man, Alan Setterberg, from the great state of Utah as your next National Vice Commander.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Chair recognizes Past National Commander 'Jake' Comer.

PNC COMER: This is not in the script, but we're proud to. Elaine, come forward. This is something we generally do back stage each year, because each year the past First Ladies of The American Legion presents a pin to the new First Lady to wear during her term.

So, with us here today is Claudette Jordan of Maine, Mary Ludwig of Minnesota, Graetian Thiesen of California, and Jean Keller of Illinois, all past First Ladies presenting Elaine with her pin.

NATL COMDR BOCK: I now call on Past National Commander Joseph J. Frank of Sunset Hills, Missouri to present the Colors to our incoming National Commander.

Presentation: Colors To Incoming National Commander

PNC FRANK: Please rise for the presentation of our National Colors to Commander-Elect Paul A. Morin by the Color Guard of the 2nd District, Department of Indiana.

Color Guard, present the Colors of the new National Commander of The American Legion. Right hand salute. Two!

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

Commander Morin, you stand before this convention having received a unanimous vote of confidence in your ability to represent not only Legionnaires across this nation, but also all American veterans in the coming months. I and the delegates know that you are the right man to carry this great organization forward in the coming year.

You and I have known each other for a long time, my friend, and I want to congratulate you personally on your election to National Commander of this 88th National Convention of The American Legion. We have been friends for a long time, Paul, and I know you'll be a great Commander.

The United States Flag and the Crimson Banner of the National Commander, I am honored to present to you as you begin your year of service to this great organization that we love so much. I know you will protect that banner and that flag, and under your leadership, you will lead this great organization to new heights. And with your abilities with veterans dealing with health care and veterans issues, I know that we will be a better American Legion when you are going out in Reno, Nevada, sir.

Color Guard, retire the Colors. Right hand salute. Two.

NATL COMDR MORIN: My thanks to Past National Commander Frank for presenting me my Colors today.

NATL COMDR BOCK: I now call on the National Adjutant.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: The Constitution By-Laws of The American Legion require that the National Committee meet within 24 hours of the conclusion of this 88th

Annual National Convention. Therefore, the call for the Post National Executive Committee meeting will follow immediately the adjournment of this convention. That meeting will be in Convention Center Room 151 A, C and G, the lower level of this convention center.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Is there any further business to come before this convention? Hearing none, please uncover as the outgoing National Chaplain, Bishop Steven E. Wright, offers a benediction.

Benediction
Bishop Steven E. Wright, Utah, National Chaplain

Prior to offering the benediction, I've been asked to notify you of the recent passing away yesterday of Reverend George Romney, Past National Chaplain 1981-1982.

Please join me now.

Our Father in heaven, we thank Thee as we conclude this convention for all Thou has given us. We pray for and commend to Thee those of our number who have passed away this year.

Now, Father, we thank Thee for the great leadership we have had during this past year and for the efforts of all Legionnaires everywhere. Will Thou bless those who have served us so well this last year, and bless their families.

We pray for a special blessing to be upon our new Commander and National Officers and for their families, who support them with such sacrifice and love. Will Thou strengthen and bless them. As we have been reminded this day, will Thou bless us to be prepared to answer the call when we are called. May we do so humbly and readily and with vigor and with determination.

May we keep Thee foremost in our hearts, we pray, asking You to be with us as we leave this convention that we may do so with Thy peace and in Thy safety we humbly pray, offering this moment to each. Amen.

NATL COMDR BOCK: The Color Guard will retire the Flag of the United States.

...At this time the delegates stood and rendered a right-hand salute to the Colors.

The time is 1:59 p.m. I now declare this 88th Annual National Convention of The American Legion adjourned, *sine die*.

...At 1:59 p.m., the 88th Annual National Convention of The American Legion adjourned.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANNUAL RECIPIENT(S)

National American Legion Distinguished Service Medal Award: Awarded annually for outstanding service to the nation and to the programs of The American Legion.
RECIPIENT: Major General Patrick H. Brady, USA (Ret.)—Sumner, WA

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: Jose Albert Pujols (Albert Pujols)—St. Louis Cardinals

Bob Feller Award: Awarded annually to that American Legion Baseball player recording the greatest number of strikeouts during the regional tournaments and World Series of American Legion Baseball.
RECIPIENT: Robby Broach, American Legion Post 175—Metairie, LA

Commissioner of Baseball Trophy: Awarded annually at the Major League World Series to that baseball team which becomes the National Champion as a result of playing in The American Legion World Series.
RECIPIENT: American Legion Post 175—Metairie, LA

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: Brady Shoemaker, American Legion Post 346—Terre Haute, IN

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: American Legion Post 346, Terre Haute, IN

The Frank N. Belgrano, Jr. Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department which has rendered the most outstanding service during the year to the program of the Boy Scouts of America.
RECIPIENT: Department of Illinois

George W. Rulon Baseball Player of the Year: A Plaque is presented to recipient by appropriate official upon conclusion of The American Legion Baseball World Series. Citation is presented to recipient at a special Hall of Fame ceremony at Cooperstown, NY, the following summer.
RECIPIENT: Joseph M. Walsh, American Legion Post 79—Weymouth, MA

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: American Legion Post 175, Metairie, LA

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): David Baudry, Brady Benoit, Anthony Longo, Post 175—Metairie, LA

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: Brady Shoemaker, American Legion Post 346—Terre Haute, IN

Junior Shooting Sports Trophy: Awarded annually in four categories to the top performing Individual and Team in the Sporter and Precision categories competing in the annual USA Shooting National Junior Olympic Air Rifle Championship who are members of clubs and teams affiliated with The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program.
RECIPIENT(s):

Precision Team:	**DuBois Rifle and Pistol Club (PA)—Michael Kulbacki, Justin Pentz, Kyle Smith, and Kyle Yebermetsky.**
Precision Individual:	**Michael Kulbacki—DuBois Rifle and Pistol Club (PA)**
Sporter Team:	**Homestead 4-H Shooting Club (NE)—Cole Bures, Micaela Jochum, Alex Niefeldt, and Alyssa Wolken.**
Sporter Individual:	**Micaela Jochum—Homestead 4-H Shooting Club (NE)**

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: Brady Shoemaker, American Legion Post 346—Terre Haute, IN

The Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department within the continental limits in the United States showing the greatest Americanism activity in use of The American Legion School Medal Awards.
RECIPIENT: Department of Florida

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: Brady Shoemaker, American Legion Post 346—Terre Haute, IN

Spafford National Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department of The American Legion having within its jurisdiction the winner of the National High School Oratorical Contest.
RECIPIENT: Department of Tennessee

Francis M. Redington Sportsmanship Award: Awarded annually to the athlete competing in The American Legion Junior Air Rifle National Championship who best exemplifies good sportsmanship and fair play.
RECIPIENT(s): Christina Dutra—Grampian, Pennsylvania
DuBois Rifle and Pistol Club—DuBois Post 17

William Randolph Hearst Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department attaining the greatest number of percentage points compiled from information contained in the Consolidated Post Reports, and supporting Department narrative.
RECIPIENT: Department of Virginia

American Legion & Scouting Square Knot Award: This award is designed to recognize American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion members who are actively involved in the Scouting program. This award is not

meant to be a selective or limited award, but one that is available to any American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion member who completes the requirements for the award. The Award is meant to recognize dedication and work required by an American Legion, American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion member to assist in furthering the Scouting program in The American Legion.
RECIPIENT(s): 2005—John Radke, Sr., Harold Lake, John Pavik, Richard Bernardini, Charles Pakula, William Perkins, Robert Litten, Daniel Travers, John Sullivan, Michael Mangino, Dennis Gaynor, Gertrude Gaynor, William Luongo, Richard Fiesel, Sandra Luongo, Terry Bernier, Riley Hughes. 2006—Joe Sinceworth, Robert Lohne, Edward Kemper, Charles Hall, Paul Corriere, Jr., Maynard Unger, Alan Brenner, Rodger Brown, David Dohm, Jorge Montes, George Lude, Marlene Zimmerman, Jimmie Davis, Gary Pressley, Phillip Keller, Eugene Mozal, Michael Montemorano, Kemper Dadisman, Paul Loefke, Stanley Weinstein, Bernard Flatow, Joseph Quaderer, Ted Holz, III, Charles Hulse, Wesley Elder, John Garvey, Anders Martenson, III, Verdery Roberson, John Komar, Mark LeClair, Warren Higginbotham, Robert Conlon, William Rich, Thomas Clingerman, James Colson, Kenneth Shelby, Carla Scott, Jeff Wilkes, Ronald Christensen, Milan Dubois, Jr., John A. Burrell, Peter N. Mastopoulos, Dale Striechert, Robert W. Paiva, Gregory Johl, Richard L. Willhite. (2006 winners as of: 11/27/06)

Canadian Friendship Award: Awarded by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee at such times and places as may be consistent and appropriate. It shall be awarded to specific individuals who shall be war veterans within the accepted meaning of the term and members of authentic veterans' organization in Canada. It shall be awarded to such individuals in recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans' affairs and in the development and perpetuation of the spirit of international good will and comradeship between the United States and Canada and between their veterans' organization and The American Legion.
RECIPIENT(s): Edward Huitema and Edith Bourgoin

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: Department of Montana, Department of Virginia

Employer of the Year Award for Hiring Veterans: Awarded to an employer in recognition of outstanding achievement in the employment and retraining of veterans.
RECIPIENT(s): (2005)

Category I—Robert J. Albert Printing Service, Inc.—Clearwater, FL
Category II—ITS Medical Systems, LLC —Duluth, GA
Category III—Alutiiq-Wackenhut Security Services—Fort Bragg, NC

Note: The 2006 Employer of the Year Awards will not be determined until December 31, 2006.

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): (2005)

LVER of the Year: **Walter A. Pollock, Jr.— Columbus, GA**
DVOP of the Year: **Jerry Roehl— Boise, ID**
ES Office of the Year: **William C. Neal & William T. Ousley, Office Managers**
Escarosa Career Center Veteran's Program—Pensacola, FL

Note: The 2006 Employment Service Awards will not be determined until December 31, 2006.

Awards To Enhance The Lives Of Disabled Persons: The program is a joint project between the National Organization & the AETNA Company, to award those Posts that enhance the lives of disable persons by providing opportunities for their participation in community activities.
RECIPIENT(s): None awarded for 2006

National DEPARTMENT History Contest Awards: Awarded annually at the Fall Meeting of the National Executive Committee to those contestants entered in the National Department History Contest having submitted the One-Year History Narrative or Yearbook of the Department which best meets the standards established for that particular competition.
RECIPIENT(s):

Department of Texas (One-Year Narrative History)
Department of South Dakota (One-Year Narrative History)
Department of Wisconsin (One-Year Yearbook History)
Department of South Carolina (One-Year Yearbook History)
Department of Ohio (One-Year Yearbook History)

National POST History Contest Awards: Awarded annually to those contestants entered in the National Post History Contest deemed by a duly authorized panel of judges to have submitted the One-Year History of the Post which best meets the standards established for the competitions.
RECIPIENT(s):

Battlefield Post 214—Rossville, GA (One-Year Narrative History)
Marion Mays Post 455—Somerville, TX (One-Year Narrative History)
Ibell-Jacobson-Smith Post 61—Deep River, CT (One-Year Narrative History)
Alois Dreikosen Post 469—Marathon, WI (One-Year Yearbook History)
Thomas M. Brady Post 45—Canton, GA (One-Year Yearbook History)
Raleigh Post 1—Raleigh, NC (One-Year Yearbook History)

International Amity Award: Awarded by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee at such times and places as may be consistent and appropriate. It shall be awarded to specific individuals who shall be war veterans within the accepted meaning of the term and members of an authentic veteran organization established in the territory of any of the nations associated as war-time allies of the United States of America. It shall be awarded to such individuals in recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans affairs and for service and contributions made in the development of international good will and comradeship between their organization and The American Legion.
RECIPIENT(s): Modesto P. Agyao and Arcadio S. Lozado

The Distinguished Public Service Award: Awarded annually by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the Commander's Advisory Committee at the time of the annual Washington Conference. It may be awarded to one or more person(s) of the United States Congress.
RECIPIENT(s): Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (TX)

The Arthur D. Houghton Sons of The American Legion Trophy: Awarded annually to that Detachment of Sons of The American Legion in each of five membership categories (I—200-1,000 members; II—1,001-3,000 members; III—3,001-6000 members; IV—6001-12,000 members; V—12,001 or more), each of said Detachments attaining the greatest percentage of increase over previous year's membership when compared with all Detachments in its category.

RECIPIENT(s): (2005)

Category I	**Detachment of Oklahoma**
Category II	**Detachment of Connecticut**
Category III	**Detachment of Massachusetts**
Category IV	**Detachment of New Jersey**
Category V	**Detachment of Pennsylvania**

Note: The 2006 Houghton awards will not be determined until December 31, 2006.

General Henri Gouraud Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department in each of six categories established by the National Membership and Post Activities Committee, each of said Department having been the first in its respective category to attain or exceed its nationally assigned membership quota (effective 1986).

RECIPIENT(s):

Category I	**None awarded for 2006**
Category II	**None awarded for 2006**
Category III	**None awarded for 2006**
Category IV	**None awarded for 2006**
Category V	**None awarded for 2006**
Category VI	**None awarded for 2006**

General John J. Pershing Honor Award: Awarded annually to that Department having the greatest percentage of its posts receiving the Honor Ribbon for having 100 percent or more, of the post's previous year's membership enrolled for the coming year by December 31, and having reported such achievement to National Headquarters by not later than January 31.

RECIPIENT: Department of Wyoming

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: Department of France

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: Department of France

The O. L. Bodenhamer Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department designated to lead the parade at the time of the ensuing National Convention.

RECIPIENT: Department of North 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 Brady M. Cillo and Anthony J. Stinton

The American Legion Coast Guard Academy Award: Awarded annually to that cadet of the graduating class of the United States Coast Guard Academy who is considered to have personally excelled in athletics.

RECIPIENT: Ensign T. S. Crowley

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 Adrian Matthew Zavala

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 James Q. Nguyen

The American Legion Naval Academy Award: Awarded annually to that graduating midshipman of the United States Naval Academy who stands highest in those English, History and Government courses taken to complete a Foreign Affairs major.
RECIPIENT: Ensign Paul J. Angelo

National Commander's Blood Donor Awards: Presented to departments in different sized categories for participating in The American Legion's Blood Donor Program.
RECIPIENT(s):

Category I—Departments with 100,000 or more members:
Post Participation: Department of Florida
Individual Participation: Department of Minnesota
Category II—Departments with 70,000 to 99,999 members:
Post Participation: Department of Maryland
Individual Participation: Department of Maryland
Category III—Departments with 40,000 to 69,999 members:
Post Participation: Department of Nebraska
Individual Participation: Department of Nebraska
Category IV—Departments with 25,000 to 39,999 members:
Post Participation: Department of Tennessee
Individual Participation: Department of Tennessee
Category V—Departments with 10,000 to 24,999 members:
Post Participation: Department of Montana
Individual Participation: Department of Montana
Category VI—Departments with less than 10,000 members:
Post Participation: Department of Alaska
Individual Participation: Department of Alaska

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: Officer Charles Roessler, Milwaukee Police Department

Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department giving the highest degree of support to the ROTC program within its jurisdiction, based on criteria drawn up by the National Security Commission.
RECIPIENT(s):
Departments of Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, Tennessee.

Fourth Estate Award: Awarded to press, radio, TV, or other communications media; to associations of same, to owners, executive heads or staff members; such award to be in recognition of outstanding service to community, state, or nation, which service shall have been in accordance with or the furtherance of established American Legion policies and programs.
RECIPIENT: The Post-Crescent—Appleton, Wisconsin

National Commander's Public Relations Award: Awarded to an outstanding individual and/or organization for distinguished public service in the field of communications.
RECIPIENT: John Fales "Sgt. Shaft"—Washington, DC

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 Post 1080—Joliet, IL

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 2006

The Four Chaplains Trophy: Awarded annually to the winner of The American Legion Firing Squad competition at the National Convention.
RECIPIENT: No contest in 2006

The Glen R. Hillis Trophy: Awarded annually to that Color Guard winning first prize in competition with all other Color Guards during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.
RECIPIENT: American Legion Post 49—Tilton, NH

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 Post 1080—Joliet, IL

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 2006

William F. Lenker National Service Trophy: Awarded annually to that State Department of The American Legion excelling in welfare work for war veterans, providing the membership of that Department shall be no less than 80% of the membership of the preceding year.
RECIPIENT: Department of Idaho

Abbreviations

ABM	Anti-ballistic Missile
ABMC	American Battle Monuments Commission
ACDUTRA	Active Duty Training
ACE	Air Combat Element
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
ADF	Alliance Defense Fund
AFB	Air Force Base
AFRH	Armed Forces Retirement Home
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ALS	Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis
ANAVICUS	Army, Navy, and Air Force in Canada—United States
ARM	Adjustable Rate Mortgages
ASVET	Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training
BCMRs	Boards for Correction of Military Records
BEA	Budget Enforcement Act
BRAC	Base Realignment and Closure (Commission)
BVA	Board of Veterans Appeals
BX	Base Exchange
CAPTA	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act
CARES	Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services
CAT	Computerized Axial Tomography
CAVC	Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
CBOC	Community Based Outpatient Clinics
CBP	Customs & Border Protection
CBRNE	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive
CBRNE/WMD	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive/Weapons of Mass Destruction
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CIS	Center for Immigration Studies
COLA	Cost-of-Living-Adjustment
CONUS	Continental United States
COPD	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
COSCO	China Ocean Shipping Company
CRSC	Combat-Related Special Compensation
CWC	Chemical Weapons Convention
CWT	Compensated Work Therapy
DEC	Department Executive Committee
DECA	Defense Commissary Agency
DHS	Department of Human Services
DIC	Dependency and Indemnity Compensation
DMS	Direct Mail Solicitation
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
DoD	Department of Defense
DoE	Department of Energy
DoL	Department of Labor
DPMO	Defense POW/MIA Office
DPMO	Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office
DVA	Department of Veterans Affairs
DVOP	Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program
DVOP/LVER	Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program/Local Veteran's Outreach Representative

EPs	End Products
ETA	Employment and Training Administration
FCP	Federal Ceiling Prices
FCS	Future Combat System
FEHBP	Federal Employees Health Benefits Program
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHP	Force Health Plan
FRP	Federal Response Plan
FSS-P	Federal Supply Schedule for Pharmaceuticals
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	General Accounting Office
HR	House of Representatives
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
IIRIRA	Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, 1996
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
IOM	Institute of Medicine
IRCA	Immigration Reform and Control Act, 1986
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
IT	Information Technology
IV	Immigration Visa
JCSD	Joint Commission Support Directorate
JPAC	Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command
LTC	Long-Term Care
LVER or LVR	Local Veteran's Employment Representative
LWR	Light-Water Reactor
MGIB	Montgomery GI Bill
MGIB-SR	Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve
MHS	Military Health System
MIA	Missing in Action
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRC	Medical Reserve Corps
NACA	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics
NAS	National Academy of Sciences
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCA	National Cemetery Administration
NCMEC	National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NDMS	National Disaster Medical System
NEC	National Executive Committee(man)
NHCU	Nursing Home Care Unit
NIA	National Institute of Aerospace
NIV	Non-Immigrant Visa
NRC	National Research Council
NSLI	National Service Life Insurance
NVTI	National Veterans' Training Institute
NWP	Neighborhood Watch Program

OBRA90	Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act 0f 1990
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OEF/OIF	Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OJT	On-the-Job-Training
OSD	Office of Secretary of Defense
PAY-GO	Pay-As-You-Go
PL	Public Law
PNC	Past National Commander
POW	Prisoners of War
POW/MIA	Prisoner of War/Missing in Action
PRC	People's Republic of China
PX	Post Exchange
QUERI	Quality Enhancement Research Initiative
RET	Retired
ROK	Republic of Korea
ROK-US	Report of Korea-United States
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
SBA	Small Business Administration
SDVI or RH	Service Disabled Veterans Insurance
SEI	Space Exploration Initiative
SEVIS	Student and Exchange Visitor Information System
SGLI	Servicemen's Group Life Insurance
SHAD	Shipboard Hazard and Defense Project
SMC	Special Monthly Compensation
SMOCTA	Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act
SRV	Socialists Republic of Vietnam
TAP	Transitional Assistance Program
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century
TERA	Temporary Early Retirement Authority
TPS	Temporary Protected Status
TOW	Tube-Launched, Optically Tracked, Wire-Guided Missile
TPS	Temporary Protected Status
UN	United Nations
US	United States
US-DPRK	United States-Democratic People's Republic of Korea
USA	United States Army
USAF	United States Air Force
USAID	U. S. Agency for International Development
USC	United States Code
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
USNH	United States Naval Home
USRJC	US-Russia Joint Commission
USSAH	United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home
USUHS	Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
VA	Veterans Affairs *or* Veterans Administration *or* Department of Veterans Affairs
VAOPGCPREC	VA Precedential Opinion of the General Counsel
VETS	Veterans Employment and Training Service

VGLI	Veterans Group Life Insurance
VHA	Veterans Health Administration
VHA	Veterans Hospital Administration
VIPS	Volunteers in Police Service
VJTA	Veterans Job Training Act
WAVE	Wide Area Virtual Environment
WIA	Workforce Investment Act
WRNNMC	Walter Reed National Naval Medical Center
WWI	World War I

FOREWORD

The American Legion continued to have a strong year under the leadership of National Commander Thomas L. Bock, Aurora, Colorado. Membership was strong with 2.6 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. Altemates 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 adjoumment 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

J. Addington Wagner, Michigan
Preston J. Moore, Oklahoma
William E. Galbraith, Nebraska
John H. Geiger, Illinois
Joe L. Matthews, Texas
William J. Rogers, Maine
John M. 'Jack' Carey, Michigan
Michael J. Kogutek, New York
Keith Kreul, Wisconsin
Clarence M. Bacon, Maryland
Judge 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
Bruce Thiesen, California
William M. Detweiler, Louisiana
Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota
Joseph J. Frank, Missouri
Anthony G. Jordan, Maine
Butch L. Miller, Virginia
Hon. Alan G. Lance, Sr., Idaho
Ray G. Smith, North Carolina
Richard J. Santos, Maryland
Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania
John A. Brieden, III, Texas
Thomas P. Cadmus, Michigan

National Executive Committeemen

F. Wayne Turner, Alabama
Jimmie L. Foster, Alaska
Julius Maklary, Arizona
Bobby L. Wamble, Arkansas
Floyd Martin, California
Joseph E. Ross, Colorado
Richard W. Anderson, Connecticut
Thomas L. Burns, Delaware
Ernest R. Sohns, D.C.
Robert J. Proctor, Florida
William E. Marshall, France
Ray Hendrix, Georgia
Michael D. McCloskey, Hawaii
Richard Hanni, Idaho
Rodger A. Bennett, Illinois
Thomas Henderson, Indiana
Michael E. Wanser, Iowa
David O. Warnken, Kansas
Randall Coffman, Kentucky
Charles D. Aucoin, Louisiana
Robert A. Owen, Maine
Alfred M. Schmidt, Maryland
Lawrence A. Connors, Massachusetts
John E. Hayes, Mexico
Kenneth G. Dittenber, Michigan
Virgil V. Persing, Minnesota
Charles E. Langley, Mississippi
David N. Voyles, Missouri
Arthur C. Ellison, Montana
Michael J. Landkamer, Nebraska

Ron Gutzman, Nevada
Benjamin F. Talford, New Hampshire
William A. Rakestraw, Jr., New Jersey
Bruce Jorgensen, New Mexico
Richard C. O'Keefe, New York
Jerry L. Hedrick, North Carolina
Curtis O. Twete, North Dakota
Carl W. Swisher, Ohio
Wayne L. Pedigo, Oklahoma
Charles E. Schmidt, Oregon
Alfred Pirolli, Pennsylvania
Ernesto P. Golez, Philippines
Carlos Orria-Medina, Puerto Rico
Eugene Pytka, Rhode Island
Rennie M. Singletary, Jr., South Carolina
Paul A. Evenson, South Dakota
Joseph W. Young, Tennessee
Ronald G. Cherry, Texas
William E. Christoffersen, Utah
Rodney "Stub" Sherman, Vermont
Rob R. Gordon, Jr., Virginia
William Schrier, Washington
William W. Kile, West Virginia
Arthur D. Herbison, Wisconsin
Irvin A. Quick, Wyoming

Alternate National Executive Committeemen

vacant, Alabama
James L. Van Horn, Alaska
Deodoro M. Aguilar, Arizona
Ross Rogers, Arkansas
Edward C. Landis, California
Jeff Luginbuel, Colorado
W. Frazier Brinley, Connecticut
Donald E. Neil, Delaware
Walter W. Norris, D.C.
Dennis R. Boland, Florida
Micahel T. Umland, France
Charles F. Wessinger, Georgia
LeRoy P. Pulawa, Hawaii
Cleve Rice, Idaho
Elvin J. Carey, Illinois
W. Darrell Hansel, Indiana
John J. Ross, Iowa
Elgin Wahlborg, Kansas
Randall Fisher, Kentucky
Owen D. Watts, Louisiana
Herman N. Wright, III, Maine
Dr. Gordon B. Browning, Maryland
James F. Army, Massachusetts
Jack D. Freitag, Mexico
Gerald N. Dennis, Michigan
Raymond DeZurik, Minnesota
Gayle Gorden, Mississippi
Richard A. Heigert, Missouri
Bob O. Beals, Montana
Douglas Boldt, Nebraska
Salvatore Ruvolo, Nevada
John E. Neylon, New Hampshire
Billy Mack, New Jersey
William E. Zack, New Mexico
Paul Mitras, New York
Coley A. Hunsucker, North Carolina
John Schafer, North Dakota
Richard Zulch, Ohio
William Hardin, Oklahoma
Richard Clark, Oregon
Richard A. Coccimiglio, Pennsylvania
Ignacio F. Palad, Philippines
Faustino Espinosa, Puerto Rico
Ernest Gerundio, Rhode Island
Billy W. Bell, South Carolina
Larry L. Price, South Dakota
Perry D. Roberts, Tennessee
Conrad L. Roberson, Texas
Terry D. Schow, Utah
Linda M. Perham, Vermont
George C. Lussier, Jr., Virginia
James F. Angell, Washington
William E. Burkett, West Virginia
Terry G. Troutman, Wisconsin
Gerald L. Jacobs, 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
Willard F. Coffey, Michigan

This past year I have been given not only the privilege but also the honor of serving the finest Veterans organization, The American Legion as a National Vice Commander overseeing the Central States region, which includes Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois and Wisconsin. I am especially proud to have served my year under the great leadership of National Commander, Thomas Bock, who made my year a memorable year with not only his commitment to the American Legion, but to the many veterans in which are programs are designed to serve. Commander Bock worked closely with each of us and always kept the communication lines open and gave each of us a friendship we shall never forget.

During my travels through my region, I have listened to the several issues and concerns of our fellow legionnaires and we all face the same issues in obtaining new members and retaining our present Legion members, and keeping our many programs alive and active in our communities. The fine legionnaires I have traveled with during this past year are truly dedicated to the mission of the American Legion, and have served their States well in their leadership, dedication and motivation to promote our many programs.

I wish to thank our National Commander, Thomas Bock, the National Staff, my fellow Vice Commanders and all of the Central Region Departments for the many lasting memories of a most enjoyable year working with each of you as a National Vice Commander.

Travel schedule and events for 2005-2006.

September 2005

12-14	Brainstorming Sessions & phone calls to District & Department Commanders, Indianapolis, IN
18-20	Legislative Briefings & National Commander's Testimony, Washington, D.C.

October 2005

5-6	NVC Breakfast, Fall Meetings of NEC, & National Commanders Reception, Indianapolis, IN

November 2005

5-6	Michigan Membership Rally, Milford, MI
18-20	Egyptian Past Commander's Banquet and Tour Marion Veteran's Home "The Haven," Department of Illinois

December 2005

18-21	Mid-year Membership Evaluation Meeting, Indianapolis

January 2006

12-14	Mid-Winter Conference, Department of Wisconsin
15-21	Membership Caravan, Department of Illinois
27-29	Mid-Winter Conference, Department of Kentucky

February 2006

3-5	Mid-Winter Conference, Department of Tennessee
18-20	Legislative Dinner & Spring Conference, Department of Michigan
26-March 1	Washington Conference, Washington D.C.

March 2006

26-31	Membership Roundup, Department of Ohio

April 2006

No Visits

May 2006
10-11 NEC Spring Meetings, Indianapolis, IN
June 2006
10-11 Buckeye Boy's State, Bowling Green State University, OH
15-16 Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, NY
July 2006
1 Dedication of Veteran's Memorial, Pine Mountain, Iron Mountain, MI
August 2006
25-31 National Convention, Salt Lake City, UT

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
James H. Hall, New Jersey

It has been my privilege and honor to serve National Commander Tom Bock as National Vice Commander. His devotion to serving our American Legion with special emphasis given to the grass roots, the blue cap Legionnaires, has inspired us all. His trips to the war zones to visit our troops serving our Nation was commendable and rewarding to The American Legion and well received by the troops.

The highlights of the year for me were representing Commander Bock at Cooperstown, New York at the Baseball Hall of Fame where I presented Femando Irizarry with the Player of the Year Award; presenting The American Legion Award at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland to Paul Angelo; the Memorial Day Breakfast at the White House with President Bush followed by Memorial Day Services at Arlington National Cemetery; taking part in the Memorial Day Program at the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial and the Homecoming for William L. Sparwasser, National Commander of the SAL in Baltimore, Maryland.

My visitations to my twelve Departments in the Northeast Region were very constructive. We devoted a tremendous amount of time and effort to membership, especially renewals. All of our other programs did very well. I was particularly impressed by the amount of monies and material such as clothing, food, etc. sent to the National Emergency Fund or directly to the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

I would like to thank the Department Officers of the Northeast Region for which I served. It was an amazing team of individuals who spent countless hours on our many programs. The hospitality and generosity was greatly appreciated. My sincere thanks to the National Staff for their help and guidance and a special thanks to National Adjutant Bob Spanogle.

A summary of my travels for 2005-2006 are listed below:

September 2005
4-5 Drum and Bugle Corps Competition, Dept. of Pennsylvania
12-14 Brainstorming Sessions & Phone calls to District & Dept. Commanders, Indianapolis
18-20 Legislative Briefings & National Commander's Testimony, Washington, DC
October 2005
5-6 NVC Breakfast, Fall Meetings of NEC & National Commander's Reception, Indianapolis
22 Blue Star Program, Iselin, New Jersey
28-30 Membership Round-up, Dept. of New Hampshire
November 2005
5-6 Membership Workshop, Dept. of Rhode Island
18-20 Speaking Engagement for Dept. of Massachusetts Commander
December 2005
18-21 Mid-year Membership Evaluation Meeting, Indianapolis
January 2006
14-15 Mid-Winter Conference, Dept. of Connecticut
20-22 Mid-Winter Conference, Dept. of Maine
February 2006

17-19	Membership Visit, Dept. of Maryland
26-March 1	Washington Conference
March 2006	
11-12	Oratorical Contest, Dept. of Vermont
17-19	Homecoming Celebration for SAL Nat'l Cmdr., Dept. of Maryland
April 2006	
14-17	National Commanders Homecoming, Denver, Colorado
24-27	Membership Blitz, Dept. of Pennsylvania
28-29	Testimonial for New Jersey Dept. Commander (Home Dept.)
May 2006	
10-11	NEC Spring Meetings, Indianapolis
13-15	Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, New York
24-26	U. S. Naval Academy Visit, Annapolis, Maryland
29	Memorial Day Ceremonies, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA
June 2006	
7-9	Department of Massachusetts Convention, Springfield, MA
9-10	Department of New Jersey Convention, Wildwood, NJ
July 2006	
14-16	Department of Delaware Convention, Dover, DE
19-22	Department of New York Convention, Rochester, NY
August 2006	
25-31	National Convention, Salt Lake City, UT

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Michael E. Harris, Virginia

Standing, here before you, it is challenging to merely put into terminology what a privilege it has been to serve with our National Commander, Tom Bock and those of our "Team." We rapidly became a team upon our election in Honolulu, Hawaii. Out team, I deem, has shown compassion and above all, devotion to serving our veterans and their families. We have stood our ground under the guidance of Commander Bock, and while we did fail by one vote on the flag amendment I do not believe this membership is going to surrender this just and noble cause. To quote Walt Disney "If you can dream it, you can do it. Always remember that this whole thing was started with a dream and a mouse." We have stood with our troops through Resolution 169 and we stand proudly against those who would take away the American way of life, the ACLU. President Reagan, in a speech on August 17, 1992 talking of Miss Liberty's torch said, "The glistening hope of that lamp is still ours. Every promise every opportunity is still golden in this land. And through that golden door our children can walk into tomorrow with the knowledge that no one can be denied the promise that is America." To those of the ACLU I say do not take my America away!

To all of our officers and staff of this outstanding organization, I express gratitude to you for a charge skillfully completed and the job you will continue to do for those that come after us. I have come to comprehend, and recognize the value and performance of our staff at National Headquarters. One thing is definite; they do not receive the recognition for their undying work for this organization, and I for one could have not survived without their assistance, advice, and briefings.

My visitations to Departments have been diverse, for each Department does go about business a bit differently. However, make no mistake, all of our Department's work for the same goals and objectives. On all of my visits I was always ask two questions, regardless of the Department, "What can we do better to take care of our veterans and their families and what can we do better for the American Legion?"

The highlights of this year are far too numerous to enumerate, for it would take hours to relate. Instead allow me to thank our American Legion family, our American Legion Auxiliary, and our Sons of the American Legion, for not only the memories. But more importantly for your steadfast loyalty and devotion to this great organization. Our

family has accomplished much and I firmly believe that much more will be accomplished.

To the southeast region and to the southern block, I again say thank you for making this a year that Lucy and I will never forget. As a point of personnel privilege I also want to say thanks to my beautiful wife, Lucy, for supporting me during this year and making sure my bags were packed properly.

To my home Department, Virginia, my American Legion family, I wish to express my appreciation to you for the faith that you have shown in me through the years and the support you have provided to Lucy and me during this special year.

May God bless each and every one of you and may God bless this great and wonderful United States of America, it is now time for Lucy and me to come home.

Summaries of my travels for 2005-2006 are as follows:

September 2005

12-14	Indianapolis, IN—Brainstorming sessions and telephone calls to District and Department Commanders
18-20	Washington, DC—Legislative briefing and the National Commander's testimony

October 2005

5-6	Indianapolis, IN—NVC breakfast, Fall Meeting of the NEC, and National Commander's Reception
28-30	Florida—Fall Conference, Department of Florida

November 2005

11	Florida—Post 135, Department of Florida
21	Virginia—Post 340, Department of Virginia

December 2005

12-15	Virginia—United States Court House, Norfolk, swearing in of new citizens, Virginia
18-21	Indianapolis, IN—Mid-year Membership evaluation meeting

January 2006

6-9	Louisiana—Mid-Winter Conference, Department of Louisiana
12-16	Alabama—Mid-Winter Conference, Department of Alabama
19-22	Mississippi—Mid-Winter Conference, Department of Mississippi

February 2006

3-4	West Virginia—Mid-Winter Conference, Department of West Virginia
26 March 1	Washington, DC—Washington Conference

March 2006

16-18	Georgia—Spring Conference, Department of Georgia
24-26	Virginia—Spring Conference, Department of Virginia

April 2006

None

May 2006

10-11	Indianapolis, IN—NEC Spring Meetings
28-30	Colorado—USAF Academy, Colorado Springs, CO

June 2006

5-7	Virginia—Post 49, Department of Virginia
9-10	North Carolina—Special event honoring William Lee, founder of Army Airborne Troopers, Department of North Carolina
17-21	Virginia—American Legion Boys State, Department of Virginia
22-25	South Carolina—Spring Conference, Department of South Carolina

July 2006

7-9	Arkansas—State Convention, Department of Arkansas

August 2006

3-5	Virginia—American Legion College, Department of Virginia
25-31	Utah—National Convention, Salt Lake City, Utah

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Sebastian T. Roll, North Dakota

It has been a great privilege and honor to have served with you as your National Vice Commander. Your service and dedication have been an inspiration to all Legionnaires in our great organization and especially to me as your Vice Commander. The camaraderie and hospitality of the Midwest Region, which consists of South Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, and my home state of North Dakota was without a doubt the finest you can find.

Commander Bock, our aim this year was resolution #169 "Support our Commander-in-chief, our Congress, Military Leaders, and our troops on terrorism." I feel our team did very well from all the responses we received.

Our second was membership. We set out to close the backdoor on membership. We didn't accomplish every thing we wanted to but we did make a difference. I want to thank the states that took me on the week long membership tour. I think that National needs that personal contact with the Blue Cap Legionnaires. I also want to thank all the Department Commanders, the District Commanders and especially the Go-Getters for all the hard work they did.

Other issues were mandatory funding for the VA health care and the ACLU. I am sure that as time goes by these issues will also be resolved.

Last but not least is the Flag Amendment. That was probably the most frustrating of all the issues. When we went to Washington, DC to walk the hill in June and we couldn't convince one of the 34 Senators that voted against the amendment to change their mind. Especially sad is the fact the two Senators from my home state of North Dakota wouldn't change their mind. I'm sure that the new team that is coming in will work just as hard as we did on these issues and by all of us working together we will succeed.

In my travels through the region I was really amazed at all the volunteers. At every location there was the American Legion Auxiliary who are so supporting of the American Legion Programs. I always say thank you to the American Legion Auxiliary because they make the American Legion look good.

I especially enjoyed the Children's Home in Oklahoma, the Truman Pilgrimage in Missouri, the Coast Guard Academy in Connecticut, and the Department Conventions. I want to thank the State Adjutants, the NEC's and the alternate NEC's that waited on me, like I was a very special person.

Not to be forgotten is the National Staff. I want to thank all of them in both Indianapolis and DC for the help they have given me this past year. Every time I would call them, I would be treated with the greatest respect. They were always there to help me.

Commander Bock, your friendship and dedication to the American Legion Family will always be part of my fondest memories and for that I thank you.

The following two pages is a summary of my activities and travels for this past year.

September 2005

12-14	Brainstorming Sessions & Phone Calls to District & Dept. Commanders, Indianapolis
18-20	Legislative Briefings & National Commander's Testimony, Washington, DC

October 2005

1-6	NVC Breakfast, Fall Meetings of NEC, & National Commander's Reception, Indianapolis
24-28	Membership Tour, Dept. of Kansas

November 2005

14-20	Membership Tour and Rally, Dept. of Iowa

December 2005

2-4	Official visit for Pearl Harbor Day, Morris, MN
18-21	Mid-year Membership Evaluation Meeting, Indianapolis

January 2006

20-22	Mid-Winter Conference, Dept. of South Dakota

February 2006

10-12	Winter Conference, Dept. of North Dakota (Home State)
24-26	Membership Post Visits, Dept. of Missouri
26-March 1	Washington Conference, Washington DC

March 2006

No Dept. visits

April 2006

14-16	National Commander's Homecoming, Denver
28-30	American Legion Children's Home, Ponca City, OK

May 2006

7-8	Truman Pilgrimage, Dept. of Missouri
10-11	NEC Spring Meetings, Indianapolis
15-17	Coast Guard Academy, New London, CT
19-21	Department Convention of Kansas at Great Bend

June 2006

22-25	Department Convention of Nebraska at North Platte
26-29	Walk the Hill, Washington, DC

July 2006

13-14	Department Convention of Iowa at Cedar Rapids
15-16	Department Convention of Texas at Plano

August 2006

25-31	National Convention, Salt Lake City, UT

REPORT OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER
Taurino J. Trevino (TJ), New Mexico

It has been a great honor to have served The American Legion as National Vice Commander for the Western States and the Departments of Mexico, and the Philippines, under the leadership of National Commander Thomas Bock. Also the other National Vice Commanders, Jimmy Hall, Mike Harris, Sebestain Roll, and Bill Coffey. This year has really been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

The Departments in the Western Region are Arizona, Alaska, Colorado, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming and of course two foreign Departments—Mexico and the Philippines.

Every department that I visited has the same concern. We all share the same dedication of The American Legion. We belong to an organization that continues to take the lead in fighting for what is right for our nation and it's veterans. Such as to provide adequate funding for the Veterans Administration support a Constitutional Amendment to protect our nation's flag. To maintain a strong National Defense.

I wish to thank National Commander Tom Bock, our National Staff, and the Department Officers of the Western States who made my visit to their Departments a most pleasant adventure, and for making my experience as National Vice Commander a most enjoyable event this year.

Summary of my travels and activities for the year 2005-2006.

August 2005

National Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii. Elected and installed.

September 2005

12-14	Brainstorming Session and phone calls to District and Department Commanders, Indianapolis, Indiana
18-20	Legislative briefing and National Commander's testimony, Washington, DC

October 2005

5-6	National Vice Commanders' Breakfast, Fall Meeting of NEC and National Commander's Reception, Indianapolis, Indiana
28-30	Joint District Meetings, Blackfoot, Idaho

November 2005

No activity

December 2005

2-4	DEC Meeting, Salt Lake City, Utah
9-11	Membership Meeting, Laughlin, Nevada
18-21	Mid-Year Membership Evaluation Meeting, Indianapolis, Indiana

January 2006

14-15	Mid-Winter Conference, Sheridan, Wyoming
21-22	5th Area Meeting, Brawly, California

February 2006

3-5	Southern District Convention, Sitka, Alaska
10-12	Mid-Winter Conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico
26-March 1	Washington Conference, Washington, DC

March 2006

10-11	Western District Convention, Ninilchik, Alaska
24-26	DEC and Spring Meetings, santa Maria, California

April 2006

21-23	Spring Conference, Dept of Washington
28-30	District Meetings, Billings and Winifred, Montana

May 2006

25-27	U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York

June 2006

15-18	Department Convention, Litchfield, Arizona
22-25	Department Convention, Albuquerque, New Mexico
28-July 3	Department Convention, Ely, Nevada

July 2006

29-August 2	Attended New Mexico American Legion Baseball Toumament

August 2006

10-13	Attended Regional Baseball Tournament, Albuquerque, NM
25-31	National Convention, Salt Lake City, Utah

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN
Bishop Steven E. Wright, Utah

My year as National Chaplain of The American Legion began on August 25, 2005, when I was sworn in during the post-convention meeting of the National Executive Committee (NEC) at the conclusion of the Eighty-Seventh National Convention held in Honolulu, Hawaii. My sincere thanks are offered to National Commander Thomas L. Bock and The American Legion leadership team for their faith and trust in me to serve on this year's team of national officers.

After offering prayers of gratitude and blessing during the NEC meeting, we returned to our home and to news of the terrible devastation and heartbreak created by Hurricane Katrina. The entire American Legion family came together with the rest of the nation to provide much needed help, comfort, faith, prayers, material goods and money, and an outpouring of love of a magnitude of enormous proportion.

As National Chaplain, I have been called upon to offer prayers of Invocation and Benediction at numerous meetings and social functions throughout the year. Among others, those have included prayers at all of the meetings of the NEC, the Homecoming Dinner for Commander Bock, the Past Dept. Commanders Luncheon, the Americanism Commission breakfast, YE STEIVOS dinner (sponsored by the Department Adjutants), and the Americanism Commission breakfast held during the October national meetings in Indianapolis. Similarly, I was invited to attend and offer prayers at the meetings of the NEC and the National Commander's Dinner during the national meetings held in May. The invitation to those meetings offered the opportunity to meet with Mr. Robert Caudell, our national liaison, regarding plans for the National Patriotic Religious Service to be held at the National Convention in Salt Lake City. During these meetings, I conducted memorial services and brought greetings to several of the leaders assembled. A special opportunity came to express gratitude to the Americanism Commission for the personal blessing in my youth to attend American Legion Boys State (Utah) and play

American Legion Baseball.

From Oct. 28-30, together with Auxiliary National Chaplain Rosey Newman and S.A.L. Chaplain, Larry Ford, I met with Department Chaplains at the annual Department Chaplains Conference. The conference theme, "Be Not Weary in Well Doing", together with the workshops held, helped us to refocus on our need to continue serving and giving without tiring or letting up in our efforts. The annual Chaplains Dinner, Sunday Services and reports concluded our uplifting weekend.

In late February, I traveled to Washington, D.C. where I offered prayers at the meetings of the Veterans Affairs Committee, the National Commanders Luncheon honoring John Fales ("Sgt. Shaft") and at the Veterans Rally where Vice President Cheney and several distinguished national legislators addressed us. On February 28th, through the courtesy of Senator Orrin G. Hatch (UT) and at the invitation of Senate Chaplain Barry Black, I offered the invocation as Guest Chaplain in the U.S. Senate. Then, on March 1st, I offered the invocation in the U.S. House of Representatives as the Guest Chaplain at the invitation of Congressman Rob Bishop (UT) and House Chaplain, Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin. This tremendous personal experience and blessing was made possible only because of the high esteem held for The American Legion and past national chaplains who have served us so well. During this week, I also visited Utah's Congressional Delegation on behalf of veterans' issues.

In addition to other opportunities to serve throughout the year, I have offered prayers and greetings at the National Historians Luncheon and at Commander Bock's Homecoming in Aurora, Colorado, participated in the Murray City Veteran's Day Parade, given the keynote address at the Syracuse City Memorial Day services, written a personal statement for the California "Record Gazette" on why the story of the Four Chaplains is so meaningful, and provided written guidance regarding offering prayers in keeping with The American Legion tradition of being non-sectarian and non-denominational. Further, I have written an article for The Dispatch and corresponded with Department Chaplains and Commanders regarding ways chaplains can expand their service to be "rounders." Additionally, my special thanks is extended to all Department Chaplains and Past National Chaplains who participated in the revision of the Chaplains Handbook, and to Bob Caudell and his staff for their efforts to correlate and include the recommendations.

On Sunday, August 27th, as part of the National Convention held in Salt Lake City, Utah, I hosted the annual Chaplains Breakfast where chaplains from across the country met together in fellowship and to recognize The American Legion Family National Youth Champions. Following the breakfast, it was my pleasure to preside at the National Patriotic Religious Service held in the LDS Conference Center where those in attendance were inspired by the music of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square. While this service is historically focused on those who have given their lives in service to country, special effort was also made to honor those currently serving. Many service members and people from surrounding communities joined with the Legion Family to share in this hour of devotion. The memorial message, "Who Are the Brave?" encouraged all of us to continue to stand for the right at all times and in all places. The remainder of the Convention provided opportunity to pray and invoke God's blessings during our meetings. I am grateful for the blessing of serving The American Legion as the National Chaplain, and express my love to those who have served before me for their legacy of service, kindness and devotion. To all of our staff at the National Headquarters, and especially to Bob Caudell and June Miles, I express my gratitude for their professionalism and dedication to their service, and for the support they have given me during this year. To those in the Department of Utah who have mentored and supported me (a one-time department chaplain and many-time department judge advocate), I am forever grateful; and to my supportive and loving wife, Linda, I give my eternal thanks and love for allowing me to serve. May God bless each of you, and every citizen and family of this "sweet land of liberty," with the desire to serve Him and our fellow man.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIAN

Johnny B. Keel, Louisiana

I am both honored and humbled to have served this great organization as its 47th National Historian. I want to thank the screening committee and National Commander Bock for the opportunity of being one of his National Officers. A special gratitude goes to Past National Commander William Detweiler of Louisiana for his guidance and mentorship through out the year. My duties included the recording of History for the American Legion

My first task as National Historian was over seeing the judging of Post and Department Histories for the National Contest in Indianapolis, Indiana during the National Executive Committee meeting in October. There were 51 entries judged by members of The National Association of Department Historians American Legion (NADHAL). This year there were 32 new Department Historians, and I would like to thank the National Association of Department Historians of The American Legion (NADHAL), especially Fae Casper, for their assistance in training the new historians form the Judging Contest.

The Contest results were given at the National Executive Committee meeting.

One Year Department Narrative History Contest was:

First Award, plaque, Department of South Dakota
Second Award, plaque, Department of Georgia
Third Award, plaque, Department of Texas
Honorable Mention: Department of Pennsylvania

Certificates of participation are awarded to Departments:

Department of District of Columbia

One Year Department Yearbook History Contest was:

First Award plaque, Department of New Mexico
Second Award, plaque, Department of Wisconsin
Third Award, plaque, Department of Ohio
Honorable Mention: Department of Tennessee

One Year Post Narrative History Contest was:

First Award Plaque, Manhasset Post 304, Manhasset, NY
Second Award Plaque, No-Vel Post 159, Venice, FL
Third Award Plaque, Marion Mays Post 455, Somerville, TX
Honorable Mention: Columbia County Post 192, Evans, GA

One Year Post Yearbook History Contest was:

First Award Plaque, Alois Dreikosen Post 469, Marathon, WI
Second Award Plaque, Chattahoochee, Post 251, Duluth, GA
Third Award Plaque, Julius L. Shyer Post 430, Durant, IA
Honorable Mention: Raleigh Post 1, Raleigh, NC

I had the opportunity to attend the Washington, DC Conference at the end of February and the beginning of March and in a small way promote the agenda of The American Legion to our representatives in the House and Senate.

In May 2006 I attended the National Executive Committee Spring Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana and addressed the upcoming activities at the National Convention in Salt Lake City, UT.

I have had the privilege of attending and speaking at Memorial Day and Veterans Ceremonies at U S Army Military Base Fort Polk, Louisiana to the Military Community. I have attended Nemours American Legion functions throughout all the Eight District of the American Legion in Louisiana and installing their officers.

The American Legion needs to recognized Joseph Hovish and the Legion Library Staff for their instrumental support through the year.

The American Legion has accomplished much in the past and it is the responsibility of Historians at the Post, Department and National level to document these accomplishments. Without history we would be an organization trying to explain its

existence.

Without our documented history, the public and our Legion members would not remember that it was The American Legion is the proud sponsor of American Legion Baseball. They would not remember The American Legion sponsors Boys State and Boys Nation. They would not remember The American Legion established and promotes an Oratorical contest. The American Legion wrote and promoted the G.I. Bill. Without documented history, they would not remember The American Legion has contributed to children through the Child Welfare Foundation. They would not remember The American Legion continually lobbies our Congress to maintain and improve benefits for our Nation's veterans and active military personnel. They would not remember that The American Legion promotes Americanism and proper respect for the flag of our country, finally without recorded history; they would forget the innumerable events and causes undertaken by our American Legion on the Post, District and National level.

At the National Convention I held a luncheon on Saturday, August 26 from 11:30-1:00 PM in the Alpine East Ballroom. 2nd level Hilton Salt Lake City Hotel. Many friends and Legionnaires attended this affair the Guest speaker Tom Graves of San Francisco, Califomia

As my term as National Historian comes to a close my hope for the future is to further the word the importance of documenting our history. I look forward to continuing to serve The American Legion and veterans of the United States for many years to come.

NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE
P. B. Onderdonk, Jr., Maryland

Contracts

The following eighty-eight (88) contracts have been reviewed or prepared:

1. Articles of Agreement by and between The American Legion and The American Legion National Convention Corporation of Kentucky, covering the convocation of the 2009 Convention of The American Legion in the City of Louisville, State of Kentucky, have been executed.
2. A Memorandum of Agreement by and between The American Legion and National Veterans Legal Services Program, whereby National Veterans Legal Services will provide consultations, informal training of Department Service Officers, BVA staff and claims/representatives, case work review, briefings on proposed changes in law and regulations and assistance in methods for prompt adjudication of veterans' appeal cases.
3. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and AdoptaPlatoon (AAP), whereby a link has been established to Operation Crayon referring to AAP which provides morale-lifting mail and care package support to service members deployed overseas.
4. A Service agreement by and between The American Legion and Powerware Global Services, whereby Powerware Global Services replaces and services the battery in the computer room.
5. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Data Processing Services, Inc., whereby Data Processing Services will add 15 disc drives to the computer system and create and add drives to the computer system storage capacity.
6. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Neighborhood E-mail, whereby Neighborhood E-mail will assist in cleaning of in-house data base and E-mail files.
7. A Service Agreement by and between The American Legion and Fuller Engineering Service Corporation, whereby Fuller Engineering will provide maintenance on the Liebert Equipment in the computer room.
8. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Dell Marketing L.P., whereby The American Legion will market the Dell Federal Member Computer Discount Purchase Program to its various associations, employees, members and affiliates.

9. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Bally Total Fitness, whereby Bally Total Fitness will offer its services and products under The American Legion's Family Benefit Plan to its employees, members of the Organization and affiliates.
10. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Norlight Telecommunications, Inc., whereby Norlight Telecommunications, Inc. will provide a dedicated internet port and service of same for The American Legion's computer system.
11. Housing contract between The American Legion and Marymount University to provide for lodging and food service for American Legion Boys Nation held on July 21-28, 2006 .
12. A Memorandum of Understanding by and between The American Legion and The United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC), whereby The American Legion will assist the United States Army Recruiting Command to improve the recruiting environment for Army recruiters and USAREC will provide information regarding American Legion activities and special community events to local units, bulletins and newsletters.
13. Eight (8) Baseball Regional Tournament Contracts and the Contract for The American Legion World Series.
14. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Fischer/Parr Entertainment Group (FPEG), an Ohio corporation, to sponsor, at no direct financial cost to The American Legion, a NASCAR team for the Busch Series from Memorial Day 2005 through the end of the 2007 NASCAR season.
15. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Bridgestone Golf to provide free golf equipment to military personnel returning from duty in the Middle East and Afghanistan.
16. A contract by and between The American Legion and Bluewho.com (web hosting provider), and sub agreement with Samuel G. Cooke American Legion Post 267 to purchase our web hosting and design service.
17. Two (2) List Protection Agreements by and between The American Legion and the following companies have been executed to cover the protection of magnetic tapes used for mass-mailings to the general membership of The American Legion:
    Barton-Cotton-Famous Hospitality, Inc.
    Association Group Insurance Administrators (AGIA)
18. A Service Agreement by and between The American Legion and Sigma Micro Corporation for The American Legion's Technical Services Rate Retainer (TSRR) subscription for hardware, operating system and environment support.
19. A Service Agreement by and between The American Legion and Budget Truck Rental, LLC for truck rental discount program.
20. Maintenance Agreement by and between The American Legion and Comtech Group for the IBM Software subscription for the AS400 and RS6000 computer software.
21. Maintenance Agreement by and between The American Legion and Quality Concepts for structural and environmental services (cleaning) at the Fort Ben location.
22. A Contract by and between The American Legion and Communications Products, Inc. for software upgrade for the existing server running Windows 2000 Server.
23. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and Stratalys Research & Consulting, LLC for a research project to understand the causes of membership non-renewal.
24. Maintenance and Sales Agreement by and between The American Legion and Ikon Office Solutions, Inc. for equipment maintenance.
25. An Agreement by and between The American Legion and FTD.COM, Inc. for a 10 percent discount for floral services via the Legion web site or by calling the FTD 800 number. This program is part of the Member Benefits Family

Program

26. A License Agreement by and between The American Legion and RLX Video, Inc. This is the vendor TN Marketing uses to provide their DVD's.
27. Annual Maintenance agreement by and between The American Legion and Eaton Power Quality Corporation to provide maintenance and perform preventative maintenance checks on the Uninterruptible Power System (UPS) which regulates the power spikes to the AS400 and is the battery backup in case of a power outage.
28. Fifty-three (53) 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:
    Marsh Affinity Group
    Sport Graphics, Inc.
    Resource One
    JH Marketing Services
    TN Marketing
    Treloar & Associates
    Quincy Sun
    Moore Wallace Response Marketing
    G E Financial Assurance
    Cole Managed Vision Care
    E H Direct
    Pierce & Company
    LTC Associates
    Aegon Direct Marketing Services, Inc.
    Bankers Life & Casualty Company
    Careington International
    Colonial Penn Life Insurance Company
    Dataquik Corporation
    Mailing Services of Pittsburgh
    TransContinental Direct
    Webcraft LLC dba Vertis, Inc.
    Regulus Integrated Solutions
    Quebecor World Digest
    Versatile Card Technology
    CD-COM Systems Midwest, Inc.
    BANTA
    Openfirst
    GMACI National General Insurance Company and National Assurance Company
    Commercial Letter, Inc.
    Felix Group, LLC
    University of Santa Barbara
    Veterans Online, LLC
    Name-Finders List
    VERTIS
    KDM
    ASC (The College Board)
    Military Advantage
    AEGON/Pinnacle Data Systems, LLC
    PipMail
    Mainstreet Media-Kansas
    Aberdeen American News-South Dakota
    Torrington Telegram-Wyoming
    The Heritage Company
    Daily Reporter

Northwinds Publishing & Printing
Morgan Printing, Inc.
Nfocus Consulting, Inc.
Kramers Mailing Service
FTD Branded
Nielsen Company
True North Companies (Medicare Part D, Program-provided by PacifiCare)
Daily Freeman Journal
CES Mail Communications, Inc.

Litigation

ANNA C. GILKEY	)	Superior Court of California
	)	County of Orange
Plaintiff	)	Central Justice Center
	)	
vs.	)	
	)	Case No. 00CC09989
	)	
CITY OF ANAHEIM;	)	
ANAHEIM IN '99	)	
CONVENTION	)	
CORPORATION; THE	)	
AMERICAN LEGION AND	)	
DOES 1 TO 50	)	

This is a personal injury case wherein the plaintiff, Anna C. Gilkey, alleges in her complaint that while attending the National Convention in Anaheim, California she slipped and fell due to water on the floor. The case closed by the Insurance Company.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, NINTH
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR
ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: CIO 99-2206

MARY KABASAKALIAN,
Plaintiff,
Vs.
ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA,
Defendant.

This is a slip and fall case against the Orange County Florida Convention Center because plaintiff allegedly tripped over a cord at the Orlando National Convention. The defense was tendered to The American Legion pursuant to the lease for the hall. The matter has been referred to our insurance company. The case was resolved by our adjuster. It is closed.

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO

BEVERLY EDWARDS,	:	
Plaintiff,	:	
v.	:	Case No. AO20ll06
HARTFORD LIFE INSURANCE	:	Judge Cartolano

COMPANY,et al., :
Defendants. :

Despite the fact that the premiums of a lapsed policy weren't paid, the plaintiff contends that she was the beneficiary of a life insurance policy issued by Hartford Life Insurance Company as part of The American Legion Insurance program. The insurance company defended The American Legion. The plaintiff voluntarily dismissed the case. It is closed.

STATE OF MINNESOTA COUNTY OF GOODHUE	))	DISTRICT COURT FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT
	)	
Marcus Robert Urban, a minor Michael Thomas Urban, a minor, And Brett Ryan, a minor, By and through their parent and Natural guardian, Todd Michael Urban, And Todd Michael Urban, Individually, Plaintiffs, v.	)))))))))	Court File NO.
The American Legion and its subdivisions; and The American Legion, Department of Minnesota	))))	

This is a dram shop case, which arises out of an automobile accident that occurred in Goodhue County, Minnesota. According to the complaint, the plaintiffs claim they were riding in an automobile that was struck by another vehicle driven by Orvin Joel Rolland who allegedly was illegally operating his vehicle while under the influence of alcohol that allegedly had been sold to him by Pine Island Liquor and American Legion Post No. 184.

Counsel has been obtained and the defense is proceeding for the account of the insurance company. The plaintiffs' attorney has been misusing discovery as a club to harass and the Court allowed it. Once the Court read our discovery motions things started to change. A Motion For Summary Judgment was filed and granted. The plaintiffs' law firm is now contesting costs and appealed. The State Court of Appeals affirmed and the plaintiff appealed to the Minnesota Supreme Court convincing the State Attorney General to file an amicus brief which completely misstates the facts. Review was granted on one issue in a very confusing order. The matter is pending in the Minnesota Supreme Court.

No. 2003-C1-11689

ONETA MCCLAIN, Plaintiff	*	IN THE DISTRICT COURT 285TH
V	*	JUDICIAL DISTRICT BEXAR
	*	COUNTY, TEXAS
AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, and AMERICAN LEGION AND TEXAS NATIONAL CONVENTION CORPORATION	* * * * *	

OF THE AMERICAN	*
LEGION and AMERICAN LEGION	*
DEPARTMENT	*
OF TEXAS AND STAGE TECH,	*
INC.,	*
Defendants	*

During the convention parade at the 83rd National Convention of The American Legion held in San Antonio, Texas, the Plaintiff allegedly fell from an elevated reviewing stand and claims she was an invitee on the reviewing stand and that the handrail or safety rail along the edge of the reviewing stand was defectively designed and constructed which caused her to fall and suffer physical injuries to her back and body in general. The case has been turned over to our insurance company and an appearance has been entered. The case was resolved by the insurance company.

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF BELMONT COUNTY, OHIO

JOHN E. WATSON and CATHERINE	*	
A. WATSON,	*	
	*	
Plaintiffs,	*	
	*	Case No. 04 CV 160
	*	
DONALD G. WEHR, THE AMERICAN LEGION	*	
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, THE AMERICAN	*	
LEGION DEPARTMENT OF OHIO,	*	
And AMERICAN LEGION POST 168	*	

This is a dram shop case. The plaintiff John E. Watson claims he was driving a vehicle that was struck by another vehicle driven by Defendant Donald G. Wehr who allegedly was illegally operating his vehicle while under the influence of alcohol. According to the complaint, Defendant Donald G. Wehr allegedly consumed alcoholic beverages at American Legion Post 168 just prior to the accident. The plaintiff claims injuries to various parts of his body, some of which injuries are reasonably certain to be permanent in nature. Plaintiff Catherine A. Watson claims a loss of consortium with her husband. The American Legion hired its own counsel, and the insurance company hired a different lawyer. Our attorney tried to have plaintiff voluntarily dismiss. He would not. The court would not grant a motion to dismiss. After discovery The American Legion's motion for Summary Judgment was granted. There was no appeal. Long after the appeal time had lapsed plaintiffs filed for relief from judgment and stated they want to go to trial. This is nothing more than an attempt to circumvent the rules and have a late appeal. We are raising all the issues. Summary Judgment was again confirmed. The case is closed.

DONALD H. RUMSFELD;		
ROD PAIGE;		
TOMMY THOMPSON;		
NORMAN Y. MINETA;		
AND TOM RIDGE,		
	Petitioners	
v.		
FORUM FOR ACADEMIC		Case No. 03-4433
AND INSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS;		
SOCIETY OF AMERICAN		

LAW TEACHERS; COALITION
FOR EQUALITY; RUTGERS GAY
AND LESBIAN CAUCUS;
PAM NICKISHER; LESLIE FISCHER;
MICHAEL BLAUSCHILD;
ERWIN CHEMERINSKY; AND SYLVIA LAW,

Respondents

This case was brought by respondents in an effort to deny military recruiters the right to come on law school campuses pursuant to the Solomon Amendment. The Solomon Amendment requires institutions who accept federal funds (other than scholarships for the needy) to allow military and navel recruiters on campus in the same way and manner as civilian recruiters are allow on campus. Respondents claim their rights were infringed.

However, the real facts of the situation show that the Federal Govemment is merely exercising proper control of its funds and setting appropriate conditions for grants to non Governmental Agencies.

The third circuit by a 2 to 1 vote ruled for respondents.

The American Legion believes the descending judge, Judge Aldecert, had the far better argument and when the Government defendants petitioned for sercerary, The American Legion joined as an amicus on the side of the Government. Our brief pointed out the fact that recruiting JAG Officers from law school rather than giving legal training to individuals who are already in the service helps maintain civilian control of the military.

The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Solomon Amendment.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA

JEANELLEN GODWIN,

Plaintiff
v.

THE AMERICAN LEGION,
THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA, INC., DORAN MEMORIAL POST # 158, INC.,THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA, BRUNO JRDRZEJA, JOSEPH C. BEASLEY, GARY M. GIBELLINA, And A.J. AUDET,

Civil Action No.05-3704-CI-8

Defendants

June 21, 2005

This was a slip and fall at a post in Florida. The lady who slipped claimed she was an employee of The American Legion and the Department as well as the post. It is possible the post does not have workman's comp insurance. We also understand the plaintiff was working for tips and the post tried to say she was not an employee.

In any event, since The American Legion does not run the post and since The American Legion has no right to run posts, we furnished copies of the cases establishing

this principal to plaintiff attorney and requested that plaintiff's attorney drop the National Organization from the case. Failure to do so would have resulted in a motion to dismiss and for sanctions. After reviewing the case law, plaintiff's attorney dropped the National Organization from the case. It is over as to the National Organization.

IN THE JEFFERSON COUNTY COURT
SECOND DISTRICT
WINTERSVILLE,OHIO

VICTOR FERRARI
Plaintiff
v.
THE AMERICAN LEGION
POST NO. 396, ET AL Case No. 04-CVF-00239

Defendants

October 8, 2005

This case is the result of a fight at an American Legion club. The plaintiff alleged the post was the agent of The American Legion. Once again, American Legion furnished plaintiff's attorney with the information and requested voluntary dismissal. Plaintiff's attorney refused and the motions were filed. The court granted the motion for summary judgment. It did not grant the motion for fees. While we belief it should have, there is a bias against doing this in many courts. The case is over.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN
SOUTHERN DIVISION

TOMMY O. CLARK,

Plaintiff

v. Case No. 1:05CV0191

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Defendant

This case was filed in Federal Court in Lansing, Michigan on March 14, 2005. In the complaint, the plaintiff alleges that The American Legion abandoned his case before the Veterans Administration in 1988.

There was no jurisdiction statement and the defendant, The American Legion, was listed as a Federal Corporation, but also, part of the state government of Michigan. Statute of limitations had clearly run since 1988. In 1988 The American Legion did not have the power of attorney from the plaintiff. This power of attorney was in the AMVETS; who in approximately 1991 won the individual 40% disability rating for a bad back. In 1991 The American Legion became the holder of the power of attorney and in 2002 won the plaintiff a 100% disability rating for PTSD. The plaintiff was given almost $200,000.00 in back benefits and receives almost $2,000.00 a month in benefits. Hence, we did not really understand why we were sued.

The fifth count of the complaint is for loss of consortium with the plaintiff's children. The children were not part of the case. Hence, there can be no loss of

consortium of claim. In addition, consortium is a description of an individual's relationship with his or her spouse. Consortium with one's children constitutes incest in every jurisdiction I know.

Again, plaintiff's attorney was sent the law and requested to drop the case. She refused. Our motions were filed and the court on it's own motion scheduled them for argument. Just before argument, the trial judge was appointed to the Sixth Circuit and dismissed the case for lack of jurisdiction. Hence, our motion for sanctions did not get heard. Nonetheless, the case is over.

Case No. 83C01-0412-CT-33

IN THE VERMILLION COUNTY INDIANA CIRCUIT COURT

SHIRLEY ARCHER,

Plaintiff,

v.

AMERICAN LEGION POST 140, CORP., AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF INDIANA, AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS,

Case No. 83C01

Defendants

This is a slip and fall case at an American Legion post in Clinton, Indiana. Here again, the plaintiff alleged that the Department and National Organization had control of the post.

American Legion had its attorney fumish the law to plaintiff's attorney with a request that plaintiff's attorney drop the case or motion to dismiss with sanctions and a motion for sanctions would be filed. Plaintiff's attorney agreed and dismissed the case. American Legion was able to get rid of this case for legal fees of less than $100.00.

IN THE UNITED STATE COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT LORI & LYNN BARNES-WALLACE; MITCHELL BARNES-WALLACE; MICHAEL & VALERIE BREEN; MAXWELL BREEN,

Plaintiffs-Appellants/ Cross-Appellees,

Record Nos. 04-55732, 04-56167 XAP

v.

CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Defendant,

and
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA AND BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA-DESERT PACIFIC COUNCIL,

Defendants-Appellees/

Cross-Appellants.

This case arose when an agnostic couple and a gay couple sued the city of San Diego because of the Boy Scout's lease of Balboa Park for a campground and the swimming pool. The Plaintiffs claim the Boy Scouts are a religious organization because they require a belief in God and claim they were discriminatory because they did not allow gays to participate as leaders.

The Federal Court in San Diego essentially ruled in favor of the plaintiffs.

For an agnostic to claim religious discrimination against an organization that requires a belief in God does not make too much sense. An agnostic is an individual who doesn't "know" whether or not there is a God. This is different from an atheist who denies the existence of God. Hence, The American Legion believes that these plaintiffs should have been dismissed for lack of standing.

In addition, the gay couple never attempted to use the facilities or send their adopted child to use the facilities. They stated to the court that they "felt" that they would not be welcome. Feelings are not sufficient for Federal Jurisdiction.

After the courts ruling, the Boy Scouts appealed, as did the plaintiffs. Indeed, the plaintiffs got their appeal filed first.

Because the court totally misconstrues the case as a case about establishment of religion when it is really a case about freedom of association and because it is a case about the basic values of this country, The American Legion has filed an amicus curiae in support of the Boy Scouts. Argument has not yet been scheduled.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION,
CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, ECF CASE
PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS,
VETERANS FOR COMMON SENSE AND
VETERANS FOR PEACE,

Plaintiffs,

04 Civ. 4151 (AKH)

v.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, AND ITS
COMPONENTS DEPARTMENT OF ARMY,
DEPARTMENT OF NAVY, DEPARTMENT OF
AIR FORCE, DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE
AGENCY; DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND
SECURITY; DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,
AND ITS COMPONENTS CIVIL RIGHTS
DIVISION, CRIMINAL DIVISION,OFFICE
OF INFORMATION AND PRIVACY, OFFICE
OF INTELLIGENCE POLICY AND REVIEW,
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION;
DEPARTMENT OF STATE; AND CENTRAL
INTELLIGENCE AGENCY,
Defendants.

This case involves a number of photographs of abuse of captives held at Abu Gharib prison in Bagdad, Irag which have not been disclosed to the public. They are known as the Darby Photographs.

The ACLU along with other plaintiffs have filed a Freedom of Information Act case

to force the release of the photographs despite the harm it would do to America and the physical danger to Americans in the Moslem world. On August 1, 2005 we were requested by the Department of Justice to become an amicus in the case. We were able to produce a brief and three affidavits within four days. Our brief raised the danger to Americans, both military and civilian. The Government had left out all the Government contractors or the effects on civilians worldwide. In addition, Charles Mills, our local attorney in the case, developed an argument that the court had no jurisdiction. Neither he nor I thought too much of the argument initially. However, every time we look at the issue and research it the argument gets stronger. Our brief was filed and argument was held in the district court. The judge commented on our brief twice and on our affidavits. Despite the fact that it appears that the trial court would like to release the photographs the judge took the entire matter to review. We are waiting for a decision.

Incidentally, both Charles and I have a great concern about the position of the Department of Justice in the case. Because of things Department of Justice attorney said and the way they have avoided certain strong arguments, we are not at all sure that the Department of Justice wants to win the case and keep the photographs from the public eye.

We do not expect the district court to be the final say on the matter.

On September 29, 2005, despite all of our efforts the Judge ruled in favor of the ACLU. We do not yet know, whether or not the Government will appeal. The Government decided not to appeal on the photographs. The American Legion's participation is over at present.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

THE REV. DR. MICHAEL
A. NEWDOW, et al.,

NO. CIV. S-05-17 LKK/DAD

Plaintiffs,

v.

THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA, et al.,

Defendants.

This case is a continuation of the earlier Newdow flag case which was resolved in the Supreme Court by a ruling that the plaintiff had no standing to bring the case.

Now, the plaintiff has had additional parties join him and has renewed his attack on the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The district court for the Eastern District of California on September 14, 2005 ruled that the California law requiring the saying of the Pledge of Allegiance in classrooms was unconstitutional, even though the usual accommodations were present in the statute for those who did not believed they could say the pledge. The court felt it was controlled by earlier Ninth Circuit opinions. The court further ruled that the saying of the pledge at the city counsel or in the U.S. Congress was constitutional.

American Legion has filed a petition to intervene as an amicus curiae. It seems clear that now that Newdow has plaintiffs that don't have his standing problems, since they are the custodial parents of the children for whom they are suing, the matter will again will be heard by the Ninth Circuit and ultimately, hopefully, the Supreme Court.

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTY OF SCHUYLKILL

Daniel Jeffrey Steich

Plaintiff

v.

The AMERICAN LEGION
POST NO. 575, ET AL

Defendants

This case was filed in Pennsylvania by filing a Praecipe for Summons and Summons.

Under Pennsylvania law, a complaint need not be filed for several years unless the defendant insists. We see no reason to start spending the money. Accordingly, we are keeping an eye on the case. It cannot go forward until the plaintiff does file his complaint.

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Philip K. Paulson, *
Petitioner, *
*
v. *

Case No. GC 849667

Charles Abdelnour, in his *
Official capacity as the City *
Clerk Of the City of San Diego; *
Mikal Haas, In his official *
Capacity as Registrar *
Of Voters for the County *
of San Diego; *
and Does 1 to 10, Inclusive, *
*
Respondents *

This case involves the Mount Soledad War Memorial which contains a cross. Plaintiffs have sued in an attempt to have the cross removed and destroyed. A judge ordered the cross removed or the city would pay penalties of five thousand dollars ($5,000) per day. The matter is currently both in the Federal courts and in the California Supreme Court. American Legion was instrumental in obtaining a stay of the penalty order in the US Supreme Court. American Legion has filed it's amicus brief in conjunction with the Department of California in the California Supreme Court. The United States Congress has enacted and the president signed a statute which would turn the memorial over to the federal government. Hopefully, this will put an end to the state litigation. Nonetheless, we will proceed until we know the veterans memorial is secure.

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE SECOND CIRCUIT
05-1820-CV

IN RE: "AGENT ORANGE" PRODUCTS LIABILITY LITIGATION

JOE ISAACSON AND
PHYLLIS LISA ISAACSON,
Plaintiffs-Appellants,

v.

DOW CHEMICAL COL, ET AL.,
Defendants-Appellees.
CAUSE NO. D-1-GN-06-000801

The American Legion has filed an amicus brief in this case in support of the claimants. The plaintiffs were not able to file a claim in the 1984 Agent Orange Settlement because they had not yet manifested any symptoms. Although these plaintiffs received no compensation and were essentially barred from the early case, the defendants have attempted to use the early case to deny them any compensation. Most of the other veteran's organizations have also joined in support of the plaintiffs.

RYAN VORLAND Plantiff,	IN THE DISTRICT COURT
Vs.	TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS
CURTIS LESLIE HARRIS; LAKE CITIES POST NO. 88, THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS, LAKE DALLAS, TEXAS; AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS; AND THE AMERICAN LEGION Defendants	345TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

This is a dram shop case filed in Texas because of an auto accident by an individual who allegedly had been drinking at a Legion post. Matter referred to our insurance company and counsel obtained. Shortly thereafter, the plantiff's attorney filed a motion to withdraw. We understand the court authorized the withdrawal.

Hence the case is in limbo at the moment.

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 562 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 11 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 289 manuscripts have been reviewed and appropriate comments in connection therewith were transmitted, when necessary, to the Publisher or Editor of *The American Legion Magazine.*

The American Legion Retirement Plan for Employees of the National Headquarters and Subordinate Groups Thereof

In accordance with the requirements of law, The American Legion has filed all necessary returns, reports and allied documents for the calendar year 2005 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.

Employees' Salary Savings (401(k)) Plan

In accordance with the provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) The American Legion has filed all of the necessary Annual Return Reports and allied documents for the calendar year 2005 with the Intemal Revenue Service in connection with The American Legion Employees' Salary Savings 401(k) Plan. The office of the National Judge Advocate also reviewed the Summary Annual Report for the Employees' Salary Savings Plan and arranged for the distribution thereof as required by law.

Parliamentary Duties

The National Judge Advocate attended the past National Convention of The American Legion and all meetings of the National Executive Committee and has served both bodies in the capacity of National Parliamentarian.

Other Duties

The National Judge Advocate functions as Secretary for Haynes & Partners Communications, Inc. and attended all but one of the board meetings of said corporation and caused the minutes of each meeting to be prepared and distributed. The National Judge Advocate also functions as counsel on matters involving to date, contracts, labor issues, real estate law, postal regulations, corporate organizations and insurance.

The National Judge Advocate also functions as counsel for and a director of The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc. In that capacity, the National Judge Advocate reviews contracts such as the trust for the flag essay scholarship fund and attends 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 29 registrations and reports have been filed. Some counties even attempt to require registrations and reports.

Meetings of the National Retirement Committee and Salary Savings Committee

The National Judge Advocate, as a member of The National Retirement Committee of National Headquarters, The American Legion, and Chairman of the Employee's Salary Savings Committee, has attended and participated in the meetings held by these committees during the past year.

I have also, in response to requests, drafted legal and other documents for the use of

National Officers of The American Legion and Officers of the American Legion Auxiliary.

During the past year I have met with and attended numerous conferences with officials of outside corporations and the government for the purpose of representation or for the rendering of advice and guidance for and on behalf of The American Legion on matters legal and administrative. In conclusion, the National Judge Advocate wishes to thank all National Officers, Department Officials, and members of the National Executive Committee for the valuable assistance and cooperation extended to him during the past year.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
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 absences of the National Adjutant from The American Legion National Headquarters, he acts for him. He additionally performs duties assigned by the National Adjutant.

He oversees The American Legion Magazine and Administrative Services, which includes the following divisions: Human Resources, Maintenance, Library, and the E. A. Blackmore Museum.

He serves on the Personnel Committee, HPC Board of Directors, the IT Committee, and various other committees as needed.

The Administrative Services Division also provides all secretarial assistance to the executive officers of The American Legion. All Division Directors resident at the Indianapolis National Headquarters report to the Executive Director

Mail
June 1, 2005 through May 31, 2006

Incoming Letters and parcels (distributed to Divisions for processing)	994,020
Incoming Parcels	7,468
Outgoing Letters/Parcels (Exclusive of National Emblem Sales)	9,972,764

Freight and Express
June 1, 2005 through May 31, 2006

Out (cartons)	2,351
Out (pounds)	181,479
UPS (in)	2,827
UPS (out)	7,176

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. The main emphasis has been on the indexing of the back issues of *The American Legion Magazine.* Since 1987, these issues have been indexed. Now the task is to keep current with those issues that appear on a monthly basis.

The access by any staff to any of the databases that the Library staff maintains has been accomplished. Because of the complexity of the database, the learning curve for other staff may not be a speedy process. Personnel in the Library will always be on hand to help patrons to find the information they seek.

For many years, the Library had a great friend and benefactor, Robert H. Barnes. Sadly, he passed away in the last year. He will be missed as one of the true supporters of the library and museum collections. He also had a quest to learn (and to share that learning) about the history of those in the field of military aviation.

A number of researchers made extensive visits to the Library. Areas of research involved the history of the GI Bill; the issue of Americanism in the first half of the 20th century; the development of women leaders and women posts in The American Legion; Oriental immigration policies in the 1920s; Boys and Girls State history; background history of the Sons of The American Legion; early history of American Legion Baseball; demographics of The American Legion; biographical details of Past National Commander Paul V. McNutt.; background to Legion's role in adding "under God" to Pledge of Allegiance" in the early 1950s.

Significant Gifts to the National Headquarters Library

The National Association of Department Historians of The American Legion has generously donated $300.00 for the book fund. Two books purchased by this donation will be selected and dedicated to the memory of two Past National Historians who passed away during the year, C. Dorothy Crimes Long and Nolie C. Deas, Sr.

Videos and DVDs: *America's Greatest Victories*; radio reruns of the following events, *Edward R. Murrow News, "Ed Lashes out at Senator Joe McCarthy"* March 12, 1954; *U.S. Declares War on Germany and Italy, "Original Broadcast"* December 11, 1941; *Pearl Harbor Attacked; "A Day that Will Live in Infamy"* December 7, 1941; *Normandy Invasion*, various radio newscasts June 6,1944; and *Famous Moments in Sports, from boxing, football, baseball, Olympics, etc.* donated by Robert H. Barnes.

Books: *Dearest Dolly—Love Letters From the Pacific 1945-1946* donated by Buddy Barnard.

The Great Events of the Great War and *Source Records of the Great War* donated by Tracy Crockett.

America Won the Vietnam War donated by Robert R. Owens.

Life Interrupted: Stories From WWII donated by David Draves.

75th Division Histories donated by Benjamin Twigg.

Child Welfare Guide, 1946; Unit Guide, American Legion Auxiliary, 1946-1947; and *Unit Handbook of the American Legion Auxiliary*, March, 1946 donated by Joseph T. Bumbleburg.

An Empty Goal donated by author Reinier "Dutch" Kemeling.

History of Erwin Prieskorn American Legion Post 46, Ann Arbor, Michigan donated by Dr. J. J. Van Gasse, M.D.

Letters Mailed Home donated by David McNeil.

Correspondence Received and Filed	878
Bulletins, Reports, etc. Received and Filed	134
Periodical Titles Received	139
Books, Pamphlets and *The American Legion Magazine* cataloged	981
Correspondence Written by National Historian	485
Correspondence Written by the Librarian	1060
Prominent Legionnaire Questionnaires Mailed	730
Prominent Legionnaire Questionnaires Received	332
Photographs Indexed	2,815
Follow-ups of Correspondence	31
Items Microfilm Added to Stock	10,342

Significant Gifts to the National Headquarters Museum

First Day Postal Covers of No. 71 (Enagle) Squadron Royal Air Force and Gallipoli—The Allied Assault; *The Postal Service Guide to U.S. Stamps*; and postcards of various aircrafts donated by Robert H. Barnes.

Last Man's Club Van Buren Post No. 401, Department of Illinois; various photographs, minutes of meetings and letters donated by Catherine Proctor.

WAVE uniform donated by Ramona Hendricks.

WW II U.S. Coast Guard uniform and WW I Army Medical Corps uniform donated by Dean H. Davis.

Department of Indiana 1936 State Convention Program donated by Joseph Haskett.

Three reproductions of Revolutionary War era flags donated by Thomas W. Bryan.

Memoir and telephone directory from WW I donated by Robert S. Krebs.

Photo albums of Charles L. Miller donated by Mrs. Charles L. Miller.

Complete Military Uniforms and Equipment (The Friedman Company); official program of Fifteenth Annual Convention of The American Legion Department of Indiana; official program and guide of Eighteenth The American Legion Department of Indiana; yearbook of The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary Putnam County Post No. 58—1932; and The American Legion Department of Indiana 1945-1946 donated by Hugh Dagley.

Photographs of 1927 delegation making their trip to Paris for The American Legion National Convention donated by Rita S. Faulders.

Roster for Battery E, 72nd Field Artillery Camp Know, November 28, 1918; roster of men available for discharge and photographs donated by Robert S. Krebs.

Photograph of the 31st National Convention donated by Robert L. Gonczy.

Army Special Forces green beret from the 45th Special Forces Company donated by Merritt A. Nord.

Two dolls dressed as Legionnaires donated by Robert E. Frank.

WW II Army uniform donated by Marjorie Pottenger.

Various items from The American Legion Paris Convention donated by Ed Barringer.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) DIVISION
Ronald E. Brooks, Tennessee, Executive Director

The Information Technology (IT) Division Staff play a key role in the selection of all software to be used by National Headquarters staff. IT also determines and procures the hardware to be used by employees of National Headquarters and is responsible for troubleshooting and maintaining the equipment. The IT Division maintains the telecommunications that inter-connect the two Indianapolis, Indiana offices with our facility in Washington, D.C.

IT is responsible for the computer system which houses The American Legion National Headquarters membership database as well as keeping this database updated with changes to the membership-whether it be adding new members, renewing existing members, changing addresses of members or changing any other membership information. Much of this work is accomplished using a high-speed optical scanner, capable of processing in excess of 100,000 responses a day.

The Internet Operations group is also a part of the IT Division. All aspects of The Legion's web presence (www.legion.org) are handled within IT. We have the creative, design and technical staff and resources to present over 5,000 web pages of information to the world.

In conjunction with the membership database capabilities, The American Legion has invested in sophisticated list processing software, which the IT Division administers. This software ensures that all mailings are done at the lowest cost by complying with U.S. Postal Service guidelines.

The IT 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' fundraising programs and mailing labels for a variety of communications pieces are all printed by the IT Division.

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 immigrants through schools of citizenship and other agencies and stand for the restriction of immigration so that this assimilation may approach perfection; and
- Combat subversive and terrorist activities, all un-American groups and activities which have for their aim the downfall of democracy in America.

Additionally, the Americanism Commission has continued to be actively involved in legislative matters affecting our way of life. Among our legislative priorities are illegal entry of aliens into this country, voluntary prayer in public buildings, bilingual education alternatives and English as the official language of the United States. Two current major legislative initiatives of The American Legion are 1) the continuing efforts to effect a constitutional amendment that would give Congress the authority to enact flag protection laws, and 2) coordinating a nationwide effort to combat the secular cleansing of our American heritage through Establishment clause lawsuits.

This Commission has the responsibility for supervision and coordination of two standing committees: The Counter-Subversive Activities Committee and the National Committee on Education.

Following is a summary of the several programs, which are the responsibility of the Americanism Commission and have been conducted during the 2005-2006 American Legion year.

American Legion Boys State/Boys Nation

The American Legion believes that if the United States is to maintain its form of government, it must have a citizenry that has a fundamental understanding and interest in its operation. This is what the Boys State program does for the young men of our Nation. It teaches the fundamentals of American government through the state level.

It was more than 70 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 American Legion, the National Organization recognized the need for a program similar to Boys State at the National level and in 1946, established American Legion Boys Nation. This year, The American Legion celebrated its 60th 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, almost 25,000 young Americans take part in Boys State, and since its inception, its 71 years, the program has graduated well over 1,750,000 young men.

Every year, each Boys State selects two outstanding graduates to represent them at American Legion Boys Nation. In 2006 the program was again held in Washington, DC, during July, and it introduced delegates first-hand to the structure and function of the federal government.

The week of government training in the Nation's Capital combines lectures and forums with visitations to federal agencies and institutions, shrines and historical points in and about Washington, 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. John "Max" Taylor of Palm Bay, Florida was elected President of the 60th 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 Salt Lake City, Utah, August 25-29, 2006.

National High School Oratorical Contest

The American Legion has awarded over three million dollars in college scholarships since 1938 to high school students participating in its annual National High School Oratorical Contest. This program, in its 69th 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 2006-2007.

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 scholarships awarded by intermediate organizations of The American Legion to participants in local levels of competition.

The 69th annual National Finals Contest was held at Indianapolis, Indiana, in April 2006. The three finalists were: First place—Nicholas Elledge, Knoxville, Tennessee; second place—Terrie Nelson, Goldsboro, North Carolina; third place—Katie Dahlinghaus, Minster, Ohio.

Boys Scouts of America

The American Legion charters approximately 2,700 Scout Units in communities across the country involving more than 71,000 young people. Its commitment to the principles of Scouting dates back to the Legion's first National Convention in 1919.

The American Legion is gravely concerned with the continued acts of domestic terrorism by the ACLU and its unrelenting attacks against the Boy Scouts of America and the Boy Scouts' efforts to maintain and practice traditional family values with regard to membership and leadership standards.

The American Legion selected Nicholas Coury, Glendale, Arizona, as its 2006 Eagle Scout of the Year. Selection was based on his outstanding religious, school, community and scouting achievements. He will receive a $10,000 scholarship from The American Legion.

Three Eagle Scouts were named runners-up for the award and each will receive a $2,500 scholarship. They are Tony Tillman, Leesville, Louisiana; Matthew Abee, Murrells Inlet, South Carolina; and Paul Martin, Martinsville, Virginia.

In addition, an estimated 5,800 certificates honoring new Eagle Scout recipients are distributed annually.

Almost two hundred and sixty American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion members have received The American Legion and Scouting Square Knot award to recognize their dedication and work to assist in furthering the Scouting programs of The American Legion.

Junior Shooting Sports Program

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program is a national Americanism program administered through Post-sponsored Junior Shooting Clubs. The purpose of the program is to provide gun safety and marksmanship training for young people and to offer a wholesome recreational activity through organized competition. The Junior Shooting Sports Program has 940 active clubs with almost 15,000 young people participating.

The sixteenth annual Junior Air Rifle National Championship was conducted August 1-6, 2006 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 1,200 entrants.

The competition was divided into two categories: precision air rifle and sporter air rifle. Medals and plaques were awarded in both categories, as well as in each of the three positions of prone, kneeling and standing.

The 2006 winners were Thomas Santelli of Washington, Pennsylvania (Precision) and Tempe Regan of Superior, Montana (Sporter). Both received $1,000 scholarships provided by the Sons of The American Legion.

Eight and Forty National Lung and Respiratory Disease Nursing Scholarship Fund

The American Legion administers the Eight and Forty National Lung and Respiratory Disease Nursing Scholarship. This scholarship, established in 1957, was created to assist Registered Nurses in securing advanced preparation for those positions in supervision, administration or teaching. These prospective positions must have a direct relationship in the areas of care and prevention as it relates to lung and respiratory diseases. The Eight and Forty, for 2006-2007, awarded 15 $3,000 scholarships to recipients in 12 states for one year's study to assist in furthering their education. This brings their cumulative total for the past 46 years to 833 scholarships, totaling over $1.5 million to help eliminate personnel shortages in this important area of nursing. This scholarship program will again be offered for the 2007-08 school year.

Flag Education

The American Legion is a nationally recognized authority on the proper display of the United States Flag. Each year, thousands of letters, phone calls, and electronic mail messages are routinely answered giving factual information on the display, use of and respect for the American Flag.

The American Legion continues distribution and sale of "For Which It Stands" a multimedia instructional resource about the history of the flag of the United States, the significance and meaning of our flag, and respecting and caring for our flag. It is intended primarily for use with students in the upper elementary and middle/junior high school grades. Over 2,800 copies of the DVD were sold this past year.

Additionally, over 65,000 copies of the publication *Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette*

and more than 100,000 copies of the pamphlet, *Flag of the United States—How to Display It, How to Respect It* are distributed annually to schools, organizations and individuals. This information is sent at little or no cost to all who request it.

In 1988, The American Legion published *Our Country's Flag*, an educational comic book for use in elementary schools. Well over one million copies have been distributed since the booklet was introduced. In May 1995, the education booklet, *I Pledge Allegiance*, was published, also for use in elementary schools. In 2005, The American Legion added *Our Country's Veterans* to its list of educational publications.

The American Legion continues its campaign to protect the U.S. Flag from physical desecration. All 50 state legislatures have passed memorializing resolutions in support of a constitutional amendment to give Congress the authority to enact flag protection laws. Working with other organizations of the American Legion-founded Citizens Flag Alliance, The American Legion shepherded a flag protection Constitutional amendment through the House of Representatives for the sixth time in as many Congresses. In June of 2006, The American Legion spearheaded the drive for the amendment in the U.S. Senate, coming within one vote of passage there. National Commander Tom Bock has vowed to Congress and the American people that "we will be back" in the 110th Congress.

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 and honesty.

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 81st season in 2006. Over 90,000 players on 4,800 teams participated in this American Legion Americanism youth activity during the past year. The 2006 George W. Rulon American Legion Baseball Player of the Year is Joe Walsh, Weymouth, MA.

More than seven million dollars in sponsorship fees are spent on American Legion Baseball teams by the local posts. One million dollars is appropriated by The American Legion's National Organization to conduct eight Regional Toumaments and the World Series of American Legion Baseball.

Many Legion players have gone on to distinguish themselves in Major League Baseball and have been honored with election to the Hall of Fame. They include Tony Gwynn, Tom Seaver, Johnny Bench, Pee Wee Reese, Bob Feller, Ted Williams, Willie Stargel, Stan Musial, Carl Yaztremski, Warren Spahn, Brooks Robinson, Frank Robinson, and Paul Molitor.

Over 50 percent of the Major League ballplayers and almost 86 percent of college players competed in American Legion Baseball as teenagers. The lessons learned on the baseball diamond, such as leadership, teamwork and respect for the rules, are lessons that are learned for a lifetime.

COUNTER-SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE
Robert Bournival, New Hampshire, Chairman

The Counter-Subversive Activities Committee, since its establishment by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion on November 17, 1950, has scrutinized and continues to monitor what is transpiring in the realm of subversion and terrorism. A program of the Americanism Commission, reports of activities are made to the National Executive Committee at its Spring and Fall Meetings and at National Convention.

The Committee is responsible for furnishing background information on assigned resolutions that are considered by the National Americanism Commission for recommended action to the National Executive Committee or the National Convention.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Rev. James T. Akers, Kansas, Chairman

The National Committee on Education, established in 1976, is comprised of members from both The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

The purposes of the Committee are: (1) to inform itself and The American Legion/American Legion Auxiliary of developments, problems and potentials in the field of education; (2) to recommend appropriate policies and programs for The American Legion/American Legion Auxiliary; and (3) to maintain contact with the education community so that there may be an interchange of thinking between The American Legion/American Legion Auxiliary, educators, students and other organizations concerned with the well-being of education throughout the Nation.

Education was one of the first major concerns of The American Legion. In 1921, the organization committed itself to a constructive support of education. During the years that followed, The American Legion developed a formal Policy on Education.

The American Legion has always supported the principle that education is a necessary prerequisite to the successful functioning of a republic. While recognizing the right of private and religious groups to maintain schools, The American Legion vigorously subscribes to the necessity for a publicly supported education system to ensure that every American child has the opportunity for an adequate education. The American Legion believes that popular self-government, as set forth in the Constitution of the United States, cannot continue to exist without a continuing system of free public education. Not only does proper national defense require trained personnel, but every phase of life today demands that we have competent citizens who are qualified, willing and able to discharge their responsibilities.

The availability of educational opportunity for individuals to pursue their own development is a prerequisite to the achievement of all other social goals. Our education system must be designed to provide every person with the means to reach their potential which will provide our Country with the high level of responsible citizens and specialized workers that it requires. In tum, we will have greater assurance of economic growth, of sound decision-making, and the knowledge necessary to promote our national security.

The American education system should produce citizens who understand and are dedicated to principles of free enterprise; to democratic principles and processes; and whose devotion to freedom and human dignity goes beyond mere lip service.

The Education Program of The American Legion consists of four basic elements: (1) recognition of local systems through observance of American Education Week; (2) dissemination of scholarship and financial aid information through the publication Need A Lift?; (3) participation by American Legion Posts and American Legion Auxiliary Units in a community-wide effort to enhance the programs and policies of the local schools through the guidelines provided in the handbook PACT (Post, Auxiliary, Community Together); and (4) scholarship programs.

American Education Week is an annual event co-sponsored nationally by The American Legion. The observance was originally established by The American Legion with the help of the National Education Association in 1921. The major objective of the

program is to focus public attention on the needs and achievements of the Nation's schools. This year's theme is "Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility." The observance will be November 12-18, 2006.

The publication *Need A Lift?* is revised annually and contains 152 pages of scholarship, grant and loan information, work-study cooperative programs and sources of career information for all students. 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 $685,000. Each fall, complimentary copies of *Need A Lift?* are sent to more than 28,000 high schools across the nation. In all, last year nearly 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 done through American Legion Posts, schools, counselors and librarians, by mail and through distribution at national education conventions. Copies of these publications can also be obtained by writing The American Legion National Emblem Sales Division, P.O. Box 1050, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206. Individual copies of *Need A Lift?* are $3.00 plus shipping and handling, prepaid. *A Guide for Parents and Students* is available at a cost of 10 cents each or $2.95 per 100, plus shipping and handling, prepaid.

Following the terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, The American Legion established the September 11th Memorial Scholarship Fund to provide educational opportunities for the children of American service men and women who die while on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. The fund will provide "American Legacy Scholarships" to the children to attend college and will be in addition to their governmental entitlements. Fund raising activities are ongoing with an initial goal of 20 million dollars established to fund this scholarship. Other scholarship programs include the National High School Oratorical Contest; Eagle Scout of the Year; Educational Communications, Inc. Boys Nation Scholarship; American Legion Baseball Leadership Scholarship; Gatorade Sportsmanship Award Scholarship; Educational Communications, Inc. Baseball Scholarship; and the Samsung American Legion Scholarship. Through these scholarship programs, The American Legion issues, on average, $450,000 annually to eligible students to further their education.

The *PACT Handbook* is the guide for American Legion Education Chairmen. It contains information on the goals and objectives of the education program, ideas and suggestions for activities, coordinating concepts and a typical calendar for a successful program. Programs covered in the handbook include: Citizenship Education, Career Education activities such as career nights, community resource files, Adopt-A-School, how to promote American Education Week, and financial aid nights.

Over 23,000 students are recipients of The American Legion School Award Medal each year. This award is designed to recognize a student for the qualities of courage, honor, leadership, patriotism, scholarship and service. The award is presented to a boy and a girl upon graduation from elementary school, junior high/middle school or high school.

The American Legion believes that the citizens of this country should be dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in the entire realm of intellectual endeavor; that our people should recognize those persons who have developed their intellectual abilities to the fullest extent; that teachers should enrich their knowledge, particularly in the field in which they teach and that scholarship assistance to deserving students should be expanded.

Such an educational program will fulfill the dreams of the past, the aspirations of the present and the needs of the future. The American Legion supports such a system of education and believes that the vitality of our democratic way of life is dependent upon such schools.

Americanism Commission
Executive Section

Joseph E. Caouette, Jr., Rollingsford, New Hampshire—Chairman
Larry L. Price, Redfield, South Dakota—Vice-Chairman
Roger L. Wild, Lincoln, Nebraska—Commander's Representative
Charles E. Gannon, Landover Hills, Maryland—Consultant
Philip H. Mette, Effingham, Illinois—Consultant

COMMISSION ON CHILDREN & YOUTH

Elmer Fuhrhop, Ohio, Chairman
Marty Justis, Maryland, Director

The American Legion has been a staunch supporter for the children and youth of our nation since our founding in 1919. Our commitment to our nation's children continues to be a paramount concern for the National Commission on Children & Youth as it seeks to improve the well being of all children.

Through the decades that followed our founding, The American Legion became a strong advocate for children's rights and remained at the forefront of the child welfare movement. The early years were devoted to progressive childcare and protection programs. Through the efforts of The American Legion and its affiliated organizations—the American Legion Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion, and the Eight & Forty - many states and communities improved their own child welfare provisions.

The development of new and expanded public programs designed to provide economic security for children made it possible for our organization to turn its attention to other 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 area of concern for child welfare and child health.

As stated in a 1924 resolution adopted by the National Executive Committee, The American Legion "has and will do everything possible to perpetuate 'A SQUARE DEAL FOR EVERY CHILD'." This remains our ultimate goal and the definitive challenge for the years ahead.

To attain this goal, The American Legion, in 1925, adopted the "Whole Child" plan, which states: "every child should have a home, health, education, character and opportunity." Its foundation is based on three guiding principles:

1. To strengthen the family unit against the forces of today's complex society, recognizing that the most normal environment for children is a home with their own parents.
2. To extend support to sound organizations and facilities that provide services for children and youth, always acting in a supplementary capacity, rather than duplicating the efforts of existing agencies.
3. To maintain a well-rounded program that meets the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs of today's young people. Stated certainly for future endeavors, this third principle has provided the flexibility to address all matters of child health and child welfare.

While these principles represent the heart of the "Whole Child" plan, the muscle depends on our four Guidelines for Action, working together:

1. PREVENTION—Finding solutions to obstacles before they become long-lasting problems.
2. EDUCATION—Providing information to our members and the general public on timely issues involving children and youth.
3. LEGISLATION—Maintaining knowledge of new and existing laws, needed amendments, and the administration of laws that affect young people at the national, state and local levels.

4. MATERIAL AID—Providing direct assistance in the form of cash, clothing, food and time.

During the past eighty-eight years, The American Legion's Children & Youth Program has contributed to significant advancements in the area of child welfare. While our list of achievements is extensive, it is by no means complete. The American Legion has, and will maintain a deep community-centered interest in children to find new, and perhaps presently unknown, approaches to child welfare problems. There is no way of knowing what issues will face our youth tomorrow. Our survival may well depend on the quality of care, education, and training which we, as parents and citizens, provide for all children today.

The American Legion is proud of the Legionnaires, and the members of its affiliated organizations, and their achievements on behalf of our nation's youth. Their efforts in the area of child welfare are a living testament to the ability of an organization of free men and women to adapt itself to evolving needs, while maintaining high principles and taking on increased responsibilities under those principles.

2005-2006 Program

In May of each year, The American Legion's National Commission on Children & Youth meets to consider what programs it wants to emphasize for the following program year. When a decision is made, the National Children & Youth staff is charged to research these areas of concern and produce materials to support our volunteers.

For the program year 2005-06, the Commission voted to focus their efforts on the following quality of life issues, which directly impact our young people on the National level:

1. Child Health
2. Child Safety
3. Military Family Support

Child Health: Since our beginning, the Legion has worked to improve the quality of life for all young people. Our partnership with Children's Miracle Network underscores this mission. Children's Miracle Network (CMN) raises critically needed funds for 170 children's hospitals, which treat 17 million children annually in the United States and Canada. These hospitals treat children with all types of afflictions and injuries, rendering service based on need, not the ability to pay. They annually provide $2.5 billion in uncompensated charity care and are committed to turning no child away.

Children's Miracle Network is dedicated to ensuring that 100 percent of local donations made through CMN Champions (the continuing theme of CMN's fund-raising campaign) stay in the community in which they were raised to benefit children treated at participating hospitals.

The Commission encourages American Legion Departments and Posts to work with and support their local CMN-affiliated children's hospitals to benefit the health and well being of our nation's children. During the 2005-2006 program year, the combined American Legion family provided more than $4 million dollars in total donations to local children's hospitals nationwide. Since our partnership with CMN began in 1998, The American Legion family has donated over $19 million to this worthy endeavor. This achievement was possible only through the dedicated efforts of Legion family members throughout this nation who have embraced this program and are committed to assisting children.

The position of The American Legion is that all children should have quality health services to assure their physical, mental and emotional well-being. To obtain these services, families of seriously ill or injured children often must travel hundreds of miles to seek medical treatment at specialized children's hospitals, thus causing the family to spend days and even weeks away from home. The additional financial burden placed on the family coupled with overwhelming medical costs is difficult, and many times impossible for the family to afford.

Ronald McDonald Houses were created to serve these families by offering them a home-like atmosphere, regardless of the family's ability to pay, where they can get the rest and renewal they need to be most supportive of their sick or injured child. The Ronald

McDonald House Charities Pop Tab Collection Program generates funds to help offset the costs associated with a family's stay while their child is receiving specialized treatment.

To assist these children and families, The American Legion has adopted the Ronald McDonald House Charities Pop Tab Collection Program as a national children and youth project designed to benefit participating Ronald McDonald Houses throughout the country. Through the collective efforts of The American Legion and Ronald McDonald House Charities, we help to provide a home-away-from-home environment for financially-challenged families with seriously ill or injured children who must undergo medical treatment at a children's hospital.

Child Safety: The American Legion is very concerned about the welfare of our nation's youth and a major problem that threatens them. Suicide among adolescents, age 15 -24, continues to be the third largest cause of death among this age group. The suicide rate among adolescents has grown steadily over the last four decades and has quadrupled since 1960. Over 4,000 young people take their own lives every year. Suicide is a senseless tragedy, but is completely preventable. The National Commission on Children & Youth produces and distributes a brochure, entitled "Know the Warning Signs of Youth Suicide," designed to assist youth and adults in understanding some of the warning signs and facts about suicide.

As long as Halloween activities are sponsored and promoted in our various communities by duly appointed and elected officials, the National Commission on Children of Youth of The American Legion believe children and parents should know how to make this observance as safe as possible. To assist this effort, the National Commission on Children & Youth produces and distributes a brochure, entitled "Make Halloween a Fun and Safe Night," to educate children and parents about trick-or-treat safety.

The American Legion is very concerned about young people destroying their lives by using drugs. Alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, and marijuana are often readily available and considered to be the entryway to a life of drug dependency and delinquency. Gateway drugs are so-called because the use of these drugs often leads to drug abuse, addiction, and to the use of other drugs such as heroin, cocaine, and LSD.

Growing up today is hard enough without drugs, but peer pressure to use can be extremely intense; however, individuals are the ones that are ultimately responsible for their own behavior. Decisions that one makes today can have far-reaching effects on one's life for years to come. To help combat this problem and educate our nations youth about the dangers of gateway drugs, the National Commission produces and distributes a brochure, entitled "Gateway Drugs...Choose not to use," to equip parents and children with the facts of gateway drugs and help children lead a healthy lifestyle.

Military Family Support: Since September 11, 2001, the nation has been on high alert and National Guard and Reserve units have been activated in record numbers. As a result, the families of these men and women often find themselves unable to meet normal monthly household obligations. Assistance is needed for a variety of everyday chores and expenses. These needs range from routine household chores, grocery shopping, and childcare, to ensuring that the grass is mowed for the expecting mother whose husband is serving abroad.

To actively address these issues, The American Legion maintains a nationwide toll-free telephone number, 1-800-504-4098, for service personnel and their families to call for assistance. Families can also request assistance electronically through the Legion's web site at www.legion.org or email at familysupport@legion.org. All requests are referred to The American Legion Department, or state, in which the call originated. Departments relay the collected information to a local American Legion Post. The Post then contacts the service member or family to see how assistance can be provided locally. Since the creation of the Family Support Network in 1990, thousands of Posts have responded to meet these families' needs.

As our forces pursue the enemies of freedom in Iraq and around the globe, The American Legion supports our men and women in uniform and their families with the Family Support Network. Those of us in The American Legion, who served our nation in times of adversity, remember how it felt to be separated from those we love. The Family Support Network is successful as a direct result of Legionnaires, at the Post level in local

communities, responding to the needs of our comrades and their families. As the nation's largest veteran's organization, our commitment to the men and women of our armed forces and their families is absolute. As a grateful nation, we must ensure that no family endures hardships caused by military service that ensures American ideals and freedom.

Continuing with our tradition of supporting veterans and their families, The American Legion has partnered with Operation: Military Kids to support the children of activated and deployed members of the armed forces. Spearheaded by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Army Youth Development Project, Operation: Military Kids recognizes that when National Guard, Reserve, and other military parents living in civilian communities are mobilized, their children suddenly have unique needs and may lack the community support systems associated with active military installations.

Extensive media coverage of ongoing military operations and dependence on the Reserves and National Guard creates daily anxiety. These "new" military kids seek friends and adults who can empathize and can help them cope with their new world. The American Legion, as a core partner of Operation: Military Kids, will enable this program to harness the benefits of our well-established and successful children and youth programs at the national and local levels to support military youth.

The American Legion in cooperation with State and County Cooperative Extension staff will seek to reach out to military youth before, during, and after their parents deploy. This outreach effort will seek to:

1. Create a community support network for military youth.
2. Deliver recreation, social and educational programs for military youth.
3. Support military kids coping with the stress of having a parent deployed.
4. Collaborate with schools to ensure that staff is attuned to the unique needs of military students.
5. Educate the public on the impact of the deployment cycle on military personnel, families, kids and the community as a whole.

Continuing Programs

Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA): This is the landmark program of the Commission on Children & Youth. Begun in 1925 as a form of direct aid to veteran's children, the Temporary Financial Assistance program is still unique in the social work field today and remains a very active program. In 2005, the program aided 1,128 children with more than $534,504.88 in grants. From it's beginning to present, this fund has assisted veterans' families with millions of dollars in non-repayable grants.

The fund, made possible by The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation, is used to assist families in meeting the costs of shelter, food, utilities and medical needs when the parents are unable to do so; thereby helping to keep the child, or children, in a more stable home environment.

Through TFA, a Post may call upon the Americanism and Children & Youth Division of The American Legion for cash assistance to help meet the basic needs of veterans' children. Funds can be granted over a temporary period to eligible children when it has been determined by investigation that the child is in need and that no other sources are available, or those that are available are inadequate. It is important to note that while the veteran must have served honorably on active duty during a designated war period, the veteran does not have to be a member of The American Legion to receive assistance.

As sure as The American Legion is the largest veterans' organization in the world, there are veterans' families who require assistance. Possibly the rent is overdue or the children are hungry because a parent is sick or disabled, deceased, or has deserted the family. Whatever the reason, these children become the concern of The American Legion, and the Temporary Financial Assistance Program is the vital tool which is used to help meet the maintenance and health needs of veterans' children, thereby allowing the child to develop in the home.

Child safety: The American Legion has demonstrated a strong concern for the safety of this nation's young people since the early 1920's. In 1992, the Commission on Children & Youth designated the Child Safety program as one of our annual or continuing programs.

Child safety is defined as any external event that may present a significant danger to a child or young person. It includes, but is not limited to:

1. Child Abuse and Neglect
2. Sexual Abuse
3. Indoor/Outdoor Safety
4. School Safety
5. Playground Safety
6. Childhood Communicable Diseases
7. Accidents (automobile, drowning, firearms)
8. Fire Safety
9. Substance Abuse
10. Youth Suicide

Accidents are the leading cause of death and disability among our nation's youth. Annually, nearly 25,000 children under the age of 19 will die in automobile crashes, drowning, fires, and through the improper use of firearms. In homes, playgrounds and parks, the potential for serious injury is always present.

Legion volunteers regularly disseminate information to parents, children and community leaders regarding the issue of safety. Making children safety conscious, in the home and outside, is necessary to assure that they have an opportunity to play and grow into useful adults and citizens.

Legislative Efforts

The initiation and support of worthwhile Children & Youth legislation is one means by which the Commission on Children & Youth has attempted to accomplish its goals during the 2005-2006 program year. At National Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, August 31-September 2, 2004 the following resolutions, here summarized, were approved.

Admission of Children of United States Citizens: Res. 389-2004. United States citizens now have greater access to the nations of the world for work opportunities, both in the public and private sectors, and travel. In part, because of this, many children in foreign countries are progeny of United States citizens. Public Law 97-359 was enacted to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide preferential treatment in the admission of certain children of United States citizens, but addresses only alien children from Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea or Thailand born after 1950 and before October 22, 1982. As The American Legion believes that no child born of a United States citizen should be denied equal treatment under the laws of this country, we urge legislative action to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide equal treatment in admission of all children of United States citizens.

Children in Pornographic Literature: Res. 391-2004. 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. 395-2004. 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. 397-2004. 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 immunized. 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. 400-2004. Juveniles account for

nearly 35 percent of our population and better than 50 percent of serious crimes as reported by the FBI Crime Reports. Much of that crime is attributable to the over $500 million damage done to Government-supported institutions, specifically schools and housing. With this violence and vandalism in our Nation's institutions is an enormous loss of educational and domestic resources and human potential. The American Legion urges 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. 394-2004. One of the basic principles of the children and youth program is to maintain the integrity of the family home. In today's fast paced society, it is critical that we seek to recognize the importance of strengthening the basic unit of our country...the family. No institution can take the place of the family in giving meaning to human life and stability to our society. We urge the President and the Congress to establish National Family Week on a permanent basis during the Thanksgiving holiday week.

School Nutrition Program: Res. 398-2004. The American Legion again reaffirms its position that the Congress of the United States and the various state legislatures be urged to appropriate sufficient funds for school nutrition programs. This is necessary to reflect the increased cost of food and to provide for needed facilities and trained personnel for the purpose of conducting an adequate school lunch program.

Support for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: Res. 398-2004. 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. They 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. OJJDP develops effective programs to prevent delinquency, to divert juveniles from traditional juvenile justice systems and to provide critically needed alternatives to institutionalization. They coordinate all Federal juvenile delinquency programs and all Federal programs related to missing and exploited children. The Juvenile Justice and 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.

Catastrophic Illness among Children: Res. 390-2004. It has long been our position that all children should have adequate health services to assure their physical, mental and emotional well being. In the 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 financially assist those families faced by catastrophic illness to the end that the family will not be financially devastated.

Drug Trafficking: Res. 393-2004. We realize that one of the best methods to attack the drug problem is from the demand side, but this resolution urges funding for all necessary areas and agencies that can help reduce the quantity of the substances that are being made available in this country. By working at both ends of the problem, we can make a difference in the number of users.

Protect Children from the Unrestricted Media: Res. 396-2004. The producers of movies, television shows and TV news, and the Internet have become very explicit in describing and depicting various types of violence. Organizations, such as the American Civil Liberties Union defend such actions as the author's constitutional right of free

speech without regard for the potential consequences to minor children. The American Legion supports appropriate state and federal legislation to restrict the excessive use of violence, vulgarity, and other forms of moral depravation in movies, TV programs, TV news and on the Internet. In addition, we encourage Departments and Posts to conduct awareness campaigns to educate their members, their families and the general public, about the potential dangers the Internet and other forms of electronic media pose to children and teenagers.

Comprehensive Health Care for Children and Youth: Res. 392-2004. Many of our children continue to face health needs that are not properly addressed due to the high cost of our health care delivery system. The American Legion continues to support and endorse the programs as outlined by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau as authorized under Title V of the Social Security Act and urges the Congress of the United States to continue its support by adequately funding these programs, including the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant, the Healthy Start Initiative, Emergency Medical Services for Children Program and the Abstinence Education Program.

These are the highlights of our 2005-2006 Children & Youth legislative program. The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth has constantly urged Departments to support Children & Youth legislation as it relates to our National objectives. Local Posts are also encouraged to support city ordinances that deal with the community's efforts to improve conditions for children and youth. The Children & Youth legislative program is a never-ending struggle, which we eagerly accept for the sake of all children.

Children & Youth Expenditures

Annually, as it has for the past 83 years, the Commission on Children & Youth records activities from The American Legion Family, consisting of nearly 15,000 Posts of The American Legion, over 5,500 Squadrons of The Sons of The American Legion, 10,000 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, 2005 through May 31, 2006 and combined with these reports.

During the reporting period, The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation reported $455,586.48 in donations from members of The American Legion Family and individuals across the country. During the same timeframe, our Temporary Financial Assistance program provided $534,504.88 in grants to 510 families in need. For the 2005-2006 Children & Youth programs year, including contributions to the Child Welfare Foundation, Posts, Squadrons, Units and Departments of The American Legion and affiliated organizations reported a grand total of $26,060,991 in expenditures and contributions.

Children & Youth Literature

During the 2005-2006 program year, hundreds of thousands of pieces of Children & Youth literature were distributed by the Americanism and Children & Youth Division in order to further the objectives of the total program.

As shown in Table #5, our most popular brochures are related to our major points of emphasis—Child Health, Child Safety, and Military Family Support. It is of further interest to note that some 1,559 citations were distributed to Departments in order to recognize Posts for their contributions to the overall Children & Youth Program.

Appreciation Acknowledged

The Commission on Children & Youth and its Chairman take this opportunity to thank the volunteers of The American Legion family. Many hours, tremendous amounts of energy and personal sacrifice cannot be repaid. Special mention must also go to National Commander Thomas L. Bock not because of his position, but because of his sincere dedication and enduring support for our programs this past year. In addition, the Commission sincerely thanks National Adjutant Robert W. Spanogle for his support and cooperation. The members of The American Legion do 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
W. Darrell Hansel, Vevay, Indiana—National Commander's Representative
Robert M. Johnson, Laplata, Maryland—Consultant
Raymond G. Johnson, Unadilla, NY—Consultant
Mile Smith, Chicago, Illinois
Gary W. Gifford, Lexington Park, Maryland
Herbert J. Petit, Jr., Kenner, Louisiana
Peggy Moon, St. Joseph, Minnesota

AMERICAN LEGION CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION, INC.
Dennis R. Boland, Florida, President
William A. Pease, Indiana, Executive Secretary

In 1954 The American Legion endorsed the separate incorporation of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. Since then, the Foundation has granted over eight million dollars to other non-profit youth oriented organizations.

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation's foremost philanthropic priority is to provide other nonprofit organizations with a means to educate the public about the needs of children across this nation. The Foundation accepts proposals from nonprofit organizations for projects that:

- Contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children through the dissemination of knowledge about new and innovative organizations and/or their programs to benefit youth; and/or
- Contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children through the dissemination of knowledge already possessed by well-established organizations, to the end that such information can be more adequately used by society.

In October of 2005, the Board of Directors approved grants to 21 non-profit organizations in the amount of $611,381 for projects to be completed in calendar year 2006. The organizations and amounts are as follows:

American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Grants

American Humane Association	Englewood, CO	$29,850
Center on Media and Child Health	Boston, MA	$31,819
Chadwick Center for Children and Families	San Diego, CA	$20,000
Child Development Resources	Norge, VA	$26,850
Child Welfare League of America	Washington, DC	$29,914
Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation	Tenafly, NJ	$40,000
Children's National Medical Center	Washington, DC	$25,000
Cornelia de Lange Syndrome Foundation, Inc.	Avon, CT	$25,720
Danbury Children First, Inc.	Danbury, CT	$41,500
Family & Children's Service	Minneapolis, MN	$36,000
Foundation for Children with Cancer	St. Louis, MO	$15,000
Institute for American Values	New York, NY	$24,600
Mercy Medical Airlift	Virginia Beach, VA	$38,000
The MY HERO Project, Inc.	Laguna Beach, CA	$26,222
National Association of SAVE	Raleigh, NC	$25,000
National CASA Association	Seattle, WA	$52,500
The National Craniofacial Association	Chattanooga, TN	$33,090

National Marfan Foundation	Port Washington, NY	$25,000
ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation	Rolling Meadows, IL	$34,116
Toby Tire Safety	Springfield, IL	$15,000
University of Minnesota	Minneapolis, MN	$16,200

During the 2005-2006 contribution year, donations exceeded $455,586 with over $220,900 of that amount coming to the Foundation from the Sons of The American Legion. We receive most of our support from the members of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, the Eight and Forty, and the Sons of The American Legion. Their Posts, Units, Salons, and Squadrons are the primary contributors to the success and growth of our Foundation.

We encourage each member and each local organization to make an annual contribution in support of their Foundation so it can continue to fund projects that will assist children by giving them a better chance at life. It is important to remember that every dollar given to the Foundation is put directly into the trust fund to be used for grants that assist our young people.

At the meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation held in Indianapolis on May 7, 2006, the following officers were elected: Dennis R. Boland of Florida (President); Peggy Moon of Minnesota, (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 87th annual National Convention of the American Legion was conducted in Honolulu, Hawaii August 19-25, 2005. National Commander Thomas P. Cadmus (Michigan) called the National Convention to order at 9:00 A.M. on Tuesday, August 23, 2005. Commander Cadmus welcomed the Legionnaires to Honolulu, Hawaii and thanked them for their continuing service to our Country and to our Veterans. The Honorable Linda Lingle, Governor of the State of Hawaii, the Honorable Mufi Hannemann, Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, Harry B. Pasco, Department Commander, the American Legion Department of Hawaii, and Michael D. McCloskey, President of the National Convention Corporation of Hawaii welcomed legionnaires to the National Convention. Senators Daniel K. Inouye and Daniel K. Akaka, and the Honorable Jim Nicholson, Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs also addressed the attendees of the 87th National Convention.

The Honorable George W. Bush, President of The United States, addressed the convention via telephone from Air Force One on Tuesday, August 23, 2005.

One of the many highlights for the 2005 National Convention was The National Commander's Banquet for Distinguished Guests that took place in Hall II of the Hawaii Convention Center. The Motor City Angels provided entertainment to a crowd of approximately 2,300 Legionnaires and guests.

Convention Commission Activities

The National Convention Commission held three regular meetings during the year. Discussions continue regarding the revisions of our request for proposal (RFP) that is 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 the same way during the initial review and site visit process. It is the commission's desire to continue to attract new cities desirous of hosting our National Convention. This provides our "blue cap"

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 8/40	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	47%	0%	$1,000.00	$2,996.00	$64,853.00	$33,483.00	$13,416.00	$0.00	$112.00	796	$115,859
Maine	52%	0%	$3,305.05	$1,200.00	$73,735.00	$136,201.00	$61,171.00	$0.00	$125.00	1,734	$275,687
Massachusetts	40%	0%	$3,808.77	$1,008.67	$61,953.00	$162,165.00	$99,003.00	$12,100.00	$472.50	1,796	$330,531
New Hampshire	60%	43%	$0.00	$3,249.98	$69,118.00	$182,626.00	$126,861.00	$0.00	$20.00	14,552	$381,875
Rhode Island	0%	29%	$2,147.07	$52.00	$4,002.00	$620.00	$620.00	$150.00	$50.00	4,741	$7,641
Vermont	73%	0%	$2,458.13	$1,665.00	$129,512.00	$90,459.54	$51,765.38	$135.00	$203.00	6,528	$276,216
TOTAL:	46%	7%	$12,719.02	$10,161.66	$393,173.00	$605,574.54	$352,785.38	$12,385.00	$982.50	32,147	$1,387,811
REGION 2											
Delaware	67%	95%	$0.00	$475.00	$29,965.00	$32,166.00	$23,750.00	$1,200.00	(2)	8,247	$87,594
D.C.	40%	0%	$0.00	$258.00	$1,990.00	$5,450.00	$6,485.00	$0.00	$50.00	70	$14,233
Maryland	87%	78%	$1,600.00	$3,551.00	$374,272.00	$999,582.00	$762,122.00	$15,617.00	$25.00	29,903	$2,175,969
New Jersey	28%	0%	$3,142.75	$5,249.25	$90,902.00	$108,859.00	$74,596.00	$0.00	$183.00	13,470	$282,731
New York	62%	99%	$11,586.94	$6,648.08	$490,616.00	$996,023.00	$613,259.00	$146,620.94	$194.00	49,541	$2,265,128
Pennsylvania	80%	0%	$6,349.75	$2,294.00	$455,036.00	$1,196,609.22	$787,038.84	$100.00	$402.00	231,591	$2,447,829
Virginia	100%	59%	$14,165.56	$3,465.90	$478,536.00	$562,254.00	$646,324.00	$186,910.50	$705.00	16,796	$1,893,373
West Virginia	65%	0%	$8,144.10	$285.00	$62,668.00	$57,960.00	$54,947.00	$0.00	$160.00	3,539	$184,182
TOTAL:	80%	82%	$45,171.11	$22,224.23	$1,985,004.80	$3,958,753.22	$2,988,520.84	$350,848.44	$1,718.00	353,157	$9,352,039
REGION 3											
Alabama	16%	40%	$5,187.37	$2,368.53	$10,986.00	$170,827.03	$69,721.00	$90,688.46	$160.00	1,227	$337,931
Florida	77%	100%	$11,983.59	$36,563.75	$304,324.00	$467,484.00	$228,628.00	$300.00	$625.00	38,096	$1,047,896
Georgia	70%	0%	$2,455.90	$561.00	$521,076.00	$491,016.00	$159,897.00	$0.00	(2)	24,902	$1,174,804
Kentucky	55%	0%	$9,073.86	$2,112.26	$134,193.00	$431,452.00	$104,814.00	$0.00	$279.00	9,883	$681,924
North Carolina	26%	0%	$23,481.18	$1,566.00	$56,013.00	$74,481.00	$65,800.00	$0.00	(2)	1,105	$221,338
South Carolina	27%	32%	$1,724.07	$782.00	$24,806.00	$66,857.00	$83,287.00	$273,333.64	(2)	4,312	$452,366
Tennessee	48%	11%	$7,883.22	$630.00	$69,205.00	$89,955.00	$33,718.00	$0.00	$0.00	3,432	$161,371
TOTAL:	48%	31%	$68,749.01	$44,583.53	$1,120,485.00	$1,793,872.03	$713,843.80	$364,322.09	$1,054.00	61,857	$4,097,633
REGION 4											
Arkansas	23%	0%	$0.00	$15.00	$58,516.00	$55,862.00	$13,947.00	$0.00	$279.00	3,616	$128,609
Louisiana	15%	18%	$18,048.62	$970.00	$199,995.00	$108,436.00	$24,743.00	$2,500.00	$144.00	8,217	$352,837
Mississippi	5%	25%	$18,782.42	$2,875.00	$41,670.00	$38,373.00	$7,695.00	$650.00	$162.50	3,491	$110,208
Oklahoma	27%	0%	$17,778.33	$150.00	$11,086.00	$45,470.00	$16,268.00	$0.00	$163.00	1,404	$90,915
Texas	1%	58%	$9,823.89	$15,187.00	$123,740.00	$236,960.00	$45,391.00	$500.00	$1,080.71	49,715	$432,883
TOTAL:	12%	28%	$62,433.26	$19,197.00	$435,007.00	$485,091.00	$108,044.00	$3,650.00	$1,829.21	66,443	$1,115,251
REGION 5											
Illinois	21%	54%	$14,252.38	$5,885.50	$138,171.70	$233,058.98	$154,469.08	$3,500.00	$887.25	18,609	$548,205
Indiana	45%	58%	$18,621.36	$4,287.22	$229,806.00	$391,387.00	$452,023.00	$0.00	$919.30	13,716	$1,095,344
Michigan	48%	0%	$8,127.67	$3,467.00	$97,824.00	$122,145.00	$78,594.00	$0.00	$3,419.45	6,046	$313,377
Missouri	50%	30%	$5,634.99	$1,817.96	$156,204.00	$225,054.00	$125,168.00	$0.00	$375.00	4,931	$514,074
Ohio	75%	0%	$2,496.72	$35,615.08	$297,214.00	$946,868.00	$330,007.00	$0.00	$1,812.00	16,695	$1,614,013
Wisconsin	83%	0%	$2,025.00	$8,215.31	$108,287.00	$132,216.00	$120,807.00	$0.00	(2)	6,762	$371,548
TOTAL:	51%	24%	$49,358.09	$59,068.97	$1,026,408.70	$2,050,728.98	$1,261,068.08	$3,500.00	$7,413.00	66,758	$4,456,561
REGION 6											
Iowa	1%	0%	$22,109.67	$1,030.00	$49,087.00	$67,303.00	$17,599.00	$300.00	(2)	20,702	$147,357
Kansas	64%	68%	$3,530.80	$4,522.05	$62,330.00	$29,773.00	$67,724.00	$9,000.00	$290.00	4,812	$177,170
Minnesota	49%	0%	$18,199.20	$3,487.00	$407,954.00	$396,440.00	$264,462.00	$0.00	$405.00	59,006	$1,090,327
Nebraska	69%	0%	$0.00	$2,200.00	$40,045.00	$52,131.00	$46,539.00	$0.00	$250.00	2,622	$141,165
North Dakota	56%	38%	$0.00	$1,036.00	$82,038.00	$170,472.00	$66,869.00	$0.00	$0.00	11,042	$320,415
South Dakota	43%	90%	$608.50	$407.50	$5,220.00	$6,198.00	$8,707.00	$0.00	(2)	196	$21,135
TOTAL:	41%	28%	$44,446.17	$12,682.55	$646,644.00	$712,315.00	$471,900.00	$9,300.00	$945.00	98,380	$1,898,289
REGION 7											
Arizona	63%	0%	$20,899.06	$3,746.00	$143,661.00	$97,566.00	$111,909.00	$0.00	$315.00	16,840	$378,115
California	70%	86%	$11,042.22	$4,040.65	$738,177.00	$479,407.00	$506,439.00	$15.00	$2,086.00	54,170	$1,741,207
Colorado	43%	0%	$8,418.98	$1,700.00	$650.00	$19,478.00	$30,866.00	$4,500.00	$21.00	4,086	$83,634
Hawaii	70%	0%	$1,484.20	$210.00	$660.00	$9,565.00	$260.00	$0.00	$25.00	75	$12,444
Nevada	65%	38%	$854.00	$385.00	$20,182.50	$27,804.25	$2,587.00	$75.00	$113.00	126,479	$51,811
New Mexico	0%	47%	$2,750.00	$2,850.22	$86,244.00	$35,727.66	$10,941.00	$7,282.00	$799.00	11,313	$146,574
Utah	48%	55%	$1,000.00	$2,975.90	$76,656.00	$81,315.00	$32,102.00	$6,000.00	$662.50	2,123	$160,711
TOTAL:	57%	62%	$44,448.46	$15,906.77	$1,066,440.50	$730,702.93	$695,124.00	$17,652.00	$4,021.50	215,065	$2,574,496
REGION 8											
Alaska	46%	38%	$2,000.00	$350.00	$94,773.00	$52,100.00	$55,532.00	$0.00	$335.00	7,652	$205,090
Idaho	58%	51%	$36,350.45	$1,020.00	$44,588.00	$22,066.00	$13,128.00	$0.00	$75.00	125,522	$117,227
Montana	100%	48%	$18,631.66	$448.00	$22,170.60	$13,152.00	$19,999.00	$50.00	$70.00	7,239	$74,521
Oregon	34%	59%	$610.00	$615.00	$103,672.00	$69,356.00	$19,922.00	$0.00	$67.00	9,673	$194,642
Washington	53%	60%	$72,031.60	$2,613.51	$88,777.00	$30,058.00	$55,621.00	$200.00	$1,075.15	16,802	$250,376
Wyoming	0%	62%	$1,888.35	$118.00	$32,999.00	$19,528.00	$13,050.00	$600.00	$73.00	4,915	$68,056
TOTAL:	54%	55%	$131,512.26	$5,164.51	$387,179.60	$206,260.00	$177,252.00	$850.00	$1,695.15	171,803	$909,914
REGION TOTALS:	47%	34%	$449,837.38	$177,887.80	$7,068,259.80	$10,543,297.70	$6,768,357.28	$762,507.53	$19,657.36	1,087,460	$19,119,785
FOREIGN											
France	9%	0%	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$100.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	0	$100
Mexico	0%	0%	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	0	$0
Philippines	0%	0%	$0.00	$0.00	$1,500.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	0	$1,500
Puerto Rico	0%	0%	$0.00	$0.00	$2,800.57	$4,080.57	$705.00	$15.00	$0.00	0	$7,601
TOTAL:	2%	0%	$0.00	$0.00	$4,300.57	$4,180.57	$0.00	$15.00	$0.00	0	$8,496
SUBTOTAL:	46%	35%	$449,837.38	$177,887.80	$7,063,560.37	$10,547,478.27	$6,768,357.28	$762,522.53	$19,657.38	1,087,460	$25,789,301

(2) - Not organized in the Department

Child Welfare Foundation by National Auxiliary	$10,000
Children & Youth Division by National Auxiliary	$10,000
Child Welfare Foundation by National 8/40	$537
Children & Youth Division by National 8/40	$0
Other children programs by Jr. Auxiliary	$0
Child Welfare Foundation by Individuals	$18,708
Bequests to Child Welfare Foundation	$6,326
C.W.F. by Sons of The American Legion	$220,939
Child Welfare Foundation by National Legion	$6,185
GRAND TOTAL	$26,080,991

TABLE #1 REPORTING PERIOD: JUNE 1, 2005 - MAY 31, 2006

TABLE NO. 2
EXPENDITURES FROM NATIONAL TEMPORARY AID FUNDS TO DEPARTMENTS ACCORDING TO YEARS

	1926-45	1946-65	1966-85	1986-95	1996-2004	June 2005- May 2006	Grand Total
Alabama	29,181.33	51,167.06	76,790.45	185,155.82	134,837.32	3,187.37	480,119.35
Alaska	0.00	1,627.56	1,550.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	7,177.56
Arizona	26,081.70	8,752.00	21,380.31	228,396.73	289,526.72	20,899.06	595,018.52
Arkansas	33,873.20	25,962.22	2,881.07	58,723.29	16,181.81	0.00	137,821.39
California	30,106.15	16,026.45	1,550.00	7,558.06	18,992.22	11,042.22	85,276.04
Colorado	41,621.11	22,618.11	1,385.00	13,205.83	11,173.17	6,418.98	96,432.20
Connecticut	1,854.00	440.00	450.00	1,192.00	6,871.56	1,000.00	11,907.56
Delaware	2,035.00	1,000.00	475.00	2,035.00	8,497.84	0.00	14,642.84
DC	2,570.00	1,203.50	600.00	28,836.75	2,319.00	0.00	33,329.25
Florida	33,341.28	25,520.50	2,530.00	33,542.76	52,486.22	11,983.59	158,404.35
Georgia	88,894.07	86,084.42	4,885.00	8,498.51	10,405.90	2,455.90	182,203.80
Hawaii	870.00*	0.00	900.00	0.00	4,884.20	1,484.20	7,938.40
Idaho	7,583.50	5,771.85	7,366.39	24,202.62	159,134.70	36,350.45	240,419.51
Illinois	30,230.79	4,343.53	10,525.73	129,729.07	262,292.83	14,252.36	451,364.31
Indiana	31,850.08	9,066.40	2,920.00	152,703.98	158,579.30	16,821.36	369,941.12
Iowa	17,483.08	597.00	3,928.45	18,982.47	205,756.15	22,109.67	268,856.82
Kansas	20,786.80	42,064.35	6,923.00	9,891.54	12,760.80	3,530.80	97,757.29
Kentucky	25,843.50	45,527.90	84,854.96	48,497.68	115,371.54	9,073.88	307,169.24
Louisiana	23,400.50	38,464.30	3,365.00	7,840.45	17,848.82	16,048.82	106,787.49
Maine	3,818.94	1,910.26	2,676.55	20,812.00	19,000.55	3,305.05	51,323.35
Maryland	5,867.00	3,390.57	3,383.00	4,770.00	29,820.94	1,800.00	49,051.51
Massachusetts	2,754.50*	455.00	150.00	7,050.00	15,079.90	3,808.77	29,298.17
Michigan	23,885.33	33,281.24	15,348.82	17,875.78	44,546.99	8,127.67	142,775.81
Minnesota	8,810.77	23,322.79	11,840.33	172,636.26	71,338.99	16,199.20	305,348.34
Mississippi	40,293.63	63,254.14	117,892.58	54,314.88	85,479.37	18,782.42	380,017.00
Missouri	53,073.08	47,799.64	11,056.00	19,382.51	33,349.15	5,634.98	170,275.36
Montana	5,414.25	1,868.85	1,575.30	45,267.56	39,282.25	18,631.86	111,839.87
Nebraska	18,470.10	17,795.88	17,631.06	4,520.25	759.49	0.00	59,976.58
Nevada	585.00	766.00	7,272.00	1,495.00	15,964.94	854.00	26,936.94
New Hampshire	4,250.50	4,841.50	0.00	56,557.79	12,610.00	0.00	77,359.79
New Jersey	6,985.53	1,848.00	4,478.00	85,437.20	50,051.85	3,142.75	134,961.33
New Mexico	20,074.30	53,098.74	56,723.89	117,780.24	46,512.39	2,750.00	296,819.56
New York	7,587.54	4,803.00	1,150.00	42,484.24	71,863.33	11,566.94	139,757.05
North Carolina	46,587.50	81,019.80	9,740.00	23,502.67	45,313.37	23,481.18	229,834.32
North Dakota	26,017.45	11,788.21	5,771.32	7,064.40	11,426.94	0.00	62,068.32
Ohio	23,930.43	5,116.25	11,613.89	12,357.85	10,792.72	2,496.72	66,307.86
Oklahoma	40,458.05	65,406.47	88,958.03	171,888.84	185,986.18	17,778.33	570,275.90
Oregon	1,250.50	13,750.15	24,565.95	48,815.83	13,986.00	810.00	101,208.43
Panama	875.00	534.00	600.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,809.00
Pennsylvania	22,847.41	851.00	19,204.85	38,863.37	23,030.36	6,348.78	110,766.75
Puerto Rico	17,057.00	57,754.00	55,499.50	49,720.00	11,100.00	0.00	191,130.50
Rhode Island	1,562.00*	1,841.00	1,080.00	19,527.38	14,035.65	2,147.07	39,973.10
South Carolina	58,453.05	28,893.34	5,339.00	900.00	11,888.09	1,724.07	114,985.55
South Dakota	42,430.27	16,362.05	725.00	46,361.43	4,751.80	606.50	111,237.05
Tennessee	31,144.77	54,813.20	20,804.30	61,868.79	26,896.13	7,863.22	204,792.41
Texas	35,373.50	47,362.43	28,714.50	8,534.74	21,960.86	9,823.89	149,499.92
Utah	11,125.48*	3,246.00	3,386.00	13,414.42	13,034.34	1,000.00	45,218.24
Vermont	1,824.50	8,251.50	0.00	5,425.00	3,545.13	2,458.13	22,505.26
Virginia	45,310.31	28,037.78	17,836.00	37,295.82	52,344.36	14,165.56	194,989.85
Washington	3,378.00*	427.50	625.00	100,545.28	439,099.80	72,031.80	616,107.47
West Virginia	27,529.86	11,395.94	3,460.00	24,514.66	32,484.49	8,144.10	107,529.19
Wisconsin	15,661.98	8,067.25	9,876.00	19,309.76	31,673.82	2,025.00	86,835.63
Wyoming	8,160.00	1,963.00	1,350.00	2,279.00	12,058.56	1,888.35	27,548.91
Other Depts	580.00	173.50					733.50
*Miscellaneous	18,499.21						18,499.21
TOTAL	$1,121,572.85	$1,089,978.73	$777,323.21	$2,253,246.25	$2,976,191.15 (2)	$448,837.38	$8,662,149.57

*For the year 1926--Department totals not available

Table 3

Comparison of Number of Children of WW II, Korean, Vietnam, Grenada/Lebanon and Panama Veterans Receiving Aid from National Children and Youth Division

	World War II	Korea	Vietnam	Grenada/ Lebanon	Panama
June	0	4	7	4	8
July	0	7	14	7	8
August	1	1	10	12	0
September	0	0	27	10	18
October	0	0	24	19	15
November	0	0	11	12	10
December	0	0	13	5	10
January	0	0	14	10	3
February	0	0	10	4	1
March	0	0	6	10	3
April	0	0	6	1	1
May	0	0	4	6	2
Totals	1	12	146	100	79
Percentage	0.09%	1.11%	13.56%	9.29%	7.34%

Table No. 4

Printed Material Furnished Upon Request
During Period June 1, 2005 through May 31, 2006

	Total
American Legion & Children's Miracle Network - Brochure	6,008
American Legion Child Welfare Foundation	25,142
Annual Children & Youth Program Piece	17,024
April is Children & Youth Month	13,600
Family Support Network	38,574
Gateway Drugs	39,421
Make Halloween a Safe and Fun Night - Brochure	158,153
Nathan's Visit Comic Books	16,955
National Family Week	24,964
Play It Safe Safety Booklet	26,159
TFA Applications	576
TFA Brochures	16,177
Walkathon Project Guide	2,882
Warning Signs – Suicide Prevention	38,960
Citations:	
Annual Children and Youth Citations	1,591
Certificate of Meritorious Service	47
National Achievement Award	33
Special Children & Youth Citation	316
Reporting:	
Unit Report Form	200
We Want a Report from Your Unit or Salon	50
TOTAL	426,832

Legionnaires and their families with a varied and enjoyable convention that can be shared by all on an annual basis.

Beginning with the 1999 national convention and continued at the 2005 convention, each attendee had to have the proper identification badge/credentials to enter all of the venues of The American Legion national convention. On-site registration tables were available for those who needed to register at the site of the convention. This process continues to prove successful and will be in effect for all future national conventions. Additionally, the convention & meetings office was directed to procure a new paper within plastic badge for the national convention.

This badge proposal was made available for the first time at the 2001 national convention and continued successfully at the 2005 national convention. There have been no changes to the traditional Distinguished Guests badges and the traditional badges continue to be available for purchase through the Emblem Sales Division during and after the national convention.

The National Convention Commission reviewed bids, provided to The American Legion, for the 2011 National Convention from the cities of Detroit, Michigan, Houston, Texas, Minneapolis, Minnesota and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Subsequent to conducting site visits and after listening to formal presentations from each of these fine cities, the National Convention Commission recommended to the National Executive Committee that the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota be tentatively awarded the National Convention for 2011, the dates being August 26-September 1, 2011. The National Executive Committee later approved the recommendation.

Dates and future conventions are:

Reno, Nevada	August 24-30, 2007
Phoenix, Arizona	August 22-28, 2008
Louisville, Kentucky	August 21-27, 2009
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	August 27-September 2, 2010
Minneapolis, Minnesota	August 26-September 1, 2011

DISTINGUISHED GUEST COMMITTEE
Greg Rowley, Utah, 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
James E. Koutz, Indiana, Chairman
Joseph C. Sharpe Jr., Maryland, Deputy 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, 2005, through June 30, 2006. 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.

2005-2006 Meetings

During the period this report covers, the commission met for four regularly scheduled executive sessions. A list of those meetings follows:

1. Members and guests of the National Economic Commission met on Saturday, August 20, 2005, in the Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, in conjunction with the Eighty-seventh Annual National Convention. A report on that meeting was made to the National Executive Committee on Monday,

August 22, 2005. 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 3-4, 2005. A complete report on that meeting appears in the Digest of Proceedings of the National Executive Committee, October 5-6, 2005.
3. The National Economic Commission met in conjunction with the Forty-sixth Annual Washington Conference on Monday, February 27, and Wednesday, March 1, 2006. 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 8-9, 2006, 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 10-11, 2006.

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 staff testified before Congress, and also participated in the preparation of testimony presented by other members of the Legion staff on several occasions.

The Economics staff also prepared the Commission's portion of the testimony that was presented in September 2005 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.

Administrative Activities

The Commission's staff of two manages 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 Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Housing and Urban Development. The deputy director also represents The American Legion on the following boards and Committees: the Secretary of Labor's Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment and Training, the veterans' advisory committees of the Small Business Administration and the Office of Personnel Management, and the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education. He is also currently serving as chairman of the Veterans Corporation's advisory committee, and attends meetings on licensing and certification.

In addition to those activities, the deputy director works closely with community based groups, particularly the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans.

Another staff responsibility is answering the large volume of mail and electronic mail that is received annually from veterans seeking information or assistance on issues which come under the Commission's jurisdiction. While the staff can neither place individual veterans in jobs nor represent them in labor disputes, the staff does provide information, guidance and, when appropriate, referral. Besides correspondence from individuals, the staff also receives and answers frequent requests and inquiries from government agencies, members of Congress, congressional committees, private organizations, and other groups regarding veterans' economic issues.

One of the Commission's major programs is its awards program, which is administered by the staff. Through this program The American Legion pays tribute to those employers across the country who have established outstanding records in the employment and retention of veterans, workers with disabilities and older workers, and to outstanding members of the state employment security agencies.

As of National Convention 2005 the award program also includes a Homeless

Veterans Outreach Award, given to the Legion Department with the most outstanding record in outreach to homeless veterans. The 2005 award went to the Department of Indiana, and the 2006 award will be presented to the Department of Idaho at Convention in Salt Lake City. One important criterion in this award is how well the Legion, Auxiliary and Sons work together toward the goal of ending homelessness among veterans.

Other important programs of the National Economic Commission include the Homeless Veterans Task Force and the Veterans' Small Business Task Force. The Homeless Veterans Task Force has established chairmen or primary contacts in all fifty states and the District of Columbia, and is committed to ending the disgrace of homelessness among veterans within ten years.

The Veterans' Small Business Task Force conducted a veterans' career fair in Honolulu during the Legion's National Convention there in August 2005 and will be conducting another one in Salt Lake City during National Convention there in August 2006. In conjunction with this fair the task force will also be conducting a veterans' small business training course consisting of two days of intensive training for both new and established veteran-owned small businesses to prepare them for bidding on Federal Government contracts. The task force also participates in veterans' career fairs conducted by other sponsors, such as the recent ones at Walter Reed Medical Center, Fort Lewis, and Fort Sam Houston, and has contracted with Military.com to participate in its on-line jobs registry.

Publications

As mentioned 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*.

This year the Commission and staff completed a major revision of its Manual for Employment Chairmen, which was then made available to Legion Department, District, and Post employment chairmen nationwide. It and the Commission's other publications on various economic topics 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 awards 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, James E. Koutz (IN), appointed a six-person subcommittee to review all of the nominations that had been received during 2005 in the Employer of Veterans Awards Program. The purpose of this subcommittee was to select a national winner and a runner-up in each of the employer categories.

The members of the Employer of the Year Subcommittee met on February 27, 2006, to consider employer nominations from Departments.

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 Award Subcommittee selected the following winners:

Large Employer: Alutiiq-Wackenhut Security Services, Fort Bragg, North Carolina

Medium Size Employer: ITS Medical Systems, LLC, Duluth, Georgia

Small Employer: Robert J. Albert Printing Service, Inc., Clearwater, Florida

Officials of the three winning companies have agreed to send representatives to the 88th Annual National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, 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.

Employment Service Awards

Beginning in 1993, three awards have been presented to the Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Year, the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist of the Year, and the Employment Service Office of the Year. These awards are given in cooperation with local Job Service offices across the country, to recognize truly outstanding veteran-dedicated staff members.

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 February 27, 2006. Winners are to receive their plaques at the 86th National Convention. National winners are the following:

LVER of the Year: Walter A. Pollock Jr., Columbus, Georgia

DVOP of the Year: Jerry Roehl, Boise, Idaho

Local Office of the Year: Escarosa Career Center Veterans' Programs, Pensacola, Florida

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Albert M. Robotti, New Jersey, Chairman
Joseph C. Sharpe Jr., Maryland, Deputy 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.

VETERANS' PREFERENCE COMMITTEE

Richard T. Lee Jr., California, Chairman
Joseph C. Sharpe Jr., Maryland, Deputy Director

This committee is charged with the responsibility of promoting veterans' employment opportunities in Federal government and for ensuring that agencies continue to observe all veterans' preference laws.

Federal Veterans' Economic Programs

The following is a brief overview of the Commission's interactions with those federal agencies, and their veterans' programs, with which the Commission works regularly.

Department of Labor: The Deputy Director for Economics meets frequently with top officials in the Veterans' Employment and Training Service.

The Economic Division referred nearly one dozen veterans' inquiries to VETS for investigation and reply.

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.

The American Legion has testified in favor of continuing to sell paper Savings Bonds

along with the new availability of electronic bonds.

Department of Veterans Affairs: The Economic Division referred nearly one dozen veterans' inquiries to the VA Home Loan Guaranty Service, the Education Service, and the Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Service for investigation and reply.

Office of Personnel Management: The Economic Division referred nearly two dozen veterans' inquiries to OPM for investigation and reply.

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 Economic Division referred several veterans' inquiries to USPS for investigation and reply.

The Veterans' Preference Committee continues to promote employment opportunities for veterans within the Postal Service.

Small Business Administration: The Deputy Director of Economics meets regularly with the SBA's Assistant Administrator for Veterans Business Development, and invited the Assistant Administrator to speak to the Commission at Washington Conference in March 2006 and at National Convention in August 2005.

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 Koutz 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 and liaison observers from the National Executive Committee.

The National Organization had an operating deficit of $14,821 for 2005. 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
Alvan T. Fuller, Massachusetts, 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 2005 and for the first three months of 2006.

January 1 to December 31, 2005
(12 months)

Gross Sales	$ 9,991,568
Cost of Goods Sold	5,339,613
Overhead	3,196,590
Operating Profit	1,455,366

Total number of 2005 orders processed was 94,128.

January 1 to March 31, 2006
(3 months)

Gross Sales	$ 2,379,686
Cost of Goods Sold	1,266,849
Overhead	868,132
Operating Profit	244,706

Total orders processed for first 3 months of 2006 was 22,558.

The American Legion Life Insurance Program
LeRoy S. Lakey, North Carolina, Chairman
G. Paul Dunn, Oklahoma, Member Benefits Administrator

When considering the plans offered through The American Legion Life Insurance Program, it is important to remember these plans are for supplemental coverage only and are not meant to be the only coverage a member has. In addition, these plans are not meant to replace existing coverage. These plans are not designed to compete with individual/private insurance plans or employer benefit plans.

As with any insurance coverage, members should carefully consider these plans and read and understand all materials received including rates, benefits, features, scheduled premium increase or benefit reductions.

Important Information: Effective January 1, 2004—All Term Life plans were transferred to ReliaStar Life Insurance Company. Insured members were informed of this change in October 2003.

As a result of this change, all Term Life Insurance plans are under review. As soon as determinations are finalized about existing plans or new plans, appropriate announcements will be made. **We expect to have additional plans available in 2006.** ***May not be available in all states.***

If you have questions from current policyholders call 1-800-542-5547:
MARSH AFFINITY GROUP SERVICES
Formerly (SEABURY & SMITH, INC.)
1776 West Lakes Parkway
West Des Moines, IA 50398

The American Legion has a Level Term Life Plan to available to members, their spouses and dependents. **This includes Sons of The American Legion members and spouses.** The Administrator for the plans is Seabury & Smith, Inc., located in West Des

Moines, Iowa. Eligibility for the plan is members and spouses under age 70. This plan **automatically** terminates at **age 75.**

Claims

The primary feature of The American Legion Insurance Plan is the benefits paid to beneficiaries of deceased insured Legionnaires. In 48 years, claims have been paid amounting to more than $308 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 2006, the total benefits paid will be nearly $323 million.

Modern Veterans Plan

With new, Improved Benefits for the younger member who is looking for a more economical choice for life insurance, the LegionLife Modern Vets Plan may be the right choice. Also, spouse coverage is now available. Now, all members under age 40 may apply, regardless of service status. And for those members under the age of 30, the maximum benefit has been increased up to $200,000. For members under the age of 40, your family may be protected for less than the cost of Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI), and you can keep your benefits even if you're called back to active duty. **For more information and a free information kit, contact the program administrator toll free 1-800-542-5547.**

In addition to its low cost, the plan includes a provision that will pay a covered person's full face amount in the event of death caused or contributed to by war or an act of war, declared or undeclared, if the person is serving on active duty. The rates for this plan are very competitive with all associations and lower than many.

The Legion-approved Modern Vets Plan is currently underwritten by ReliaStar Insurance Company. ***Plans are not available in all states.*** Call Marsh Affinity Group Services for details.

Birthday Life—Whole Life Insurance

The Birthday Life whole life plan is currently unavailable for new coverage. Union Fidelity has terminated their agreement with The American Legion effective December 31, 2005. All current policyholders will still receive the service they have become accustomed to from Union Fidelity Life Insurance Company.

The American Legion is currently searching for a replacement carrier and expects to make their selection later this year.

Requests for Birthday Life information for policyholders should be directed to the Administrator, Union Fidelity Life Insurance Co., 500 Virginia Dr., Fort Washington, PA 19034; 1-800-523-5758.

Health Care Plans

The American Legion has the following health care plans available to American Legion and Sons of The American Legion members and their dependents.

Please Note: *The plans are not available in all states.* Call for details.

1. A variety of major medical plans, called "Market Basket," which allows members (Legion and SAL) to call and request quotes on major medical insurance.
2. Small Business Group Insurance- provides quotes on major medical coverage for small employer groups of 2-50 employees. Additional options offered for employees are term life, accidental death, long and short-term disability and dental. Remember, these plans are for employees of the small business group-not the general membership. Posts and Departments with 2 to 50 employees could also use this plan.
   For more information, call 1-877-886-0110.
3. Dental Insurance—this is an indemnified insurance plan with a full schedule of

benefits, for members and their dependents, including SAL.
For more information, call 1-800-542-5547.

NEW—Short-Term Recovery Plan

The American Legion National Headquarters is proud to announce a new membership benefit—The Short Term Recovery Plan. This new Plan was approved by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion at their recently concluded October Meetings.

The Short Term Recovery Plan is available to Legion members and their spouses who are age 65 and above, on a GUARANTEED ISSUE basis, no matter what their current health or health history. The Short Term Recovery Plan pays cash benefits if you are admitted to the hospital for as little as one day. Benefits of as much as $1,000 a year for In-patient Hospital expenses are available. In addition, the Plan pays up to $4,000 more a year in cash benefits to you to help pay for home recovery expenses after your hospital stay. This cash can be used to pay for things like physical therapy, speech therapy or home nursing services.

Benefits are paid in addition to any other insurance coverage you have and this Plan is not available to the general public. Premium rates for members age 69 and below are $24.95 per month (less than one dollar a day).

To request information about the new Short Term Recovery Plan, please contact the Administrator of The American Legion endorsed Insurance plans, **Marsh Affinity Group Services at 1-800-542-5547.**

The American Legion TRICARE Supplement Program

The American Legion has approved a National TRICARE Supplement Program for active duty and retired military members and dependents.

The 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. A combined brochure is available from the Administrator. Information on the plan has previously been distributed to Departments.

This program can also provide an important tool for Posts and Departments that desire to recruit members on or near military bases or retired military personnel.

For additional information, questions, or quantities of brochures, call 1-800-542-5547. The American Legion TRICARE Supplement Program is underwritten by Hartford Life Insurance Company and Administered by Marsh Affinity Group Services, of West Des Moines, Iowa. **Please Note:** ***These plans are not available in all states.***

The American Legion Discount Prescription Program

An important benefit for American Legion, Sons of The American Legion (SAL) and The American Legion Auxiliary members and dependents is The American Legion Discount Prescription Program designed by Seabury & Smith and administered by RxAmerica. The program was approved nationwide by the National Executive Committee at it's October 1995 meeting. We are pleased to announce that the Department of Maryland entered the National program in 2003, after their own program was terminated.

The program has two components: a network of retail pharmacies and a mail order service. It's easy to use. Members simply present their current American Legion, SAL, or Auxiliary membership card at the pharmacy when purchasing a prescription to receive the discount. For mail service, obtain a mail order request form from the local Post or by calling the toll-free number, **1-866-792-6534**, complete the mail order form and send it to: RxAmerica, P.O. Box 960125, Fort Worth, TX 76161-9863. The mail service is guaranteed to be more cost-effective than AARP mail service.

Most of the time members can save as much as 20% or more on prescription purchases. In cases when members appear not to save, it is usually when the drug is already on sale as a loss leader. Loss leaders are drugs priced well below retail, sometimes below cost, to lure customers into the pharmacy. However, the Legion Discount Prescription Program assures that members pay the lowest price in the network pharmacy

for that drug on that particular day—the lesser of the two.

Members have actually experienced an average savings of about 20% nationally. This amounts to nearly $54 million in savings for Legion, SAL and Auxiliary members thus far. Continued utilization will increase savings even more.

The Discount Prescription Program is providing assistance to members in a highly visible need area and can potentially be one of the most valuable member benefits available.

New Programs added in 2006

American Legion Travel—For all American Legion and SAL members and their families, this all new online and offline leisure travel benefit is designed to provide the benefit and savings of booking flights, hotels, rental cars, vacations and cruises as well as a dedicated American Legion Travel Call Center for assistance before, during and even after booking. **Call 1-800-676-1004 to speak with a live travel agent, or 1-800-881-7442 for a Cruise specialist or visit us online.**

FTD.com—FTD.COM offers 400 floral arrangements and approximately 600 specialty/gourmet items via the Internet or by calling 1-800-SEND-FTD. Working with The American Legion, FTD has created a special site, www.ftd.com/americanlegion saving you 10% on your merchandise. If you order by calling 1-800-SEND-FTD, mention promotion # **11904** to receive your 10% discount.

Medicare Part D—The American Legion now offers Medicare Part D for Legion and SAL members and their families that are Medicare eligible. PacifiCare plans have been in effect since January 1, 2006. The American Legion approved plans offer a wide range in savings and benefit options intended to meet individual needs, there is no deductible on any of the plans. Premiums start under $23 in many states, and there is even a plan that fills the $2,850 coverage gap with generic drugs. To learn even more just call the exclusive American Legion toll-free number **1-800-811-5376 (TTY: 1-800- 730-9550) 24 hours a day, seven days a week.** Customer service representatives are waiting to assist members and their families with personalized information about medications, prescription usage and pharmacy preferences. Based on that discussion, a personalized evaluation will be prepared on the Medicare Part D coverage that best suits the member's needs.

Benefits Under Review

OfficeMax Office Supplies and Printing Services and Best Western Hotels. Be watching the Magazine or Dispatch for additional information.

For a complete list of current member benefits and discounts, you can log onto our website at www.legion.org/benefits.

FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMISSION
Michael D. Helm, Nebraska, Chairman
G. Michael Schlee, Maryland, Director

The following annual report covers the activities of The American Legion's Foreign Relations Commission Foreign Relations Council for the 2005-2006 program year ending June 30, 2006.

Overview

The Foreign Relations Commission is guided by two principles communication and advocacy. The first is primarily to relay to members and the leadership major foreign policy changes and international issues affecting the United States and The American Legion. The second is to and advocate the adopted resolutions and positions of the membership to the Congress and Federal Agencies to enact or promote those policies and programs supported or opposed by The American Legion.

The Commission conducts meetings and programs throughout the year to keep the membership fully informed on current foreign policy issues. In addition, the Commission through its speaker program encourages debate and discussion on key foreign relations topics with government representatives and policy experts and our grassroots membership.

The Commission strives throughout the year to provide diverse and challenging speakers from Ambassadors and policy analysts to Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) representatives and directors. These speakers provide critical information and generate stimulating discussion that has been invaluable in keeping our membership informed and a useful tool to help in their duties to direct and develop the foreign relations policies of The American Legion.

The Commission also works to influence the Administration and Congress and encourages the bipartisan development of foreign policies, which are consistent with the principles of Democratic Activism as well as our entire portfolio of active resolutions. The American Legion works with Congressional Committees, Members and Staff along with Department of State agencies throughout the year, generating, promoting and advocating legislation and policies that are in keeping with the established resolutions adopted by the membership.

Mr. Michael D. Helm, of Kansas and member of the Department of Nebraska, was appointed in the Fall of 2004 and currently serves as the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Commission.

Foreign Relations Commission Resolutions

Of the resolutions that were adopted at the 87th National Convention in Honolulu, HI, there is a clear direction towards an emphasis on identifying, preventing and combating terrorism. A common theme that has been borne out by many of the speakers and foreign policy experts whom have addressed the commission has been the idea of the "failed state." The over-all strategic view of many in the foreign policy field is to not only address the initial acts of terrorism but to identify the root causes and to shore up the institutions that can help prevent the forming of the next generation of terrorists. The American Legions major policy resolutions reflect these new realities and will continue to evolve as the United States and the international community unites to address this global threat to political and economic stability. The Foreign Relations Commission has throughout the year worked diligently to implement and address key foreign relation's issues concerning The American Legion.

Major Issues

Resolution No. 196: Support the War on Terrorism

Continued support for Military and Law Enforcement objectives both national and international to rid the world of terrorism and prevent such acts from happening against the United States.

Resolution No. 197: U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives

Continued reexamination of our national Foreign Policy objectives and to recognize the United States role as a singular leader in the free world to promote democracy and human rights and to promote world peace and security.

Resolution No. 321: Priority POW/MIA Actions

Continue to provide sufficient means and support for the mission of full accountability of all POW/MIAs and the continued declassification or pertinent records.

Other Issues

National Convention Honolulu, Hawaii, 2005
Friday, August 19, 2005

Members of the Foreign Relations Commission along with the National Security Commission participated in a Pre-Convention tour and Repatriation Ceremony at Hickam Air Force Base. National Commander Tom Cadmus and members of The American Legion also participated and the commander spoke during the repatriation of remains of American service members from World War II and the Vietnam War. The commission members who were part of the pre-convention tour proceeded to briefings at Central Identification Lab Hawaii (CILHI), and tours of Pearl Harbor and the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl).

Saturday, August 20, 2006

A joint session of the National Security and Foreign Relations commission met at the Hawaii Convention center, Honolulu, HI. Several speakers regarding various national security and foreign policy issues addressed the joint commissions. The first speaker was Pacific Command (PACCOM) Commander, Admiral William J. Fallon. The Admiral discussed the overall missions of the Pacific Command and its responsibilities in maintaining the security of the Pacific region and U.S. territorial waters and fisheries. In addition, Admiral Fallon elaborated on the evolving role PACCOM is playing in the on-going efforts to combat global terrorism.

The second speaker was General H.C. Hank Stackpole, USMC (Ret). General Stackpole was presenting on behalf of The Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS). The General was the former President of the center and gave a broad over-view of the centers responsibilities and its mission to analyze and study strategic security issues in Asia and the Pacific Rim. In addition, it also maintains a military to military contact with more than 45 countries in the region.

The third speaker, Mr. William Chatfield, Director of the Selective Service System, gave a presentation on the current challenges facing the Selective Service System. A short Q&A session followed each of the speakers.

The Foreign Relations Commission then met in an afternoon session at 1:30 pm in room 314 of the Hawaii Convention Center. Mr. Melvin Richmond, Chief of Staff of the Defense POW/MIA Personnel Office, gave a short brief and update on the current DPMO mission and programs. The commission then met and did an informational review of the eleven resolutions to be considered by the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations.

Fall NEC 2005

Monday, October 3, 2005

Members of the Foreign Relations Commission met in the Circle West Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis, IN, to discuss various topics of interest. Past National Commanders Joe Matthews (TX) and Keith Kreul (WI) were in attendance and added greatly to the proceedings.

The Commission expedited a resolution that had been referred to the Standing Commission from the 87th National Convention Committee on Foreign Relations, Resolution 22 (CO) POW/MIA Policy Utilization. Attached to this report is an addendum with a recommendation from the standing Commission to the National Executive Committee.

National Staff provided an update on the status of the Montagnard people in Vietnam and current legislative and policy developments in the House and Senate regarding Human Rights in Vietnam. In addition, staff provided an update on appropriations for the Department of State and discussion followed on several topics: The American Legion's current policy on POW/MIA issues, Possible need for a resolution regarding the Cambodian Govemment, and Human Rights in Africa.

Tuesday, October 4, 2005

A joint session of the National Security and Foreign Relations commission met at the Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis, IN. The Joint commissions reviewed two programs on weapons technology and use and application in Iraq and an Army media production regarding transformation and force restructuring. The joint commission also entertained discussion regarding various Foreign Relations and National Security issues.

Washington Conference

The Foreign Relations Commission met in general sessions on February 27, and March 1, 2006 during the 46th annual Washington Conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Washington DC. The following is a summary of those sessions:

Morning Session, February 27, 2006

The Commission met jointly with the National Security Commission to hear several speakers of mutual interest. The first speaker, The Honorable Sean McCormack, Assistant

Secretary for Public Affairs and Department of State Spokesman, addressed the joint session of members. The Secretary made general comments regarding the major regions of the world in which the U.S. has some visible involvement: from Europe, to the Middle East, to Asia and the Korean Peninsula, to Africa and South America.

In his presentation, the Secretary gave a broad overview of the biggest threat facing the United States since 9/11 and the rise of global terrorism. He also relayed the major initiatives being done by the Department of State to engage other nations about the assistance the U.S. is doing abroad to aid in development. A question was asked in regards to the port services transfer regarding the United Arab Emirates U.A.E.'s bid to take over the port service contracts for several major U.S. shipping centers. The Secretary gave an overview of the process for review of such bids by foreign countries and reiterated that port security still remained in the hands of the U.S. Government.

The Secretary fielded other questions regarding over-all policy priorities and was asked specifically on the current situation with North Korea. He commented that the U.S. felt that engagement among all the regional players was key in bringing the North Koreans to the negotiating table. The United States is creating a single front on the issue of nuclear proliferation in the region by engaging all the players: Russia, China, Japan and South Korea. This type of diplomacy would prevent the group from being split apart on certain points of concerns by the individual states to remain focused on the nuclear disarming of the North Koreans.

The Secretary concluded his Q&A session and was presented with a gift and thanks of appreciation by Foreign Relation's Chairman Mike D. Helm, who then tumed the program over to National Security Chairman Clarence Hill.

The second speaker was Lieutenant General James T. Conway, the Director of Operations, J-3, Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Conway had commanded the I Marine Expeditionary Force during two combat tours in Iraq. General Conway began by saying that there were 2.4 million young men and women in uniform in our country of 295 million. He stated that military retention in all of the Services, Active and Reserve, continued to improve despite America being at war. The democratically-elected governments of Iraq and Afghanistan and its American ally and other allies can win the War on Terrorism. Democracy and effective militaries and police forces are the answers, not the killing of all Iraqis. General Conway believed we were winning the War on Terrorism. During the question and answer period, the General responded that the recent mosque bombing would not ignite a new civil war as the Shiites and Sunnis have been fighting for centuries. He also stated that 70-75 percent of American casualties were due to roadside Improvised Explosive Devices (IED's), and such warfare represented not only guerrilla warfare but the age-old conflict between armor and anti-armor elements. General Conway closed by saying that the Armed Forces needed the help of The American Legion. Militant Muslims were declaring a Jihad and, frankly, their long-term goals are the destruction of Israel and global domination. He concluded by saying the United States cannot be defeated on the battlefield, but if we pull out, it would be seen as a major defeat.

Afternoon Session, February 27, 2006

The National Security and Foreign Relations Commission met in joint session to attend the POW/MIA update presented by the Foreign Relations Commission.

The first speakers of the POW/MIA session were Mr. Bruce "Rocky" Harder and Mr. Jack Kull of the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO). Mr. Harder and Mr. Kull both presented a Power Point program that provided the current number of remains recovery projects being done in the Southeast Asia region. DPMO has been directing JPAC in the fieldwork arm of the Defense POPW/MIA Office (DPMO), which is charged with on the ground, site excavation, remains recovery and identification.

Mr. Harder and Mr. Kull provided highlights of current projects and ongoing programs in the countries of Vietnam and North Korea. The use of the recovery teams is extensive and places a heavy demand on their time and skills. The Teams are comprised of both civilian and cross branch military personnel who work in various different fields from public affairs to anthropology to archeological odontology. Due to the remoteness of many of the field sites and the lack of material support and resources in those areas, a

greater physical and mental demand is placed on the teams. Mr. Kull emphasized that despite those challenges, each member of those teams are resolved to complete their mission because of the importance their work is to the families of these missing service members. He relayed also the difficult challenges ahead due to budget constraints and diplomatic challenges with foreign governments.

Chairman Helms introduced the second speaker for the session.

Ms. Ann Mills Griffith, Executive Director of the National League of Families of Missing from Southeast Asia, provided an update on the status of recovery operations and relations with the government of Vietnam. She touched on the support of The American Legion with the League of Families in opposing normalization of trade relations with Vietnam and thanked The Legion for their strong support over the past 30 years.

Ms. Griffiths went on to relay her organizations concerns over the past administration's leadership from Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Affairs) and Director, Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office. She expressed her optimism and her initial take of the acting DASD, Mr. Bob Newberry, who is taking over the administrative leadership of the organization until a new Deputy Secretary is named by the White House.

Ms. Griffith then expressed the need to continually press the government of Vietnam on the issue of recovery and repatriation of remains but particularly in the area of those personnel whose status is in the category of "last known alive." It is the League's opinion that Vietnam could do much more in this area to help. She concluded by asking the continued assistance of the Legionnaires in achieving the fullest possible of all those missing, not just Southeast Asia but from all wars.

A short Q& A session was given by both speakers, which then concluded the afternoon session.

Wednesday, March 1, 2006

The Foreign Relations Commission met in a business session on Wednesday morning, March 1, 2006. Commission Professional staff gave a PowerPoint presentation on the International Affairs portion of the federal budget and over-all Foreign Relations concerns for FY2007. Staff outlined the major portions of this account, which include State Department funding, foreign humanitarian aid and military assistance. It was also stressed that all international affairs spending accounts for only one half of one percent of the federal budget.

The members of the Commission were then encouraged by the Chairman to submit ideas for speakers and topics of discussion at the meeting to be held at the 2006 National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. In addition, Chairman Helm also asked the commission members to keep in mind any resolutions that they may be interested in offering to include three priority areas regarding, Vietnam Human Rights (Montagnards), Full Funding Priorities for the State Department and continued foreign relations policies for The American Legion. He also reminded members that this was a renewal year and that we should be mindful of our core policies.

Spring NEC

On Monday, May 8, 2006, members of the Foreign Relations Commission met in the Circle West Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis, IN, to discuss various topics of interest.

Monday, May 8, 2006

The Commission expedited a resolution that had been referred to the Standing Commission from the Department of Utah Resolution 2568 World Free Trade Agreement. Attached to this report is an addendum with a recommendation from the standing Commission to the National Executive Committee.

National Staff provided an update on the status of the Montagnard people in Vietnam and current legislative and policy developments in the House and Senate regarding Human Rights in Vietnam. In addition, staff provided an update on appropriations for the Department of State and discussion followed on several topics: The American Legion's current policy on POW/MIA issues, Possible need for a resolution regarding the

Cambodian Govemment, and Human Rights in Africa.

Tuesday, May 9, 2006

On Tuesday, May 9, a joint session of the National Security and Foreign Relations commission met at the Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis, IN. The Joint commissions reviewed a program on Diplomacy and an Army media production regarding transformation and force restructuring. The joint commission also entertained discussion regarding various Foreign Relations and National Security issues.

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; Raymond J. Felsecker, Assistant Director; Tina T. Hines, Executive Secretary to the Director; and Roshawn Treadwell, Secretary.

During the year, the combined Division works diligently to fulfill its responsibility in implementing the mandates and policies of The American Legion relating to national defense and foreign affairs. The division coordinates the National Commander's foreign travel as well as managing a variety of special assignments. The duties included answering correspondence, E-mail and telephone inquiries; maintaining liaison with the Departments of Defense, State, Homeland Security, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, the Selective Service System, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and others. In addition, a continuous variety of contacts are made with other organizations throughout Washington, D.C. from policy think tanks to commercial and private associations. The foreign relation's responsibilities also include continuing liaison with embassies, and a variety of governmental and non-governmental agencies.

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 as well as Congress, the Department of State and the general public. Coordinating foreign travel, writing and delivering speeches, preparing reports and testimony, are also duties of the staff. Additionally, promotional material is prepared and distributed to support the national programs in the national security field. Numerous press interviews, background briefings and public releases are coordinated with our Media Relations Office.

Continual use is made of all American Legion national publications, such as The Dispatch and The American Legion Magazine and the Weekly Activity Report, which are a primary 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, the National Emergency Fund and Legion sponsorship in NASCAR racing.

TROPHIES, AWARDS AND CEREMONIALS
Randall W. Busch, Nebraska, 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. The recipient for 2006 is Major General (Retired) Patrick Brady. Medal of Honor recipient and President of the Citizens Flag Alliance.

This committee oversees the awarding of over 60 awards within The American Legion for national recognition in our various programs and services.

RESOLUTIONS ASSIGNMENT
Gerald Diercks, Minnesota, Chairman

The Resolutions Assignment Committee meets at least three days before the convening of the annual National Convention. This committee has the responsibility to receive, consider, and transmit all resolutions—with or without recommendation—to the appropriate convention committee for a report to the convention. During an average year, several hundred resolutions will be assigned.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
Vincent Gaughan, Illinois, Chairman

The National Constitution and By-Laws of The American Legion can only be amended by the duly elected delegates at a National Convention.

However, the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, established by the authority of the National Executive Committee in 1939, authorizes this committee to study and make proper recommendations concerning all of the matters that pertain to the Constitution and By-laws, as well as matters relating to the Uniform Code of Procedure, which provides rules and regulations for the Revocation, Cancellation, or Suspension of Department and Post Charters of The American Legion.

MEMBERSHIP AND POST ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE
Randall Mitchell, Tennessee, Chairman
Billy R. Johnson, Georgia, 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 needs of the veteran and his/her family. The Membership and Post Activities reports a continuing membership of nearly 2.7 million members worldwide.

Membership

Final 2004 membership	2,657,623
Final 2005 membership	2,615,678
2006 membership as of August 1, 2006	2,410,586

43rd Annual National Membership Workshop

The 43rd annual membership meeting was held in Indianapolis, Indiana, July 28-29, 2006, with over 300 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. 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.

The success of the program is evident, based on the revitalization/development of more than 600 American Legion Posts in the program's nine-year history. Efforts have now expanded into Metropolis areas. Many 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 successful results.

The American Legion National College

Each November, The American Legion National College can host as many as fifty talented young Legionnaires at National Headquarters in Indianapolis for a week of intensive training. These students return to their Departments armed with newly acquired or sharpened skills in leadership, marketing, communication, and fundraising. Student candidates are nominated by the Departments and selected by a National Selection Committee.

Candidates for the National College must be veterans from the Lebanon/Grenada period (August 1982) or later with demonstrated potential for further service.

The American Legion National College is a worthwhile investment for every Department. Graduates are making a difference in leadership roles and membership teams across the
country. Many have already been appointed to Department level positions while others are used in various leadership and teaching roles in Department Legion Colleges.

Sons of The American Legion

The Sons of The American Legion held their 35th National Convention at the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City, Utah in August 2006. For the 32nd consecutive year, the Sons of The American Legion are at an "All Time High" in membership. The SAL closed its membership at the end of 2005 with a record 301,083 members. This number represents a 4.1% percent increase over the previous year.

Membership figures for the 2006-year are exceeding the figures for the 2005 membership year. Going into the National Convention in Salt Lake City, the S.A.L. has already surpassed the 2005 final figures giving them another "All Time High" for membership year 2006.

The S.A.L. continues its support of American Legion programs and is heavily involved with support to our nation's veterans in the Veterans Administration Voluntary Services program. In 2005, the S.A.L. provided over 258,189, volunteer hours in VA homes and hospitals. Donations in cash and goods to these veterans exceeded $2,447,268, nationwide. Other projects include Americanism programs of which $3,132,735 was donated along with 464,985 hours of service. This was remarkable considering only than 10% of the Squadron's submitted reports. The S.A.L. also raised over $383,862 in the year 2005 for the Child Welfare Foundation surpassing all previous years. The Sons also provided several grants through The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. The Sons of The American Legion have contributed over three million dollars to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

The Sons continue to support the Legion programs with major emphasis on Veterans Administration Voluntary Services, National Emergency Fund, and the Children's Miracle Network as well as other vital programs. As an integral part of The American Legion family, the Sons continue to serve, and provide assistance to Posts and their communities.

National Emergency Fund

The National Emergency Fund was well challenged during the latter part of 2005 into 2006. The trio of Hurricanes named Wilma, Rita, and Katrina, combined with various tornados, all wrecked record damage upon our nation, and our Legion family. Total amount of grant monies awarded since the NEF was reinstated in 1989 is well over $6.6 million.

Last year, a record amount of grants totaling over $2,100,000 went to 2,512 individuals and posts. The great majorities of the grants awarded in 2005, as well as most all in 2006, are due to the Hurricanes that swept through the Gulf coast, causing major damage and flooding up and down the entire Gulf coast and inland Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. Those three hurricanes that occurred during August through October 2005 were the busiest and most destructive in history.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), hundreds of thousands were evacuated from the Gulf coast areas and millions were affected and are still affected and displaced from their homes, with many never to return to their pre hurricane lives. The NEF, in a small way, has assisted all the Legion family members identified with getting some semblance of order to their lives again.

Even though a record amount was awarded to Legion family members, in return, The Legion family has returned the favor even more so. A record amount has been donated to the NEF from Legion family and posts. From January 1, 2005 to April 25, 2006, almost $2,500,000 has been given.

We annually grant approximately $375,000 to our members during a normal year. It is important that our members realize that each and every dollar contributed to this fund is used for the express purpose of rendering financial assistance to our members and American Legion Posts who have incurred devastation from a declared natural disaster (i.e., wind, rain, fire and earthquakes). The grants are to be used for immediate needs (lodging, food and clothing) and not to substitute for insurance. Moneys to support the administrative costs of maintaining this fund and conducting fundraising are absorbed through existing budget areas.

What makes this program so unique 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 those 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 annual report card to Congress. It provides a summary of the collective assistance provided to the national from our Legion posts. Slightly over 50 percent of American Legion posts submitted reports to National Headquarters for the 2005-2006 reporting year.

The total figures show the cost to outfit color guards, firing squads and other uniformed groups was $2,814,129; Legion Baseball team support cost $7,288,310; cash contributions to VA Voluntary Services was $2,341,600, and over 1,812,500 hours of voluntary services were provided; 1,927 Boy Scout Units were sponsored with 53,726 scouts involved at a cost of $1,704,000; a total of 7,900 scholarships were presented collectively valued at $3,867,300.

In addition, 2,674,000 hours were spent performing community service work, valued at $5,615,700; a total of 87,100 pints of blood were collected; and additional millions of dollars in goods and cash were contributed to programs helping veterans and their families.

These facts and figures represent just over half of all American Legion posts.

Troop Support Services (TS2) Program

Troop Support Services (TS2) consists of three programs, Reconnect, Family Support Network and Welcome Home. The handy, condensed TS2 brochure is a pocket resource directory for both troops and their families. Packed with important information and contact telephone numbers, websites and e-mail addresses, the TS2 brochure is designed to fit easily into a service member's desert combat uniform pocket for handy reference. It includes a wallet card with condensed information to carry during deployment while leaving the main resource guide at home with the family.

Our goal is to encourage American Legion posts to get a TS2 pocket guide into the hands of every member of the U.S. armed forces to give them the information they might need on short notice.

When a post orders the pocket directories for a unit deployment event, sponsorship ceremony, or welcome home ceremony, national headquarters prints labels with post contact information that can be placed on every guide so the service member and family have a point of contact in the local community in the event of a situation needing assistance. The American Legion is there for our service men and women, and their families before deployment, during deployment and after they come home.

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION

Dave Rehbein, Iowa, Chairman
Steve Robertson, Louisiana, Director

This report covers activities of the National Legislative Commission from August 8, 2005 through August 14, 2006. During this period, the Commission met four (4) times to review the legislative program and to make recommendations to the National Executive Committee. Reports of these meetings are contained in the published proceedings of the National Executive Committee.

Purpose, Personnel and Organization

The National Legislative Commission represents The American Legion before the Congress of the United States on all legislative matters in which The American Legion is officially interested. The Commission also assists the National Executive Committee in formulating an appropriate legislative program for each session of Congress. The Commission consists of 33 members and five (5) National Executive Committee liaisons.

To further assist the Commission in its work, the National Executive Committee in 1975 created the National Legislative Council, composed of Legionnaires whose judgment and advice are respected by their elected Members of Congress. There is one council member for each Member of Congress. A Council Chairman, 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 that 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, two assistant directors, a grassroots coordinator, one secretary, a librarian and a research analyst. The director, assistant directors 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.

109th Congress, First Session

The budget process remained the focus of congressional attention during the First Session of the 109th Congress. When October 1, 2005 arrived—the official start of Fiscal Year (FY) 2006—only two of the 11 funding measures that are needed to operate the federal government had become law.

Between late September and mid-December, three continuing resolutions were passed and enacted which extended funding through the end of the year at FY 2005 amounts. The remaining nine appropriations bills—including the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) funding bill—were enacted over the succeeding three months. The final two—Defense, and Labor/HHS/Education—were enacted by the President on December 30. The First Session of the 109th Congress adjourned on December 22, 2005.

Children and Youth

President Bush on November 22, 2005 enacted Public Law (PL) 109-108, the FY 2006 spending bill for the Departments of Commerce, Justice and State and Science programs. The House passed the conference report on November 9, voting 399-17. One week later, the Senate approved the conference report by a vote of 94-5. Funding for DoJ would total $21.4 billion, $784 million more than funded for FY 2005, and $1.1 billion above the President's FY 2006 request. The FBI will receive $5.8 billion, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will be funded at $1.7 billion, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATF) will receive $924 million, the U.S. Marshals Service will be funded at 802 million, and the programs of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) will receive $342 million. The American Legion continues to support the work of OJJDP to combat juvenile crime and delinquency.

Economics

The President on December 30, 2005 signed PL 109-149, a measure to fund the Departments of Labor (DoL), Health and Human Service (HHS) and Education. On December 14, the House—by a vote of 215-213—approved the conference report to the bill, with the Senate approving the conference report by unanimous consent one week later. The chart below shows the ASVET funding totals for FY 2005, the administration's FY 2006 proposal, and the final funding totals.

Program	PL 108-199 FY 2005	White House Proposal FY 2006	PL 109-149 FY 2006
State Administration Grants	$161.1 million	$162.4 million	$162.4 million
Federal Administration	$30.4 million	$30.4 million	$30.4 million
NVTI	$2.0 million	$2.0 million	$1.9 million
Homeless Veterans Program	$20.8 million	$22.0 million	$22.0 million
Veterans' Workforce Investment Programs	$8.5 million	$7.5 million	$7.5 million
Totals	**$222.8 million**	**$224.3 million**	**$224.2 million**

The "state administration grants" line in the above chart is responsible for funding DVOPs and LVERs in state employment services. The American Legion continues to vehemently oppose this funding mechanism and will work to have DoL revert to the former method of direct appropriations.

Foreign Relations

On November 14, 2005 President Bush signed PL 109-102, the FY 2006 Foreign Operations spending bill. It contains $20.9 billion in foreign aid, $1.4 billion more than contained in the FY 2005 omnibus bill, but $1.9 billion less than requested by the White House. The House passed the conference report for the measure on November 4 by a 358-38 vote, while the Senate approved it by a 91-0 vote on November 10. Among the earmarks in the bill:

- $2.8 billion in global assistance to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria;
- $2.5 billion in economic and military assistance to Israel;
- $1.8 billion in economic and military assistance to Egypt;
- $735 million for the Andean Counterdrug Initiative;
- $514 million in assistance for states of the former Soviet Union;
- $430 million in economic assistance to Afghanistan; and
- $300 million in military assistance to Pakistan, a partner in the War on Terror.

National Security

The President on October 18, 2005 signed PL 109-90, the FY 2006 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding measure. The conference report was approved by the House on October 6 by a 347-70 recorded vote, and passed the Senate the next day by a voice vote. The measure provided a total of $30.8 billion in discretionary funding for the newest Cabinet department. The amount in several major accounts include:

- $8.7 billion for the U.S. Coast Guard;
- $4.8 billion for the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection;
- $4.6 billion for the Transportation Security Administration;
- $3.3 billion in grants for state and local "first responders"—firefighters, police and emergency response personnel to prepare for future terrorist events;
- $3.1 billion for the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement;
- $1.2 billion for the U.S. Secret Service; and
- $686 million for the Federal Air Marshals program.

On November 30, 2005 President Bush signed PL 109-115, the Departments of Transportation, the Treasury, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Judiciary, the District of Columbia and Independent Agencies spending bill. Funding for the Selective Services System for FY 2006 is included in this measure. The House passed the conference report on November 18 by a vote of 392-31, and the Senate approved it the same day by unanimous consent.

Selective Service funding totaled $25 million, a decrease of $1.3 million from the previous year. The basic mission of Selective Service is to be prepared to supply manpower to the U.S. military to ensure the security of the United States during a time of national emergency. Since 1973, the armed forces have relied on volunteers to fill manpower requirements. However, Selective Service remains the primary vehicle by which prospective recruits will be brought into the military if Congress and the President should authorize a return to the draft. The American Legion continues to support this program.

The President on December 30, 2005 signed PL 109-148, the FY 2006 DoD appropriations measure. The House passed the conference report to the measure on December 18 by a vote of 308-106, while the Senate passed the report three days later by a 93-0 vote. This measure would fund DoD programs at $453.5 billion. Included in that amount is $50 billion earmarked for military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The President did not request these funds, but Congress felt that it was more realistic to include them in a regular appropriations measure, in lieu of supplemental funding bills. Some of the major accounts funded by PL 109-148 include:

- $7.8 billion for ballistic missile defense;
- $4.7 billion for research and development of the Joint Strike Fighter;
- $3.5 billion for 15 C-17 cargo planes;
- $3.2 billion for 25 F/A-22 fighter planes;
- $2.7 billion for 38 F/A-18 Navy fighter planes;
- $1.4 billion for the Army's program to destroy chemical agents and munitions;

- $918 million for DoD's counter-drug activities and to fight narco-terrorism;
- $716 million for advance procurement of the DD(X) next-generation destroyer; and
- $415 million for DoD's former Soviet Union Threat Reduction account.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

On November 30, 2005 the President signed into law PL 109-114, the FY 2006 Military Quality of Life and Department of Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies spending bill. The House approved the conference report to the measure on November 18 by a 427-0 vote, while the Senate approved the report later that day by unanimous consent.

The chart below reflects VA discretionary funding for the previous year (FY 2005), the President's budget request for FY 2006, the amounts enacted in PL 109-114, and the funding amounts requested by The American Legion before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees.

VA Accounts	*PL 108-447 FY 2005*	*White House FY 2006*	*PL 109-114 FY 2006*	*Legion Request, FY 2006*
Medical Services	*a*$20.9 bil.	$20.0 bil	$22.5 bil.	
Medical Administration	$4.7 bil.	$4.5 bil.	$2.9 bil.	
Information Technology	—	—	$1.2 bil.	
Medical Facilities	$3.8 bil.	$3.3 bil.	$3.3 bil.	
Total, VA medical care	*$29.4 bil.*	*$27.8 bil.*	*$29.9 bil.*	*$31.5 bil.*
MCCF Collections	*b*$2.0 bil.	*b*$2.2 bil.	*b*$2.2 bil.	*b*
Medical/Prosthetics Research	$402 mil.	$393 mil.	$412 mil.	$447 mil.
General Operating Expenses	$1.3 bil.	$1.4 bil.	$1.4 bil.	$1.8 bil.
National Cemetery Admin.	$148 mil.	$156 mil.	$156 mil.	$156 mil.
Major Construction	$455 mil.	$607 mil.	$607 mil.	$327 mil.
Minor Construction	$229 mil.	$209 mil.	$199 mil.	$261 mil.
Dedicated CARES Construction	*c*$508 mil. (Major/Minor)	$0	*c*$687 mil. (Major/Minor)	*c*$1 bil. (Major/Minor)
State Veterans Homes Grants	$104 mil.	$0	$85 mil.	$124 mil.
State Veterans Cemeteries Grants	$32 mil.	$32 mil.	$32 mil.	$42 mil.

a *This figure includes $1.5 billion in supplemental funding contained in PL 109-54.*
b *The American Legion continues to ask Congress to consider MCCF collections as supplements, rather than offsets, of appropriated funds.*
c *Dedicated CARES construction funding for FYs 2005 and 2006 were included in the totals for major and minor construction; the $1 billion recommended by The American Legion for FY 2006 are in addition to the amounts recommended.*

In his original budget request, the President had requested that increases in prescription co-payments and enrollment fees for certain veterans using the VA medical system be instituted. The House rejected these proposals. While the House-passed figure of $21 billion for direct VA medical services is admirable, the $1 billion increase came at the expense of the medical facilities and medical administration accounts.

During testimony before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs and Appropriations Committees earlier this year, The American Legion warned Congress and the Bush Administration about the dangers of the under-funding of VA health care in FY 2006 and beyond. Last year, then-VA Secretary Anthony Principi admitted he needed at least $1.2 billion in added funding just to keep even with medical inflation and the current level of services dedicated to VA's clients.

However, increasing casualties from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan seeking medical care from VA have stretched the department's resources thin. On June 23, Secretary Nicholson testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. In his statement, Secretary Nicholson stated that the funding models used to determine VA's

funding needs for FY 2005 were outdated and did not include the influx of wounded veterans from the War on Terror. He further stated that he was confident that, using VA reserve funds and maintenance accounts, that he could cover at least $1 billion of any medical care shortfall in the current fiscal year. However, reports from veterans using the VA health care system revealed long waits for doctor's appointments, delayed surgeries, denied enrollment, and ward closures in efforts to cut costs and continue to serve VA's veteran clients.

On September 30, 2005 President Bush signed PL 109-80, the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Enhancement Act of 2005. This measure allows the maximum coverage for Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) to permanently increase to $400,000, from the current ceiling of $250,000. It also boosts the incremental increases in the program from the current $10,000 to $50,000. Under the terms of the measure, the Pentagon must inform a servicemember's spouse if he or she declines SGLI coverage or chooses an amount less than the maximum. The military must also inform a spouse should the servicemember chose someone other than the spouse or child as the policyholder's beneficiary.

The new maximum went into effect on September 1, 2005. The coverage of all policies in force—regardless of coverage amount—would immediately be changed to the maximum $400,000. Policyholders would then have the opportunity to decrease coverage if they choose.

The President on November 22, 2005 signed PL 109-111. This measure increases the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for rates of disability compensation for service-connected disabled veterans, as well as the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans. The COLA, which goes into effect on December 1, will be 4.1 percent, the same as the COLA for Social Security recipients.

On December 22, 2005 the Senate by unanimous consent approved S 1182, the "Veterans Health Care Act of 2005," a bill sponsored by Senate Veterans' Affairs Chairman Larry Craig (ID) to improve the health care of the nation's veterans. Among many provisions, S 1182 provides free health care for veterans in the area impacted by Hurricane Katrina, with an ending date of January 31, 2006. Sen. Craig indicated that the deadline could be extended if "Congress determines that there is still a need."

The legislation would also allow VA to reimburse enrolled veterans for the money they spend after receiving emergency treatment in a non-VA facility. VA has discovered that in emergencies, some veterans have been skipping nearby hospitals to go to VA hospitals—often further away. Those decisions have sometimes resulted in adverse health consequences. This change will encourage veterans in need of emergency service to seek the closest medical care available.

S 1182 also directs the VA Secretary to expand and improve mental health care services, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) care provided to veterans, and expand counseling through tele-health linkages.

The bill would also authorize VA to conduct a study on finding financial efficiencies within the veterans' health care system. Sen. Craig said, "VA's 'conservative' estimate is that such a study could eventually enable us to save taxpayers $1.3 billion over five years. Some people fear that this will mean a loss of jobs. I disagree. With $1.3 billion in savings, VA could hire 14,000 additional employees to provide better patient care. In this time of tight budgets, we need to harness the phenomenal efficiencies of the free market and get better health care results at the same time."

109th Congress, Second Session

The Second Session of the 109th Congress convened on January 31, 2006. Major issues on the agenda for both chambers include the war on terrorism, the reconstruction of Iraq, the flag protection constitutional amendment, and the proposed FY 2007 budget. As of today, The American Legion has participated in ten congressional hearings during the Second Session.

The President's discretionary funding recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reflect a $3.3 billion increase over FY 2006 funding. The

administration proposed $77.7 billion for VA, $35.7 billion going to discretionary accounts, including medical care—a 6 percent increase over FY 2006. However, the bulk of that increase includes fiscal assumptions by administration officials—also proposed and defeated last year, which The American Legion finds unacceptable. These proposals include:

- Charging a $250 enrollment fee to cover the cost of enrolling veterans in Priority Groups 7 and 8 regardless of other health insurance coverage.
- Increasing pharmacy co-payments for certain veterans from $7 to $15 per prescription.
- Continuing the prohibition for the enrollment of any new Priority Group 8 veterans.
- Eliminating the practice of reducing the VA first-party co-payments debts with collections recoveries from third-party health plans.

In addition, the administration has set a goal of $2.8 billion for VA to collect first- and third-party deductibles directly from veterans through the Medical Care Collection Fund (MCCF). The American Legion believes this estimate continues to be overly optimistic, as actual funds collected by MCCF to date have not met expected projections. According to VA's own statistics, only about 40 percent of the costs billed are recovered by VA. The American Legion believes VA must either improve its technology and training for its personnel, or consider contracting out the entire process.

Rather than consider ways to allow the VA health care system to accommodate the veterans currently using it, the White House budget for VA seeks to drive almost a quarter million veterans away from the health care system, in addition to continuing to prohibit a million Priority Group 8-eligible veterans from enrolling in the VA medical system. The American Legion vehemently opposes this particular administration strategy.

On February 23, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee sent its majority VA budget recommendations for FY 2007 to the House Budget Committee. The VA panel's proposal calls for a $1.9 billion increase in VA discretionary funding. The committee rejected the proposed prescription co-pay increase.

At the same time, the minority members of the House panel sent their own recommendations for VA FY 2007 budget to the House Budget Committee. In a letter to the Budget Committee, Rep. Lane Evans (IL)—the ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee —said, "A flat-line budget for veterans' health care during a time of war is unconscionable." The VA committee's minority views and estimates would add $4.5 billion to VA health care programs.

The first chart below shows: VA discretionary funding for the current year (FY 2006); proposed funding contained in the President's 2007 budget resolution; and both the majority and minority budget proposals set forth by the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HCVA).

Programs	***FY 2006 Actual PL 109-114***	***White House Request FY 2007***	***HCVA Majority Proposal FY 2007***	***HCVA Minority Proposal FY 2007***
Medical Care	$28.9 bil.	$ 31.5 bil.	$32.8 bil.	$31.8 bil.
Medical Care Recovery Fund	[$2.0 bil.]	[$2.8 bil.]	[$2.8 bil.]	[$3.3 bil.]
Medical/ Prosthetic Research	$412 mil.	$399 mil.	$427 mil.	$450 mil.
Major/Minor Construction	$119 mil.	$290 mil.	$306 mil.	$406 mil.
Dedicated CARES Construction	$687 mil.	$307 mil.	$307 mil.	$833 mil.
State Veterans Homes Grants	$85 mil.	$85 mil.	$85 mil.	$150 mil.
State Cemetery Grants	$32 mil.	$32 mil.	$32 mil.	$37 mil.

Natl. Cemetery Administration	$156 mil.	$161 mil.	$161 mil.	$175 mil.
Information Technology	$1.2 bil.	$1.3 bil.	$1.1 bil.	$1.2 bil.
Genl. Operating Expenses	$1.4 bil.	$1.5 bil.	$1.5 bil.	$1.5 bil.

The next chart again shows FY 2006 funding, and the President's FY 2007 request. It also shows the FY 2007 budget recommendations of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs (SCVA) and The American Legion's FY 2007 proposal as presented in testimony by National Commander Bock last September as well as in February of this year.

Programs	*FY 2006 Actual PL 109-114*	*White House Request FY 2007*	*SCVA Proposal FY 2007*	*Legion Proposal FY 2007*
Medical Care	$28.9 billion	$ 31.5 billion	$31.5 billion	$33.5 billion
Medical Care Recovery Fund	[$2.0 billion]	[$2.8 billion]	[$2.8 billion]	—
Medical/ Prosthetic Research	$412 million	$399 million	$429 million	$469 million
Major/Minor Construction	$119 million	$290 million	$309 million	$617 million
Dedicated CARES Construction	$687 million	$307 million	$307 million	$1.0 billion
State Veterans Homes Grants	$85 million	$85 million	$36 million	$250 million
State Cemetery Grants	$32 million	$32 million	$32 million	$44 million
Natl. Cemetery Administration	$156 million	$161 million	$161 million	$174 million
Information Technology	$1.2 billion	$1.3 billion	$1.3 billion	—
Genl. Operating Expenses	$1.4 billion	$1.5 billion	$1.5 billion	$1.9 billion

On March 9, the Senate Budget Committee released its version of FY 2007 budget resolution, Senate Concurrent Resolution (S Con Res.) 83. The Senate panel called for VA discretionary spending to be set at $36.2 billion. Prior to final passage, the Senate agreed by a 100-0 vote to an amendment—offered by Sen. Conrad Burns (MT)—that would add $823 million in funding for VA health care and medical/prosthetics research. However, an amendment championed by Sen. Daniel Akaka (HI) to add $1.5 billion to VA medical care was rejected 54-46. On March 16, The Senate passed S Con Res. 83 by a recorded vote of 51-49.

The House began consideration of a similar measure, House Concurrent Resolution (H Con Res.) 376, authored by Representative Jeb Bradley (NH), in early April. However, prior to the spring/Easter recess, disagreements within the majority party caused work on the House budget resolution to collapse.

There were hundreds of provisions in H. Con Res. 376, taken as a whole represents a $2.8 trillion budget blueprint for FY 2007. Some provisions addressed expiring tax cuts passed during the previous three years that would be extended. There were also some provisions that seek to rein in spending for health, education and labor programs. One provision of importance to The American Legion addressed administration proposals dealing with veterans' health care.

When President Bush's FY 2007 budget proposal was released in February, it contained policy initiatives that have been opposed by The American Legion since 2002. Namely, a) assessing an annual enrollment fee of $250 for veterans using the VA health care system, and b) increasing the pharmacy co-payment from $8 to $15 for a 30-day supply. The Senate rejected these proposals during consideration of S Con Res. 83. The House Budget Committee did likewise on March 29, approving an amendment to H. Con

Res. 376. The amendment would shift $795 million from the foreign aid budget to the VA budget for FY 2007, as well as a total of $3.97 billion over the next five years.

The House returned from recess on April 24. Deep differences over earmark rules, emergency spending restrictions and the level of spending on domestic programs continued to delay final action on the budget resolution. Finally, on May 18 by a vote of 218-210, the House agreed to H. Con Res. 376. House-Senate conferees will work out a version that each chamber can support. Once this is accomplished, a final blueprint for the Appropriations Committees will be in place. It should be stressed that the budget resolution is not law, but merely the guideline for spending bills.

Mid-term congressional elections will take place this November. All 435 seats in the House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate will be in play. As of August 16, four (4) senators are retiring or running for other offices, including Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (TN). One Senate incumbent—Sen. Joseph Lieberman (CT)—was defeat for re-nomination. In the House, twenty eight (28) members have announced plans to retire or are running for a Senate seat or governorship. Two (2) House incumbents were defeated for re-nomination, and there are two (2) vacancies.

In an unexpected announcement, Rep. Lane Evans (IL), ranking member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, announced in late March that he was not seeking re-election in November. Since announcing in 1998 that he had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, Rep. Evans has continued his work as a member of Congress and as a staunch veterans' advocate. His retirement will be a great loss for all veterans.

Americanism

After 18 years of hard work, The American Legion and the Citizens Flag Alliance (CFA) were poised for final passage of a constitutional amendment to protect the American flag from physical desecration. A total of 60 senators became cosponsors of Senate Joint Resolution (SJ Res.) 12. A total of 67 votes are needed to approve a constitutional amendment and send it to the individual states for ratification.

The amendment had the full support of Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (TN). On March 7, Sen. Frist spoke on the floor of the Senate in favor of SJ Res. 12, saying in part, "Countless brave men and women have died defending the American flag. It is but a small, humble act to vote to defend it." Sen. Frist set a date for debate and a possible vote on the amendment—the week of June 26.

On Flag Day, June 14 The American Legion and the CFA held a news conference near the U.S. Capitol to highlight SJ Res. 12. In addition to senators, Legionnaires and CFA spokesmen, two speakers of note included Rick Monday, former major-league baseball player who in 1976 foiled an attempt to burn an American flag on the field at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles; and, Heather French Henry, former Miss America who has been a staunch supporter of the flag amendment.

Finally, on June 27, the Senate began debate on SJ Res. 12. After a day of debate, a recorded vote was held. The final tally was 66-34, with 67 "yea" votes needed for passage. The American Legion and the CFA will continue the fight to protect the American flag in the 110th Congress.

On July 24, President Bush signed PL 109-243, the "Freedom to Display the American Flag Act." The law states that a condominium association, cooperative association, or residential real estate management association may not adopt or enforce any policy that would restrict or prevent an association member from displaying the U.S. flag on residential property within the association. This measure stems from two cases in Florida over the past three years where veterans were told to remove flagpoles from their properties by condominium association management. Despite a Florida law passed to allow display of the American flag, federal legislation was felt necessary.

The American Legion views the ACLU's continued assault on the Boy Scouts with increasing alarm. In the 109th Congress, efforts to assist the Boys Scouts continued. On March 16, Sen. Frist re-introduced his pro-Scouts legislation as S 642, the Support our Scouts Act of 2005. On April 11, Representative Jo Ann Davis (VA) introduced a companion measure, HR 1337. These measures' two major provisions would:

- Prohibit any federal law from being interpreted to limit a federal agency from providing any form of support for a youth organization (including the Boy Scouts of America or any group officially affiliated with them) that would result in the agency providing less support than was provided during each of the previous four fiscal years.
- Amend the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (PL 93-383) to prohibit any State or unit of general local government that has a designated open forum, limited public forum, or nonpublic forum and that is a recipient of assistance under the Act from denying equal access or a fair opportunity to meet to, or discriminate against, any youth organization, including the Boy Scouts of America or any affiliated group, that wishes to conduct a meeting or otherwise participate in that designated open forum, limited public forum, or nonpublic forum.

S. 642 currently has 53 cosponsors, while HR 1337 has 88 cosponsors.

The House on July 19 passed a measure that would bar most federal courts—including the Supreme Court—from hearing constitutional challenges to the Pledge of Allegiance. HR 2389, introduced by Rep. Todd Akin (MO) is aimed at preventing federal judges from ruling that the phrase "under God" in the pledge is unconstitutional. The bill passed by a recorded vote of 260-167.

During consideration of the bill, Rep. Phil Gingrey (GA) said that passage of HR 2389 would "affirm that it is the American people, not a few activist judges, that have the right to make law." Before final passage, the House adopted an amendment by voice vote that would clarify that, if enacted, the bill's provisions would be effective immediately and would apply to all pending and future litigation. The measure now goes to the Senate for passage, where a companion bill—S 1046, introduced by Sen. Jon Kyl (AZ)—has seen no action.

Since its formation in 1919, The American Legion has been concerned with illegal immigration. It is estimated that between 10 and 12 million illegal immigrants reside in this country, with 500,000 illegals thought to be entering this country every year. Most recently, Americanism Resolution #1-05 urges Congress to enact an "immigration reform policy that will secure the borders against those individuals attempting to enter this country illegally." Since the attacks of September 11, 2001 these concerns have been magnified.

On December 16 of last year, the House of Representatives by a vote of 239-182 passed HR 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005. The bill, introduced by House Judiciary Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner (WI), focuses on border security and enforcement.

On May 25 by a vote of 62-36 the Senate passed S 2611, the "Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006." This bill goes into greater detail than the House bill. As a result, a conference committee will be asked to reconcile major differences between the two measures.

The differences in the two bills are not just skin-deep; they are deep and controversial. Outlined below are major provisions of each bill.

Border Agents: S 2611 would authorize 4000 new additional border patrol agents and at least 2500 port-of-entry inspectors. HR 4437 would authorize 2000 new border patrol agents for each of the next 4 fiscal years, as well as 8000 new beds per year over the same period for detaining apprehended illegal aliens.

Border Fencing: The House bill would require DHS to build a security fence across several sectors of the Mexican border. By contrast, the Senate measure would authorized the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to build a "virtual fence" to allow the border to be patrolled with unmanned aircraft, cameras, sensors and other technology. During Senate debate, an amendment was added to include a fence similar to that outlined in HR 4437.

Interior Enforcement/Verification: S 2611 would require a new program for employers to check Social Security numbers (SSNs) of new hires against a federal database, in addition to authorizing the hiring of 10,000 agents to enforce these beefed-up employment regulations. HR 4437 would mandate expanded use of a system called Basic

Pilot that enables companies to screen employees' SSNs and foreign identification numbers with DHS. The mandatory system would be implemented in phases over a six-year period, with all employers participating.

Guest Workers: Only the Senate bill would create a guest worker program that would allow up to 200,000 people outside the U.S. to enter and fill vacant jobs during the first year of the program. The measure would also allow workers to receive a three-year visa, which could be renewed once. After holding a visa for 4 years, an individual could apply for permanent status.

"Legalization": This section of S 2611 is perhaps the most controversial. In essence, this language would provide virtual amnesty for millions of illegal aliens who entered this country unlawfully. It has three tiers, as follows:

- Short-term. The bill would make an additional 1.5 million agricultural workers eligible for permanent legal residence if they can prove that they had worked in U.S. agriculture before enactment of the new law, and if they worked three to five more years after enactment of the law.
- Mid-term. Illegals who have been in this country between two and five years - as of January, 2006—must register with DHS. Within three years, they would have to leave the U.S. and could return by applying for a visa at a land port of entry. After clearing a background check and meeting other requirements, these individuals would qualify for legal permanent residence status.
- Long-term. This section of the bill would allow illegal aliens who have been in the U.S. since April 5, 2001 eligible for "earned adjustment" to their legal status. They would be required to work in the U.S. for six years after the bill's enactment, pass a background check, pay back taxes, hold a job, learn civics and the English language, and pay a $2000 fine. There would be no limit to the number of green cards issued under the long-term section of these rules.

In addition to these major provisions, there are some extraordinary provisions in S 2611 that are not receiving a great deal of attention. These include:

a. Illegal aliens who use fake SSNs or other fraudulent documents will not face any criminal prosecution under the Senate bill.
b. Employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens will similarly face no criminal prosecution, even if they were aware that the documents used in the initial hiring stage were fraudulent.

Despite having the support of the President, the House leadership signaled in mid-June that S 2611 will not be easily or quickly reconciled with HR 4437. House Speaker Dennis Hastert announced that hearings would be held on the immigration legislation, a highly unusual move when legislation is bound for conference. Whether this legislation will be finished prior to the summer recess, or even before the end of the Second Session, is unknown.

Children & Youth

On June 29 the House by a 393-23 recorded vote passed HR 5672, the FY 2007 spending bill for the Departments of Commerce, Justice (DOJ) and State and Science programs. Funding for DoJ would total $22.4 billion, $831 million more than funded for FY 2006, and $1 billion above the President's FY 2007 request. On July 13, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of the measure, with DOJ funding set at $22 billion. The American Legion continues to support the work of OJJDP to combat juvenile crime and delinquency. Under the bills' provisions,

- The FBI would receive $6 billion under each measure;
- The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) would be funded at $1.7 billion in both bills;
- The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATF) would receive $985 million under the Senate bill, while the House bill would fund the agency at $950 million;
- The U.S. Marshals Service would be funded at $856 million under the Senate measure, at $826 million under the House bill; and,

- The programs of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) will receive $286 million from the House—which is $52 million less than current year funding — while the Senate version would fund OJJDP at $300 million.

Economics

On February 2, The American Legion testified before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee on the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS). The hearing sought to evaluate VETS' performance to help America's veterans toward employment, and to review the state grant program that funds the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialists (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER).

For the past three years—since enactment of PL 107-288, the Jobs for Veterans Act— both the DVOP and LVER programs have been funded through federal grants to state employment services. The result was that these veterans' advocates are no longer under federal jurisdiction and instead are becoming bogged down in state administrative duties, giving them less time to do their normal jobs helping unemployed veterans. The American Legion believes these programs should be national programs with Federal oversight and accountability.

The mission of VETS is to promote the physical, emotional and economic security of America's veterans, striving to create a seamless transition back to civilian life for veterans through its transitional assistance programs (TAP). However, with an average of 250,000 servicemembers leaving the armed forces every year, VETS faces a daunting task without sufficient funding or personnel to meet this goal. Approximately 44 percent of all unemployed veterans are under age 45.

Finally, The American Legion recommended the reinstatement of the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA). This program was developed as a transitional tool designed to provide job training and employment to eligible veterans discharged after August 1, 1990 and an incentive for employers to hire veterans. The American Legion continues to encourage Congress to reauthorize and adequately fund SMOCTA. Short of that goal, it is hoped that additional funding should be added to the Veterans Workforce Improvement Program (VWIP) job training opportunities.

In the FY 2007 budget request released February 6, VETS funding was pegged at $225 million, a modest increase of $3 million over current year spending. The American Legion stated this funding total is totally inadequate to address the programs under VETS' jurisdiction, and recommended $346 million for FY 2007.

On June 13 the House Appropriations Committee approved HR 5647, the FY 2007 Departments of Labor (DoL), Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education funding measure. The Senate Appropriations Committee passed companion legislation, S 3708, on July 20. These measures contain funding for DoL's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET). The chart below outlines funding for ASVET for the current fiscal year, the Administration's FY 2007 request, and the amounts contained in the House and Senate versions for FY 2007. The "state administration grants" line in the below chart is responsible for funding DVOPs and LVERs in state employment services. The American Legion continues to vehemently oppose this funding mechanism and will work to have DoL revert to the former method of direct appropriations. The bills now go to their respective chambers for further consideration.

Programs	*PL 109-149 FY 2006*	*White House Proposal FY 2007*	*HR 5647 FY 2007*	*S 3708 FY 2007*
State Administration Grants	$160.8 mil.	$161.2 mil.	$160.8 mil.	$161.2 mil.
Federal Administration	$30.1 mil.	$32.4 mil.	$32.4 mil.	$32.4 mil.
Natl. Veterans Training Institute (NVTI)	$2.0 mil.	$2.0 mil.	$2.0 mil.	$2.0 mil.

Homeless Veterans Program	$21.8 mil.	$21.8 mil.	$21.8 mil.	$21.8 mil.
Veterans' Workforce Investment Programs	$7.4 mil.	$7.4 mil.	$7.4 mil.	$7.4 mil.
Totals	**$222.1 mil.**	**$224.8 mil.**	**$224.4 mil.**	**$224.8 mil.**

Foreign Relations

On June 9 by a vote of 373-34 the House passed HR 5522, the FY 2007 Foreign Operations spending bill. It contains $21.3 billion in foreign aid, $600 million more than contained in the FY 2006 bill, but $2.4 billion less than requested by the White House. On June 29 the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of the bill, which included funding for the State Department. Among the earmarks in the bill:

- $3.5 billion in global assistance to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in the Senate bill, while the House bill would allocate $3.4 billion;
- $2.5 billion in economic and military assistance to Israel from the Senate bill, the House measure would appropriate $2.3 billion;
- $1.8 billion in economic and military assistance to Egypt in the Senate measure, while the House bill would fund this assistance at $1.7 billion;
- $1.1 billion in various economic assistance to Afghanistan from the Senate while the House would fund this account at $962 million;
- $753 million in various economic assistance to Iraq in the Senate bill, while the House bill would assign $522 million;
- $699 million for the Andean Counterdrug Initiative from the Senate bill, $507 million from the House measure;
- $371 million in assistance for states of the former Soviet Union in the House bill, while the Senate would allocate $293 million to this account; and
- $300 million in military assistance to Pakistan from the Senate, while the House measure would assign $200 million. Pakistan has been a valuable partner in the War on Terror.

The Senate must now act upon this measure, after which a conference committee will be required to produce a clean bill for enactment.

Internal Affairs

At the 86th National Convention held in Nashville TN two years ago, The American Legion approved Internal Affairs Resolution 326. The resolution urges Congress to make changes in 42 United States Code, Section 1988, which allows our nation's courts to award attorney's fees to plaintiffs in lawsuits regarding free exercise of religion. The ACLU has sought and obtained hundreds of thousands of dollars in attorneys' fees in similar cases.

Last year, Rep. John Hostettler (IN) introduced HR 2679, the "Public Expression of Religion Act of 2005." The bill seeks to amend the Revised Statutes of the United States to eliminate the effect on the constitutionally protected expression of religion by State and local officials that results from the threat that potential litigants may seek damages and attorney's fees. The American Legion will actively pursue changes to 42 U.S.C. Section 1988 to expressly preclude the courts from awarding attorney's fees—usually paid for by local taxpayers—in lawsuits brought to remove or destroy religious symbols. The measure has 60 cosponsors. On July 20, Sen. Sam Brownback (KS) introduced S 3696, the "Veterans' Memorials, Boy Scouts, Public Seals, and Other Public Expressions of Religion Protection Act of 2006," a companion measure. It currently has 6 cosponsors.

On August 2, a major victory was won in the campaign in support of legislation addressing the public expression of religion. On that date, the Senate unanimously passed HR 5683, a bill to preserve the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial in San Diego, California, by providing for the immediate acquisition of the memorial by the United States. The measure passed the House on July 19 by a vote of 349-74. The bill was signed by the President on August 14, and is now PL 109-272.

"I applaud the unanimous decision by the Senate to preserve this memorial to American heroes," stated National Commander Tom Bock. "This cross and all other

crosses and Stars of David that mark the graves and honor the sacrifices of our fallen heroes are sacred ground to Americans. As a grateful nation, we must ensure that their memory will never be dishonored by those who would seek to remove them."

The mayor of San Diego asked President Bush in May to exercise his power to take over the Mt. Soledad War Memorial by accepting the offer of the people of San Diego provided for in a 2005 referendum in which 76 percent of voters approved transfer of the national memorial to federal custody. A May ruling by a San Diego federal judge—who issued an injunction against the Soledad cross in 1991—ordered the city of San Diego to take down the cross within 90 days or face $5,000 in daily fines.

An atheist originally filed suit in 1989 against the cross. The city tried to sell the land to the nonprofit group that maintains the memorial, but federal judges repeatedly blocked the sale, ruling that the attempts were designed to favor a buyer who would keep the cross.

In a letter to the President recently, National Commander Bock wrote, "We are particularly concerned in this case that a dangerous precedent could be set that would endanger veterans memorials across America, perhaps even the nine thousand crosses that mark the final resting places of our World War II heroes at Normandy Beach."

National Security

On January 6, 2006 the President signed PL 109-163, the Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 DoD authorization bill. On December 19 by a vote of 374-41, the House of Representatives approved the conference report. Two days later, the Senate approved the conference report by a voice vote. This measure sets the spending guidelines for DoD appropriations, and also includes various policy statements. A total of $491.5 billion in budget authority was recommended, an increase of $69.6 billion above the amount passed by Congress for the current year. It also includes $50 billion in authorizations for funding to support the War on Terrorism and operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

It should be pointed out that authorizing legislation sets spending guidelines for appropriators, but does not assign actual funding. Some of the authorizing provisions of the bill include:

- $12.2 billion for military construction and family housing;
- Increase in Army personnel by 10,000, and a Marine Corps personnel increase of 1000;
- A 3.1 percent across-the-board pay raise for military personnel;
- An increase from $20,000 to $40,000 for bonuses for active-duty enlistments, a reserve enlistment bonus increase from $10,000 to $20,000, and active duty re-enlistment bonus increase from $60,000 to $90,000, as well as a pilot program to test a new $1000 bonus for Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard members who encourage new recruits to enlist;
- An increase in hardship pay from $300/month to $750/month;
- A permanent increase in the death gratuity to $100,000;
- An extension from 6 months to one year the amount of time dependents of deceased servicemembers can stay in housing or receive housing assistance; and
- An expansion of travel authorizations for families of hospitalized servicemembers.

On June 15 President Bush signed PL 109-234, an emergency supplemental appropriations measure for FY 2006. It sets forth $94.5 billion in funding to sustain military operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and the war on terrorism, for homeland security and for emergency relief to states devastated by last year's major hurricanes. The House passed the measure by a vote of 351-67 on June 13, with the Senate following suit two days later, approving the bill by a 98-1 tally.

PL 109-234 provides supplemental funding in the following areas:

- $70.4 billion for military operations and foreign aid in the War on Terror;
- $19.8 billion for hurricane recovery efforts;
- $2.3 billion for preparation to battle a possible flu pandemic; and
- $1.9 billion for border security.

During House floor debate, Rep. John Salazar (CO) offered an amendment to add $630 million to VA medical care for the current year. His amendment was ruled out of

order and was not even voted upon. The bill did, however, contain a provision for $586 million to be added to VA's major construction account for hurricane relief.

On June 20, the House voted 407-19 to pass HR 5631, the FY 2007 Department of Defense (DoD) spending bill. On July 20, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of DoD funding. The House version would fund DoD programs at $427.6 billion, an increase of nearly $18 billion over the current year funding amounts. The Senate bill would fund DoD programs at $453.5 billion. Included in each measure is $50 billion earmarked for military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The President did not request these funds, but Congress felt that it was more realistic to include them in a regular appropriations measure, in lieu of supplemental funding bills.

Some of the major accounts funded by these bills include:

- $9.3 billion for ballistic missile defense in the Senate version, $9 billion in the House bill;
- $5.1 billion for continued research and development of the Joint Strike Fighter in the Senate measure, $4.2 billion in the House bill;
- $3.5 billion for continued research and development of the Army's Future Combat System in the Senate bill, $3 billion in the House measure;
- $3.4 billion for 20 F-22A fighter planes in both measures;
- $3 billion for procurement of 12 C-17 cargo planes in both bills;
- $2.9 billion for 42 F/A-18 Navy fighter planes in both measures;
- $2.6 billion for construction of the first DD(X) next-generation destroyer in the House bill, while the Senate allocated the same amount for two vessels;
- $1.8 billion for the purchase of one Virginia-class submarine in each bill;
- $1.3 billion for the Army's program to destroy chemical agents and munitions in both measures;
- $978 million for DoD's counter-drug activities and to fight narco-terrorism in the Senate version, the House bill provides $937 million; and
- $372 million for DoD's Former Soviet Union Threat Reduction account in both measures.

On May 11 by a vote of 396-31, the House of Representatives approved HR 5122, the FY 2007 DoD authorization bill. The Senate on June 22 passed S 2766, a companion measure, by a 96-0 tally. This legislation sets yearly spending guidelines for DoD appropriations, and also includes various policy statements. A total of $512.9 billion in budget authority was recommended in the House version, while the Senate bill's authorizations would total $517.7 billion. It also includes $50 billion in authorizations for funding to support the War on Terrorism and operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

It should be stressed that authorizing legislation only sets spending guidelines for appropriators. The final funding tallies for the accounts listed below will be set in the DoD appropriations bill. Some of the authorizing provisions of the bill include:

- $17.1 billion for military construction and family housing in the Senate bill, while the House version contains $16.7 billion;
- Increases in Army personnel by 30,000, and a Marine Corps personnel increase of 5000 in both bills;
- A 2.7 percent across-the-board pay raise for military personnel in the House measure, while the Senate bill would authorize a 2.2 percent pay raise;
- An additional $100 million for Army recruiting and retention bonuses; $100 million for the Army Reserve to fund Army-wide basic officer courses; and, $59 million for Air National Guard bonuses in both measures;
- Prohibits DoD from increasing TRICARE Prime, Standard and TRICARE Reserve Select fees until the end of 2007, which is contained in both measures;

The two measures will now go to a conference committee to reconcile differences before President Bush can sign it into law.

On June 6 by a vote of 389-9, the House passed HR 5441, the FY 2007 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding measure. The measure provided a total of $32.1 billion in discretionary funding for the newest Cabinet department, a 6 percent increase above FY 2006 funds. The Senate on July 13 passed its version of the measure, with total

funding of $31.7 billion, $350 million less than the House version. The amounts in several major accounts include:

- $8.2 billion for the U.S. Coast Guard in the Senate measure, $8.1 in the House bill;
- $6.6 billion for the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection in the Senate bill, with $5.4 billion set aside in the House measure;
- $4.7 billion for the Transportation Security Administration in both bills;
- $3.9 billion for the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the Senate bill, with the House measure allocating $3.8 billion;
- $3.4 billion in grants for state and local "first responders"—firefighters, police and emergency response personnel to prepare for future terrorist events—in the House bill, while the Senate measure contains $3.2 billion for this account;
- $1.3 billion for the U.S. Secret Service in the House measure, $1.2 in the Senate bill; and
- $699 million for the Federal Air Marshals program in both measures.

Funding for the Selective Service System for FY 2007 is included in HR 5576, the Departments of Transportation, the Treasury, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Judiciary, the District of Columbia and Independent Agencies spending bill. The House passed the bill on November 18 by a vote of 406-22 on June 14. On July 20, the Senate Appropriations Committee passed its version of HR 5576.

Selective Service funding totaled $24.2 million in both measures, a decrease of $500 million from the previous year. Since its founding in 1948, the basic mission of Selective Service is to be prepared to supply manpower to the U.S. military to ensure the security of this country during a time of national emergency. Since 1973, the armed forces have relied on volunteers to fill manpower requirements. However, Selective Service remains the primary vehicle by which prospective recruits will be brought into the military if Congress and the President should authorize a return to the draft. The American Legion continues to support this program.

The American Legion continues to support legislation allowing concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability compensation by military retirees. The concept of concurrent receipt dates back to 1891, when Congress passed a law prohibiting active-duty or retired personnel from also receiving disability pensions. The current law dealing with concurrent receipt was established in 1944, when PL 78-314 allowed retired military personnel to elect to waive an amount of their retirement pay equal to their veterans' disability compensation payments. The advantage to this provision is that while military retirement pay is considered taxable income, veterans' disability compensation is not subject to federal income taxes. As a result, the retiree who receives veterans' compensation and the balance of the retired pay is financially better off than the retiree who receives only taxable retired pay.

Rep. Michael Bilirakis (FL) introduced HR 303, another version of legislation he has introduced in previous Congresses. This version would allow a service-connected retiree to receive both military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation without regard to the level of his or her service-connected disability rating. Currently, only an individual with a disability rating of 50 percent or more is eligible to receive both types of compensation. HR 303 also repeals the 10-year phase-in of full concurrent receipt. Finally, the measure makes individuals who were retired or separated from military service due to a service-connected disability eligible for the full concurrent receipt of both veterans' disability compensation and either military retired pay or combat-related special pay. HR 303 currently has 236 cosponsors. Its Senate companion measure—S 558, introduced by Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (NV)—has 36 cosponsors.

In addition, Rep. Bilirakis has introduced a slightly different measure, HR 1366, to help address another long-standing inequity. Some service-connected disabled military retirees were forced to retire from service before serving 20 years because of combat- or operations-related conditions; these persons are referred to as Chapter 61 retirees. Currently, only members who served long enough to retire independent of any disability are eligible for Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC).

Presently, those who were medically retired short of 20 years have to forfeit $1 of military retired pay for each $1 they receive in VA disability compensation. This

legislation would ensure combat-wounded members receive the retired pay they earned by service. It would exempt from the VA offset an amount of retired pay equal to 2.5 percent of their highest 3-year average basic pay times years of service. For example, it would provide a member who is disability-retired for combat wounds with 15 years of service at least 37.5 percent of high-3 average basic pay from DoD in addition to his or her VA disability compensation. This legislation is important to help address a current inequity whereby a member with 20 years of service and a 10 percent combat-related disability from the VA doesn't have VA compensation for that disability deducted from retired pay, but a member who is 100 percent disabled from combat wounds and medically retired at 19 years and 6 months suffers the full VA offset. HR 1366 currently has 45 cosponsors. Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (NV) introduced a companion measure, S 2385. This measure currently has 5 cosponsors.

During debate on S 2766, the FY 2007 DoD authorization bill, the Senate voted on an amendment that will affect an estimated 30,000 disabled military retirees. The amendment, introduced by Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (NV), would allow veterans whose 100 percent disability rating is tied to unemployability to receive both their military retired pay and their VA disability compensation. Sen. Reid's amendment passed the full Senate on June 22, with little debate and by a voice vote.

For the past several years, Congress has been chipping away at federal laws dating back to 1891 that have denied disabled military retirees their total retired pay and veterans' disability payments. A 2004 law (PL 108-375) included these veterans in a phase-in plan to allow veterans rated 50 percent or greater to incrementally receive their retired pay and disability compensation without deduction from either over a ten-year period. Those veterans with 100 percent disability ratings were to be immediately able to receive their full concurrent receipt.

However, DoD issued an administrative ruling in early 2005 that 100 percent disabled retirees who were rated by their unemployability were not going to be included in the immediate phase-in. Sen. Reid's amendment seeks to reverse this DoD ruling. The new policy would be made effective January 1, 2005.

The American Legion fully supports the intent of Sen. Reid's amendment. A conference committee will soon begin considering S 2766 and its House counterpart, HR 5122. The American Legion will continue to work in the 109th Congress to expand the elimination of this tax to include all disabled military retirees

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

On May 19 by a vote of 395-0, the House approved HR 5385, the Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 Military Quality of Life and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) funding bill. On July 20, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved a slightly differing version of the VA spending bill.

The House bill contains $77.6 billion for all VA programs, an 11 percent increase over the current fiscal year, while the Senate measure would fund VA programs at $77.9 billion. The chart below shows the funding levels for VA discretionary funding programs in the current fiscal year, the President's FY 2007 budget proposal, the House-passed spending levels contained in HR 5385, the Senate committee-approved funding amounts, and The American Legion's proposed FY 2007 funding amounts contained in testimony earlier this year.

VA Programs	*PL 109-114 FY 2006*	*President's Proposal FY 2007*	*House Funding FY 2007 HR 5385*	*Senate Funding FY 2007*	*Legion's Proposal FY 2007*
Medical Services	$22.8 bil.	$25.5 bil.	$25.4 bil.	*a*$28.7 bil.	$24.8 bil.
Medical Administration	$2.9 bil.	$3.2 bil.	$3.3 bil.		$5.1 bil.
Medical Facilities	$3.3 bil.	$3.6 bil.	$3.6 bil.	$3.6 bil.	$3.6 bil.
Medical Care Total	*$28.9 bil.*	*$32.3 bil.*	*$32.3 bil.*	*$32.3 bil.*	*$33.5 bil.*
Medical Care Collection Fund (MCCF)	$2.1 bil.	$2.8 bil.	$2.3 bil.	$2.3 bil.	*b*$2.1 bil.
Medical/Prosthetic Research	$412 mil.	$399 mil.	$412 mil.	$412 mil.	$469 mil.

General Operating Expenses	$1.4 bil.	$1.5 bil.	$1.5 bil.	$1.5 bil.	$1.9 bil.
Information Technology	$1.2 bil.	$1.3 bil.	$1.3 bil.	$1.3 bil.	*c* —
Natl. Cemetery Admin.	$157 mil.	$161 mil.	$161 mil.	$161 mil.	$174 mil.
Construction:					
Major Projects	$607 mil.	$399 mil.	$284 mil.	$429 mil.	$343 mil.
Minor Projects	$199 mil.	$198 mil.	$210 mil.	$168 mil.	$274 mil.
Dedicated CARES Funding	—	—	—	—	$1 bil.
State Veterans' Homes Construction Grants	$85 mil.	$85 mil.	$105 mil.	$85 mil.	$250 mil.
State Veterans' Cemeteries Construction Grants	$32 mil.	$32 mil.	$32 mil.	$32 mil.	$44 mil.

a *The Senate Appropriations Committee combined the medical services and medical administration accounts into a single account.*

b *The American Legion continues to believe that third-party reimbursements should supplement, rather than offset, discretionary funding. This would bring VA medical services to about $27 billion*

c *Information technology proposed funding is included in the Medical Administration account.*

With regard to military construction programs relating to military quality of life, both measures allocate $4 billion for family housing construction, operations and maintenance to continue the goal of providing adequate housing for our servicemembers and their families. The Senate measure would provide $5.5 billion for base realignment and closure (BRAC) activities, while the House bill would provide $5.4 billion. Finally, HR 5385 also contains $21 billion for the Defense Health Program, an increase of $1 billion over the current fiscal year.

The Senate will take the next step in the appropriations process. After that chamber passes its VA funding measure, a conference committee will work out final details before the President can sign the bill into law.

On February 1, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report concerning the VA budget and supposed "management efficiencies" that have been used in past years to justify reductions to VA discretionary health care requests. In each of the past four fiscal years' budget proposals (2003-2006), VA was directed to find "management efficiencies."

According to the GAO report, VA was unable to provide any support for the estimates in the President's previous budget requests. Furthermore, VA lacked any methodology for even making the savings assumptions. VA officials, despite knowing the amount of funding they would need to serve veterans, acceded to lower Administration budget totals, then developed a list of "management efficiencies" to match the gap between funds needed and funds delivered. A direct result of this deception is that VA health care was inadequately funded over the past four years. This deception caused a decrease in veterans' access to the system, and a series of emergency supplemental funding requests were initiated to keep the health care system running.

Congressional budget experts speculate that, had these so-called "savings" not been "found," there would have been no need for the $1.3 billion supplemental request for FY 2005. In addition, any need for increases for pharmacy co-payments implemented by the Administration would have been eliminated. Finally, 260,000 veterans who have previously been denied VA health care system access under current policies would have been permitted to enroll.

Immediately after the report was made public, National Commander Tom Bock issued a press release. In part, Commander Bock said The American Legion, "...members of Congress and individual veterans throughout the nation have for nearly five years publicly expressed outrage over VA's smoke-and-mirrors healthcare funding process." He added, "The GAO report confirms what everyone has known all along. VA's healthcare budget has been built on false claims...[The VA's budget] has turned our veterans into beggars, forced to beg for the medical care they earned and, by law, deserve."

Commander Bock stated further that the GAO report clarifies the need for assured funding of VA health care. "VA must be funded on a dollars-per-veteran basis, indexed annually for inflation, with the ability to collect payments from Medicare or any other third-party insurance provider," he said. "Just a few short months ago, Congress made a startling discovery of the obvious—VA was $1.5 billion short. This GAO report confirms facts that have been in evidence for years. And it's what veterans have been saying for years: these findings are the product of smoke-and-mirrors budgeting."

The American Legion will continue to closely scrutinize the VA budget process, to insure that America's veterans will receive the quality care they deserve and have earned.

On June 15 President Bush signed PL 109-233, the "Veterans Housing Opportunity and Benefits Improvement Act of 2006." The measure had passed the House on May 22 by a 372-0 recorded vote, and then passed the Senate three days later by unanimous consent.

Among its many provisions is one that authorizes VA to make grants available to assist with housing adaptations at a family member's home in which a severely disabled servicemember is temporarily residing. The grants range from between $2000 to $14,000.

PL 109-233 also makes permanent a pilot program that authorized VA to make direct housing loans to Native American veterans. It also makes some changes to VA's Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment and Training, giving it new authority to assist in employer outreach. Language in the bill also authorizes funding for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program account, in the amount of $50 million for each of the next three fiscal years.

The law also allows servicemembers, those who are rated totally disabled at the time of their separations from the military, to have up to two years from their separation date to apply for Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) coverage. In addition, servicemembers will be enabled to convert their coverage to Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI), or an individual plan or policy, during the same two-year period.

On June 22 the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees each approved a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for veterans' benefits and veterans' survivors' benefits. The percentage increase would be calculated based on the Consumer Price Index; that figure is being estimated between 2.2 to 2.6 percent. The House bill is HR 4843, while the Senate measure is S 2562. The president's fiscal 2007 budget request estimated a cost-of-living increase of 2.6 percent.

The House panel also adopted, by voice vote, an amendment to its bill by Rep. Shelley Berkley (NV) that also would apply the COLA to a $250 monthly payment given to surviving spouses with dependent children under the age of 18. This payment is for the first two years after the soldier's death. The provision for surviving spouses was included in last year's House version of the COLA bill, but it was taken out in conference because of its cost. On June 27 by a vote of 408-0, the House passed HR 4843, sending it to the Senate for further action.

Many Americans are concerned that the federal government is growing too large to serve the needs of the people, with federal appropriations increasing year after year. It is no secret that there are many federal programs that are simply not serving the American public. There are programs that are duplicative, that are no longer necessary, or that simply waste taxpayers' dollars.

On July 12, Representative Todd Tiahrt introduced HR 5766, entitled the "Government Efficiency Act of 2006." The legislation would authorize the establishment of a bipartisan "Federal Review Commission" to study whether a specific aspect of federal government operations would function more efficiently and effectively if some or all of the relevant federal programs and agencies were reorganized, consolidated, abolished, expanded, or transferred. Legislative proposals drafted by the bipartisan commissions would then be considered in Congress pursuant to expedited procedures.

Earlier in the 109th Congress, Rep. Kevin Brady introduced HR 3282, the "Abolishment of Obsolete Agencies and Federal Sunset Act of 2005." This legislation—which currently has 82 cosponsors—would establish a Federal Agency Sunset Commission to:

- Submit to Congress a schedule for review by the Commission, at least once every 12 years, of the abolishment or reorganization of each agency;

- Review and evaluate the efficiency and public need for each agency using specified criteria;
- Recommend whether each agency should be abolished or reorganized; and
- Report to Congress on all legislation introduced that would establish a new agency or a new program to be carried out by an existing agency.

Brady's bill also requires the abolishment of any agency within one year of the commission's review, unless Congress reauthorized that agency. It also authorizes the deadline for abolishing an agency to be extended for an additional two years by legislation enacted by a super majority of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Finally, HR 3282 directs the Comptroller General and the Director of the Congressional Budget Office—in cooperation with the Director of the Congressional Research Service—to prepare an inventory of Federal programs within each agency for the purpose of advising and assisting Congress and the Commission in carrying out the requirements of the bill. HR 3282 currently has 112 cosponsors.

However, The American Legion and other veterans' service organizations (VSOs) were concerned about some of the provisions of HRs 3282 and 5766. Both measures would create unelected commissions that would be highly susceptible to partisan politics. Also, the commissions are not required to hold public hearings or seek public input into any deliberations to eliminate "unnecessary" programs. One congressional opponent even characterized the bills as creating "midnight commissions" because their unelected members would work in the dark to cut programs without public input, open meetings, and without allowing Congress to request documents and transcripts.

Under the provisions of these bills, there would be a fundamental shift in the responsibilities of authorizing, reauthorizing, and funding the federal government from an elected Congress to unelected and unaccountable commissions. Further, these commissions would bypass oversight powers of Congress, the Government Accountability Office and the various Inspectors General of federal departments. Many VSOs feel that veterans' programs could be subjected to scrutiny by these commissions.

On July 27, in a final rush to complete work prior to the August recess, the House leadership failed to act on either bill. Many moderate lawmakers on both sides of the aisle expressed opposition to the bills. With an October 6 adjournment target and much work needed to complete FY 2007 appropriations legislation, there is a slim chance that either measure will be acted upon in the 109th Congress.

On August 2, the Senate unanimously approved S 2694, the "Veterans' Choice of Representation and Benefits Enhancement Act of 2006." If adopted by the House, the legislation will overturn a Civil War-era policy that denies veterans the right to hire attorneys to help them seek benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Under current law, a veteran has to exhaust the VA process—which may take years—before hiring an attorney. The VA Secretary would be authorized to prescribe qualifications and standards of conduct for agents and attorneys acting on behalf of veterans in claim proceedings before VA, and restrictions on fees collected for such services.

"I am delighted that we are closer to providing veterans and their families with the option of hiring attorneys to help them navigate the VA system," said the bill's sponsor, Sen. Larry Craig (ID), chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. "Doing away with this outdated law will allow veterans—like all other adults in this nation—to have the assistance of counsel if they so choose,"

Other provisions of S 2694 would:

- Require the removal of the ashes of a convicted double murderer from Arlington National Cemetery. Russell Wagner brutally murdered an elderly couple in Maryland in 1994. He was later convicted and died in prison. Wagner's remains were then placed in Arlington as the result of a loophole in the law barring the burial of capital offenders in national cemeteries, which has since been closed;
- Make changes to the Montgomery G.I. Bill and the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance benefits, allowing veterans and survivors eligibility for accelerated educational benefits for high-cost, short-term training leading to jobs in five areas of the economy: transportation, construction, hospitality, energy and high technology;

- Require VA to pay full costs for certain service-connected veterans residing in veterans' homes run by state governments, as well as provide medications for certain service-connected conditions for veterans in those state-run facilities. Under current law, the federal government only pays a portion of those costs;
- Allow Indian tribal organizations to apply for grants to establish veterans' cemeteries on Native American lands;
- Allow VA to designate beds in privately-run care centers as "state homes;"
- Direct the VA Secretary to designate, establish, and operate at selected Department of Veterans Affairs health-care facilities at least six centers for Parkinson's disease research, education, and clinical activities, and at least two Multiple Sclerosis Centers of Excellence;
- Authorize a VA pilot program to provide caregiver assistance and non-institutional care services;
- Modify and extend the furnishing of government markers for graves of veterans at private ceremonies;
- Improve efforts to prevent homelessness among veterans, especially among those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan; and,
- Establish an Office of Rural Health in the Office of the Under Secretary for Health.

Earlier this summer, The American Legion called into question VA's Information Technology (IT) security measures. The triggering event was the theft in early May of a laptop computer containing sensitive information for 26.5 million veterans, their dependents and military personnel. The theft was not reported to the public until nearly a month after the incident.

The laptop was recovered in mid-July, but the theft triggered an unusually quick response from the VA. Following announcement of the incident, VA Secretary James Nicholson shuffled personnel in the department to concentrate on IT security. Mr. Nicholson also offered free credit monitoring to any veteran who felt that his information had been compromised.

On July 18, President Bush announced that the promised credit monitoring would not be offered, because it was determined that it was unlikely that the information in the laptop had been accessed. American Legion National Commander Thomas L. Bock stated, "Veterans should be able to have full faith and confidence in their government...The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has stated that free credit monitoring for a year would be offered to those who could potentially become victims of identity theft. It is not possible to guarantee with total certainty that the recovered data was not accessed. Therefore The American Legion calls upon the Administration and Congress to provide the promised protection to allow concerned veterans and members of the military a sense of well being and peace of mind they so rightly deserve."

A second incident occurred in August, when VA announced that a subcontractor lost a desktop computer containing personal information for 38,000 veterans and dependents who have used VA facilities in Pennsylvania. Commander Bock called on VA and the Bush Administration to keep its original promise to provide free credit monitoring for veterans.

"I'm not sure how many computers need to be stolen before veterans get some real assurances from the government that their information is not only safe, but that safe guards will be in place to help protect them against identity theft," said Commander Bock. "In light of the latest security breach, The American Legion once again calls on the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Bush Administration to keep its promise to veterans and provide free credit monitoring for one year."

This latest breach also reinforces the Legion's previous call on the Bush Administration to look very closely at IT security and procedures at all federal agencies. "Americans across the board, not just veterans, could be the next victims of a security breach," Bock explained. "From the Internal Revenue Service who mails out those refund checks to the Treasury Department who issues those savings bonds, personal information is stored all across the federal spectrum and must be protected..."

Congress also responded to the two incidents, with over 25 separate bills in the House and Senate aimed at addressing some facet of IT security or credit protection and

monitoring for veterans and their dependents. The American Legion will keep a very close watch on this issue for the remainder of the 109th Congress, and certainly into the 110th Congress.

NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION
Clarence Hill, Florida, 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. Clarence E. Hill (Florida) is Chairman of the National Security Commission. Mr. Hill was selected as Commission Chairman at the Fall 2004 meeting of the National Executive Committee.

Pre-Convention Meetings, 2005

During the 87th National Convention of The American Legion in Honolulu, Hawaii, the National Security and Foreign Relations Commissions convened a joint session at the Hawaii Convention Center. Admiral William Fallon, the Pacific Commander, discussed the overall missions and responsibilities of the Pacific Command and maintaining security of the Pacific region. He was followed by Lieutenant General Hank Stackpole, USMC (Ret) who gave an overview of the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies. The third speaker was the Honorable William Chatfield, Director of the Selective Service System.

The National Security Commission and its six Standing Committees and two Ad Hoc Subcommittees conducted a comprehensive review of the resolutions assigned to the Convention Committee on National Security.

National Security Resolutions, 87th National Convention

The following selected resolutions, listed in Committee order, were unanimously adopted by the delegates to the 87th Annual National Convention:

Resolution No. 44: National Security Principles. The American Legion's capstone National Security resolution.
Resolution No. 45: Reducing the Reserve Retirement Age
Resolution No. 46: Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Waste
Resolution No. 47: Military Quality of Life
Resolution No. 49: Financial Anti-Terrorism Law Enforcement
Resolution No. 51: Military Recruiters and ROTC Units on College Campuses

National Executive Committee Meetings, Fall 2005

An executive session of the National Security Commission met in the Circle Center Room (Lower Level) of the Radisson Hotel on October 3, 2005, to consider resolutions properly before it and to conduct other business.

Within days of The American Legion's 87th National Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii, Hurricane Katrina began ravaging the Gulf Coast and in particular, New Orleans. Thousands of soldiers began converging on Fort Polk, Louisiana to stage Hurricane Katrina rescue and relief operations or make it their new, temporary home. Hundreds of soldiers with the Louisiana National Guard's 256th Infantry Brigade were coming home from the war zone only to find ruin, their homes destroyed and families scattered in the devastation. Hundreds of other soldiers bedded down for a night or two before heading south and were joined by over 50,000 National Guard and active-duty troops and Coast

Guardsmen in relief, rescue, and law and order operations. Coast Guard and helicopters plucked thousands of victims from floodwaters and from rooftops. The Army corps of Engineers began preparing levees, and 21 Navy ships including the hospital the hospital ship, USNS Comfort, were positioned off the Gulf coast and began receiving patients.

While there were kudos to go to the military and the VA for their relief and evacuation efforts, there was plenty of blame to go around as well. When Hurricane Hugo slammed into the Carolinas in 1989, FEMA was slow responding to that governor's delayed request as well. Clearly bipartisan government, or independent, investigations are required to determine what went right and wrong in the disaster relief efforts on Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and to implement recommendations for improvement.

The fact is, the government institution best-equipped to respond in these cases in the military. Whether a disaster be manmade or natural, only the military has the manpower, equipment, organization, discipline, communication and logistical support to take charge of a relief effort of this magnitude. President Bush has suggested that the Defense Department be the lead agency with a broader role for the armed forces in large-scale natural or terrorist disasters or disease pandemic outbreaks, but Congress needs to review and perhaps change certain laws to include the 1878 Posse Comitatus Act with regard to the military role in civilian law enforcement operations.

Washington Conference

The National Security Commission met in general session during the Washington Conference on Monday, February 27 and Wednesday, March 1, 2006. The following is a summary of their three sessions:

Morning Session, February 27, 2006

The Commission met jointly with the Foreign Relations Commissions to hear several speakers of mutual interest. The first speaker, The Honorable Sean McCormack, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and Department of State Spokesman, addressed the joint session of members. The Secretary made general comments regarding the major regions of the world in which the U.S. has some visible involvement: from Europe, to the Middle East, to Asia and the Korean Peninsula, to Africa and South America.

In his presentation, the Secretary gave a broad overview of the biggest threat facing the United States since 9/11 and the rise of global terrorism. He also relayed the major initiatives being done by the Department of State to engage other nations about the assistance the U.S. is doing abroad to aid in development. A question was asked in regards to the port services transfer regarding the United Arab Emirates U.A.E.'s bid to take over the port service contracts for several major U.S. shipping centers. The Secretary gave an overview of the process for review of such bids by foreign countries and reiterated that port security still remained in the hands of the U.S. Government.

The second speaker was Lieutenant General James T. Conway, the Director of Operations, J-3, Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Conway had commanded the I Marine Expeditionary Force during two combat tours in Iraq. General Conway began by saying that there were 2.4 million young men and women in uniform in our country of 295 million. He stated that military retention in all of the Services, Active and Reserve, continued to improve despite America being at war. The democratically-elected governments of Iraq and Afghanistan and its American ally and other allies can win the War on Terrorism. Democracy and effective militaries and police forces are the answers, not the killing of all Iraqis. General Conway believed we were winning the War on Terrorism.

Afternoon Session, February 27, 2006

The National Security and Foreign Relations Commission met in joint session to attend the POW/MIA update presented by the Foreign Relations Commission.

The first speakers of the POW/MIA session were Mr. Bruce "Rocky" Harder and Mr. Jack Kull of the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO). Mr. Harder and Mr. Kull both presented a Power Point program which provided the current project of remains recovery being done in the Southeast Asia region. DPMO has been directing

JPAC in the fieldwork arm of the Defense POPW/MIA Office (DPMO), which is charged with on the ground, site excavation, remains recovery and identification.

Mr. Harder and Mr. Kull provided highlights of current projects and ongoing programs in the countries of Vietnam and North Korea. The use of the recovery teams is extensive and places a heavy demand on their time and skills. The Teams are comprised of both civilian and cross branch military personnel who work in various different fields from public affairs to anthropology to archeological odontology. Due to the remoteness of many of the field sites and the lack of material support and resources in those areas, a greater physical and mental demand is placed on the teams. Mr. Kull emphasized that despite those challenges, each member of those teams are resolved to complete their mission because of the importance their work is to the families of these missing service members. He relayed also the difficult challenges ahead due to budget constraints and diplomatic challenges with foreign governments.

Morning Session, March 1st

The National Security Commission met in business session on Wednesday morning. Auxiliary National Security Chairman Mrs. Rita Navarrete from New Mexico described the Auxiliary's national security and homeland security projects. The Commission then heard from National Law and Order Committee Chairman George Wehrli report on the initial National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year judging. Chairman Clarence Hill reminded Commission members that this year was a renewal year for resolutions at The American Legion's 88th National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. Pre-Convention trip planning includes a visit to nearby Hill Air Force Base and their Fighter Wing. The National Security Commission will be considering new resolutions at the Spring NEC meetings dealing with The American Legion's opposition to the DoD-proposed increase in Tricare fees; Purple Hearts for those servicemembers who had died in captivity since December 7, 1941; and recycling used nuclear rods or waste. Finally, Chairman Hill, who had accompanied National Commander Tom Bock to Guantanamo Bay, reported on his impressions in reviewing living conditions of imprisoned detainees. Deputy Director Mike Duggan then gave a brief rundown on the proposed FY2007 Defense Budget. Finally, U.S. Army Colonel Bruce Kramme reported on the Army's Freedom Team Salute program which recognizes U.S. Army veterans. The Freedom Team Salute program will be featured on the Legion's website as well as in articles in Dispatch and The American Legion Magazine.

National Executive Committee Meetings, Spring 2005

An executive session of the National Security Commission met in the Circle Center Room (Lower Level) of the Radisson Hotel on May 8, 2006, to consider resolutions properly before it and to conduct other business. Four resolutions were considered and three were recommended for adoption and one held for further study. National Security Commission Chairman Clarence Hill discussed past current and future activity related to Resolution 169: Support for the War on Terrorism. Staff mentioned that it was renewal year for resolutions, and Pre-Convention planning for Commission members visiting Hill Air Force Base was discussed. Congressional progress of the Fiscal Year 2007 National Defense Authorization Act and American Legion priorities were covered by staff. Finally, Homeland Security Chairman Gus Williams (CT) discussed the State of Connecticut's Guide to Emergency Preparedness and how the American Legion Department of Connecticut contributed to its preparation.

As an issue of the highest priority, The American Legion's support for the War on Terrorism has been embodied in Resolution 169 which resolves to fully support the President of the United States, the United States Congress and the men, women and leadership of our armed forces as they engaged in the Global War on Terrorism. All Americans and freedom-living peoples everywhere are urged to stand united; and our National Commander Tom Bock is authorized, and has been committed, to use whatever means at his disposal this year to disseminate accurate information on the war and engage in whatever means necessary to ensure the support of the people. American Legion National Commander Bock has visited detention cells at Guantanamo and visited the

troops in Iraq. It has been my honor and privilege to accompany the National Commander to Guatanamo and will accompany him when he returns to Iraq later this month.

Our efforts have recognized that the war on terrorism will be a long-term struggle. This is the same conclusion contained in Defense Department and White House documents. Just recently, we learned that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has approved the military's most ambitious plan to fight terrorism around the world and retaliate more rapidly and decisively in the event of another major terrorist attack on the United States. The current Supplemental budget for the war on terrorism is currently over $92 billion, one of the largest annual war costs on record. Besides this support for the war effort, the Fiscal Year 2007 Defense budget, at $441 billion, pledges the United States to prevail in warfare operations, defend the homeland against threats, and maintain America's superiority.

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; Raymond Felsecker, Assistant Director; Tina T. Hines, Executive Secretary to the Director; and Roshawn Treadwell, 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, Homeland Security and 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; Military Officers Association of America; 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: Daniel M. Dellinger—Aerospace; Erwin Gus Williams—Homeland Security and Civil Preparedness; George Wehrli—Law and Order; Charles F. Moreland—Merchant Marine; Clayborn M. Lofton—Military Affairs; Nancy L. Carder—National and Homeland Security Council; and Gerard W. Cheffer—Naval Affairs.

AEROSPACE COMMITTEE
Daniel M. Dellinger, Virginia, 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 86th 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 2006 and 2007 defense appropriations bills. Of particular emphasis was the Air Force aerial refueling program and adequate provision for research and development, the strategic airlift, and aircraft production and development to include the F-22 fighter, and the Joint Strike Fighter.

HOMELAND SECURITY AND CIVIL PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE
Erwin Gus Williams, Connecticut, Chairman

The American Legion continues to advocate adequate staffing, adequate budgeting and adequate technical and research support for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Department of Homeland Security. In an era when Russian civil defense efforts are far greater than those of the United States, it becomes imperative that Homeland Security and the Citizen Corps be enhanced at local, state and national levels to protect our country and our citizens from terrorism.

Disaster Relief Assistance: The Homeland Security and Civil Preparedness Committee, under direction of the National Security Commission, will continue to review and monitor the progress. 1,196 Posts were involved in manmade and national disaster relief and other emergency assistance programs.

Energy: The War on Terrorism focuses the attention of The American Legion on America's continued reliance on foreign sources of energy. Unquestionably, the Middle Eastern ability to shut off aid to America could again endanger our national security interests and economic well-being. The American Legion pushed for opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil exploration in 2006 and 2007.

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 569 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. Energy resolutions were also adopted in 2004 at The American Legion's National Convention.

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 2004-2005, a total of 85, 763 pints of blood were donated by 36, 856 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, 2004 through June 15, 2005, many Departments of The American Legion actively participated in the Blood Donor program. The winning Departments included Nebraska, Idaho, Hawaii, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, Wisconsin and New Hampshire.

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 995 Posts had crime resistance programs in 2004-2005.

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 1,001 Posts had Fire Prevention programs in 2004-2005.

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. Sixteen 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 annually selects Regional winners who contend for the prestigious honor of being selected as the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Police Officer Charles M. Roessler of Wisconsin was selected and will be presented with the tenth awarding of the National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year at the 88th National Convention at Salt Lake City, Utah.

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 "fifth 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 82nd 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 nineth 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
Clayborn M. Lofton, Illinois, 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 86th and 87th 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 Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs and several Congressional press conferences.

Through the Legislative Division, correspondence with Members of Congress and Congressional staff was initiated and followed through in other areas as follows: War on Terrorism; Homeland Security; Military funeral honors; military absentee balloting; 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 the concurrent receipt issue. 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 AND HOMELAND SECURITY COUNCIL
Nancy L. Carder, Illinois, 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 Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana and Tennessee. The American Legion presented over 7,000 ROTC Medals to ROTC students in 2004-2005.

NAVAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Gerard W. Cheffer, Illinois, Chairman

Guided by resolutions adopted at the 86th and 87th National Conventions, the Naval Affairs Committee has worked to strengthen the Navy and Marine Corps 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
Robert L. Morrill, New York, Chairman
Joseph H. March, Maryland, Director

The Public Relations Commission communicates the organizational image, goals, programs and legislative positions of The American Legion to national, regional and specialized media, corporate America, and the public.

The commission produced an array of media products for use by Legionnaires across the nation during the year. The booklet, *When They Come Home—A Post Guide to Establishing a Successful "Heroes to Hometown" Program in Your Community* was prepared jointly with the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, provides plans and public relations fill-in-the-blank media products to coordinate establishment of a 'Hero Transition Team' with community resources to assist returning severely injured veterans and their families. With a recently signed memorandum of understanding with the Dept. of Defense and a full time Legion office at the Pentagon, this program enables Legionnaires to energize their communities to ensure smooth transitions of these comrades back home, helping them find housing, jobs, recreation and assisting with myriad needs. The booklets were mailed directly to post, district and dept. commanders. Copies are available free on request from The American Legion national headquarters. Other booklets prepared by commission staff included *The War on Terrorism—A Guide to Building Public Awareness and In the Footsteps of the Founders—A Guide to Defending American Values*.

The Public Relations Commission initiated The American Legion Weekly Update, an electronic newsletter providing pertinent news of current issues and developments affecting veterans, their families and national defense each week. Among its key features is the weekly National Commander's message, news from headquarters, news from Washington D.C., news from across the Legion and military outreach. Recipients include not just Legionnaires, but government agencies including the Dept. of Defense, a number of military installations, active duty, and National Guard and Reserve personnel. The newsletters enjoy significant retransmission to other groups making it an effective "force multiplier" for disseminating Legion news.

Public Relations Commission staff developed a number of event planning products for post use to conduct public and community events in support of Legion initiatives. Examples include updated Blue Star Salute guides and a new video; a new *In the Footsteps of the Founders* guide filled with promotional and media materials in support of holding town hall meetings; and new public service media spots promoting Americanism and patriotic events. All American Legion Public Relations Commission products are available for downloading on the website: www.legion.org.

PR Tools

A vast array of free public service media materials including the newly revised Public Relations Handbook and public relations training DVD, news releases, guest editorials, fact sheets, and radio and television spots were provided to American Legion Departments, Districts and Posts. All materials are free and designed to provide for local contact information. Other PR tools include suggested speeches for Memorial Day, Flag Day, and Veterans Day, event planning guides, message points and public service announcements. The Veterans Media Data Bank continues to be a resource for news media. Legionnaires interested in taking part in this program can call the public relations division or register on The American Legion Internet website.

Media Relations

From its presence in the nation's capital, the National Public Relations Commission continued to facilitate major-media coverage of The American Legion's advocacy. National stories with American Legion input included: the VA data theft/security breach and later recovery of the stolen laptop, the Flag Amendment, the Public Expression of Religion Act and the ACLU, (all major news wires and publications including the Associated Press, *Gannett News Service*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Congressional Quarterly*). Other stories included

underestimated cost of PTSD (*Kansas City Star*, *USA Today*); the war in Iraq and Afghanistan and Resolution 169; Heroes to Hometowns Program agreement between the American Legion and DoD (Scripps Howard News Service, American Forces Information Service); VA health care and funding (Associated Press, *Congressional Quarterly*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, NPR, *USA Today*, *National Journal*, *The Hill* Newspaper). Other media hits include *World Net Daily*, Scripps Howard News Service and numerous regional and national radio talk programs). In addition, hundreds of local and regional media queries were answered on a wide range of national security, veterans affairs and Legion program issues.

Awards

The National Commander's Public Relations Award was presented to John Fales, known to thousands as, "Sergeant Shaft," for his relentless and uncompromising pursuit of truth as a professional journalist, his support of American veterans and his unwavering commitment to America. Fales' wry sense of humor, empathy for the underdog, and strong love of country and fellow veterans closely mirror the nature of "Sgt. Shaft's" creator. His weekly column in the Washington Times also appears in the newspaper's national edition.

The American Legion Fourth Estate Award was presented to Madison, Wisconsin Bureau Chief Ben Jones of the Appleton Post-Crescent for a series of articles entitled, "Have We Forgotten: Wisconsin's War Memorials," a moving and informative look at the state's war memorials and the poor upkeep they received over the years. On the day the series debuted, The Post-Crescent announced on its editorial page that it was starting the Save the Doughboy campaign. The paper printed a rolling list of the names of every single donor, regardless of how much they gave to the effort. It then teamed with Post 38 for fund-raising events and activities to raise awareness to the cause. The Post-Crescent's Save the Doughboy effort raised more than $25,000, which was presented to the city to fund restoration of the statue, install lighting and repair a nearby flagpole. Appleton's City Council accepted the gift and voted 16-0 to award a contract to repair the sculpture.

The Future

The National Public Relations Commission continues to explore and engage the communication potential of emerging technologies. In so doing, The American Legion will continue to be the preeminent voice of and for the American veteran in our nation.

***THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE* COMMISSION**
Dennis J. Henkemeyer, Minnesota, Chairman
Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia, Executive Director

The American Legion Magazine sold $9.5 million in advertising in 2006. In only its second year as the advertising representatives for *The American Legion Magazine*, the James G. Elliott Co. has been a solid performer. The firm has increased price-per-page revenue and is on pace to meet its $9 million sales goal for 2006. New advertisers include Glaxo Smith Kline, AARP, Aetna and Sharper Image. Major advertisers include Mercury, Astra Zeneca and Pfizer.

Over the last year, *The American Legion Magazine* has published exclusive articles by Lou Dobbs, MGen Robert Scales, Joel Mowbray, Sen. Tom Coburn, Frank Gaffney, Ambassador Edward Rowny and Georgie Anne Geyer. Editors have traveled to Guantanamo Bay, Normandy Beach and the Katrina-damaged Gulfcoast for firsthand reports. The Magazine for a Strong America has also published exclusive interviews with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Home Depot CEO Bob Nardelli.

Paper prices are 10 percent higher than they were a year ago and are expected to increase again. Postal prices increased 5.5 percent in January and are expected to increase again in April 2007.

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION COMMISSION

K. Robert Lewis, Connecticut, Chairman
Peter S. Gaytan, Maryland, Director

The following report covers the activities of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission and its staff during the program year ending June 30, 2006.

The Eighty-seventh Annual National Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii and the Fall and Spring Meetings of the National Executive Committee approved certain positions expressed in resolutions submitted to those bodies through the Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, respectively. The approved resolutions are set forth as follows:

2005 National Convention, Honolulu, Hawaii

Resolution No. 92: (PI) Support Legislation to Grant Filipino World War II Veterans Equal VA Benefits

Resolution No. 104: (TX) Extension of the Time Limit to Appeal a Board of Veterans' Appeals Decision to the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims

Resolution No. 149: (IL) Increase the Maximum Coverage a Service-Connected Disabled Veteran can Purchase under the Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance Program

National Executive Committee Meeting
October 5-6, 2005

Resolution No. 20: Support of the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes
(Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission)

National Executive Committee Meeting
May 10-11, 2006

Resolution No. 24: Support Legislation to Place Mariner Medal Recipients in Priority Group 3 for VA Health Care
(Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission)

Resolution No. 25: The American Legion Policy to Address the Changing Needs of Women Veterans
(Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission)

Resolution No. 26: The American Legion Position on Attorney Representation Before the Department of Veterans Affairs
(Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission)

Resolution No. 27: National Convention Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Screening Committee
(Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission)

Resolution No. 28: Open-Ended Presumptive Period for Undiagnosed Illnesses for Gulf War Veterans
(Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission)

Resolution No. 29: Scheduling of the National Commander's Annual Congressional Testimony
(Origin: Register Res. 2559 (IN))

Resolution No. 30: Support for Independent Review of Servicemembers Transition Process from the Department of Defense to the Department of Veterans Affairs
(Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission)

Resolution No. 31: Veteran Disability Benefits Commission
(Origin: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission)

National Veterans Affairs And Rehabilitation Commission Meetings

Members of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission held four meetings during the period August 27, 2005, through May 11, 2006.

The VA&R Commission met on August 27, 2005, during the National Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii and a report was subsequently made to the National Executive Committee relative to the Commission's meeting.

A Subcommittee of the Executive Section of the VA&R Commission met at National

Headquarters, October 3-4, 2005, for the purpose of considering those matters, which had previously been referred for study, and to discuss a broad range of other veteran related matters, which included: VA's Budget for Fiscal Years (FY) 2006 and 2007; reports on VA's Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) and the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission (VDBC); VA's consideration to review Post Traumatic Stress Disorder cases; an update on the National Cemetery Administration; a report on The American Legion's involvement in VA Voluntary Service (VAVS); the Commission's discussion about resolutions on site-specific issues; and a briefing on the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes. A report of that meeting was presented to the National Executive Committee on October 5, 2005.

The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission met for the 83rd consecutive year in Washington, DC, on March 1, 2006, in conjunction with the 46th Annual Washington Conference. Commission members received a synopsis of a site visit to the Gulf Coast Region by a member of the System Worth Saving Task Force; reports from the National Cemetery Committee and the Committees on Recommendations, Certificates of Appreciation, and VA Voluntary Service; as well as staff updates regarding issues such as VA's consolidation/centralization efforts involving Benefits Delivery at Discharge, State Benefits Advisors, and the disposition of the Air Force Health Study/Ranch Hand Study. The actions taken by the Commission were reported to the National Executive Committee on May 10, 2006, 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 8-9, 2006, at National Headquarters, Indianapolis, Indiana. Chairman K. Robert Lewis (CT), chaired the Subcommittee meeting and encouraged those present to continue their efforts on behalf of the nation's veterans. The Commission was briefed on the Heroes to Hometowns initiative, and discussed the Lenker Award and Merchant Marine benefits. A report of this meeting was presented to the National Executive Committee on May 10, 2006.

Annual National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference

The 83rd National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference was held February 27, 2006, at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. Participants included members of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, Department and County Service Officers and Rehabilitation Directors, and various National, Department, and Post officials.

Conferees were addressed by National Commander, Thomas L. Bock (CO); Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable R. James Nicholson; the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Dr. Michael J. Kussman, M.D.; the Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals, the Honorable James P. Terry; and the Deputy Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, the Honorable William F. Tuerk. This was followed by comments from Dr. Michael E. Kilpatrick, Deputy Director, Deployment Health Support Directorate; Jack McCoy, Associate Deputy Under Secretary for Policy and Program Management; Lucretia M. McClenney, Director, Center for Minority Veterans; CMDR Dave Julian, USN, Director, Military Severely Injured Center, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense; Diane Heffington, VA Voluntary Service Office, and Robert E. Coy, President, REC Consulting.

Prior to the Conference, for the twenty-fifth 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.

National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Legislative Activities

During the past year the staff of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission was actively involved with legislative issues affecting the programs and services administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Activities included drafting legislation pursuant to the mandates adopted by the National Convention and National Executive Committee and presentation of such testimony at hearings scheduled before various Congressional Committees. Active liaison is maintained with the staff of The

American Legion Legislative Commission, officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Congressional Committee staff and with elected Congressional officials.

The following is a synopsis of the Congressional hearings held from August 31, 2005 to July 31, 2006, on matters pertaining to the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

1. On September 20, 2005, National Commander Thomas L. Bock testified before a joint session of the Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees on the Legislative Priorities of The American Legion.
2. On September 28, 2005 the Director submitted testimony for the record to the House Veterans Affairs Committee on the status of seamless transition between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.
3. On October 20, 2005 the Director submitted testimony for the record before the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on; Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs on A Report of The Department of Veterans' Affairs Office of Inspector General on Consistency and Variances in Disability Compensation Decision Making.
4. On December 12, 2005 the former Assistant Director for Policy and Research, testified before the House Oversight Committee on the Challenges and Opportunities facing Disability Claims Processing in 2006.
5. On February 2, 2006 National Commander Thomas L. Bock testified before the Senate Budget Committee on the Fiscal Year 2007 Views and Estimates.
   Also on February 2, 2006 the Deputy Director for Economics testified before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on the Jobs for Veterans Act.
6. On February 8, 2006 the Director of the Legislative Division testified before the House Veterans Affairs Committee on The Fiscal Year 2007 Budgetary Recommendations of The American Legion for the Department of Veterans Affairs.
   On the same day testimony was also submitted for the record by the Director of the Legislative Division on the Presidents Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2007 for Veterans Programs.
7. On February 14, 2006 the Director and the Deputy Director for Economics testified before the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity on VA's Fiscal Year 2007 Budget Request for the Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and Loan Guaranty Programs.
8. Also on February 14, 2006 the Deputy Director for Health Care testified before the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on the President's Budget Request for the Veterans Health Administration.On February 15, 2006 the Director of the Legislative Division testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee on The 2007 Legislative Priorities of The American Legion for the Department of Veterans Affairs.
9. On February 16, 2006 the Director testified before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on the Proposed Fiscal Year 2007 Budget for Department of Veterans Affairs Programs.
10. On March 8, 2006 the Deputy Director for Health Care submitted testimony for the record before the House Veterans Affairs Committee on Improving Access to Quality Care for Veterans.
11. On March 9, 2006 the Deputy Director for Economics submitted testimony for the record before the House Veterans Affairs Committee on VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service and The Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service.
12. On March 15, 2006 the Deputy Director for Health Care testified before the House Veterans Affairs Committee on Improving and Enhancing Access to Quality Care for Our Nation's Veterans Through VISN-WIDE Care Coordination Demonstrations.
    Also on March 15, 2006 the Deputy Director for Economics submitted testimony for the record before House Veterans Affairs Committee on Enhancements to the Montgomery GI Bill.

13. On March 29, 2006 the Deputy Director for Health Care testified before the House Veterans Affairs Committee on Enhanced Access to the Department of Veterans Affairs Health System.
14. On March 30, 2006 the Deputy Director for Economics testified before the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, The Federal Workforce and The District of Columbia Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs on Veterans' Preference within The Federal Government
15. On April 6, 2006 the Director submitted testimony for the record before House Veterans Affairs Committee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs on: H.R. 23, Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2005; H.R. 601, Native American Cemetery Act of 2005; H.R. 2188; H.R. 2963, Dr. James Allen Disabled Veterans Equity Act; H.R. 4843, Veterans Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2006; H.R. 5037, Respect for Fallen Heroes Act; and a Draft Bill.
16. On April 7, 2006 the Director testified before the House Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, Military Quality of Life and Related Agencies Committee on Appropriations.
17. On April 27, 2006 the Deputy Director for Economics testified before the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.
18. On May 11, 2006 the Director testified before the House Veterans Affairs Committee on Right-Sizing the Department of Veterans Affairs Infrastructure.
    Also on May 11, 2006 the Assistant Director for the Legislative Division testified before the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs on Healthcare Legislative Initiatives to include: S. 2634, Repeal term limits and simplify appointments for the offices of Under Secretary for Health and Under Secretary for Benefits; S. 2736, Amputation and Prosthetics Rehabilitation Centers for Veterans; S. 2433, Rural Veterans Care Act of 2006; S.1537, Parkinson's Disease Research and Education Clinical Centers Veterans Long Term Care Security Act; S.1731, Jack C. Montgomery Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center; S.2500, Healing the Invisible Wounds Act of 2006; and S. 2753, Caregiver Expansion.
19. On June 8, 2006 the Director submitted testimony for the record to the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs on pending legislation to include: S. 2562, the "Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2006"; S. 2694, the "Veterans' Choice of Representation Act of 2006"; S. 2659, the "Native American Veterans Cemetery Act of 2006"; S. 2416, the "Veterans Employment and Training Act of 2006"; S. 2121, the "Veterans Housing Fairness Act of 2005"; and a Draft Bill to Amend Title 38, United States Code, To Provide for Accelerated Payment of Survivors and Dependants Educational Assistance for Certain Programs of Education, and for Other Purposes."
20. On July 18, 2006 the Director testified before the House Veterans Affairs Committee on the Draft Legislation to Better Protect the Sensitive Information of Veterans.

Informational Services

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 American Legion Guide: Women Veterans—Identifying Risks, Services, and Prevention.* This handbook is in high demand among our women veterans. *The Sourcebook for Military Personnel and Veterans* is also an extremely helpful publication. Another publication available upon request is: *What To Do Before A Veteran Dies.* The latest popular pamphlet is, *Welcome Home—Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom Veterans—Know Your Benefits.* Also, hot off the press is *When They Come Home—A Post Guide to Establishing A Successful "Heroes To Hometown" Program* in your Community. These handbooks and pamphlets are used as handouts at seminars,

conferences, and Department Conventions. Supplies of these and other VA&R pamphlets are maintained and distributed upon request.

2005 Report on the National Cemetery Administration

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) is charged with meeting the interment needs of the nation's veterans and their dependents. In 1862, Congress established 14 U.S. cemeteries for the burial of Union war dead. In 1973, with the transfer of jurisdiction of over 81 U.S. Army cemeteries to the Veterans Administration, the National Cemetery System (NCS) was created which then operated 21 hospital cemeteries. In 1998 the National Cemetery System was renamed the National Cemetery Administration.

VA maintains 123 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico, as well as 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites. More than 3 million Americans, including veterans of every war and conflict, from the Revolutionary War to the current Global War on Terrorism, are buried in VA's national cemeteries.

With the opening of the Idaho State Veterans Cemetery in 2005, there is now an operational national or state veterans cemetery in every state of the union as well as Puerto Rico and Guam.

The NCA requested $160 million and 1,589 FTE for Operations and Maintenance in 2007. This will provide a net increase of $11 million in budget authority and 23 FTE over the 2006 current estimate level. Workloads continue to grow at existing cemeteries, and additional funding for 23 FTE, contract maintenance, and supplies is essential to maintain existing service levels, which is NCA's highest priority.

The NCA also requested $18.7 million for minor construction costs for FY 2007.

The Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act, Public Law 106-117, directed VA to contract for an independent demographic study to identify those areas of the country where veterans will not have reasonable access to a burial option in a national or state veterans cemetery, and the number of additional cemeteries required through 2020.

From 2005 through 2009, NCA will establish 11 new national cemeteries. The development of these cemeteries is consistent with current policy to locate national cemeteries in areas with the largest concentration of veterans. Each location will provide a burial option to at least 170,000 veterans not currently served.

In 2005 the National Cemetery of the Alleghenies began interment operations, providing service to veterans in the area of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 2006 new national cemeteries will begin providing service to veterans in the areas of Detroit, Michigan; Atlanta, Georgia; and South Florida. A new national cemetery to provide service to veterans in the area of Sacramento, California, will begin interment operations in 2007. These five new cemeteries will provide reasonable access to a burial option to 2 million veterans.

As directed by the National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003, Public Law 108-109, action is underway to establish six new national cemeteries to serve veterans in the areas of Bakersfield, California; Birmingham, Alabama; Columbia/ Greenville, South Carolina; Jacksonville, Florida; Sarasota, Florida; and Southeastern Pennsylvania. These cemeteries are expected to begin operations in 2009 and will provide service to about 1 million veterans.

NCA FY 2006 Capital Construction Request

State Cemetery Grants	$32.0 million
Minor Construction	$25.0 million
Major Construction	$53.4 million

State Cemetery Grants Program

In addition to building, operating, and maintaining national cemeteries, VA also administers the State Cemetery Grants program, which provides grants to states for up to 100 percent of the cost of establishing, expanding, or improving state veterans cemeteries. Increasing the availability of state veterans cemeteries is a means to provide a burial option to those veterans who may not have reasonable access to a national cemetery. In 2005, 61 operating state veterans cemeteries performed more than 20,000 interments of

veterans and eligible family members, and grants were obligated to establish, expand, or improve state veterans cemeteries in 12 states.

NCA Performance Ratings

In a report released in 2005, VA's national cemeteries received the highest rating ever achieved by a public or private organization in a nationwide customer satisfaction survey. The survey was the 2004 American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). VA scored a rating of 95 out of a possible 100 points. This is two points higher than the last survey in 2001, when VA's national cemeteries also ranked number one in customer satisfaction. In addition on ACSI's index for "user trust," VA achieved a rating of 97 out of a possible 100 points. This indicates that respondents are exceptionally willing to say positive things about VA's national cemeteries.

Headstones and Markers

VA furnishes headstones and markers for the graves of eligible persons in national, state, other public, and private cemeteries. VA also furnishes memorial headstones and markers bearing the inscription "In Memory of" to memorialize eligible veterans whose remains were not recovered or identified, were buried at sea, donated to science, or cremated and scattered. VA furnishes headstones and markers for national cemeteries administered by the Department of the Army and the Department of the Interior, as well as for state veterans cemeteries, and contracts for all columbaria niche inscriptions at Arlington National Cemetery. In 2005 VA processed more than 363,000 applications for headstones and markers for placement in national, state, other public, or private cemeteries. Since 1973 VA has furnished nearly 9 million headstones and markers for the graves of veterans and other eligible persons.

Presidential Memorial Certificate

A Presidential Memorial Certificate is an engraved paper certificate, bearing the signature of the current President, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans. Family members and loved ones may request a certificate, and more than one may be provided.

Only proof of eligible service is required. In 1962, President John F. Kennedy began the practice of issuing Presidential Memorial Certificates (PMCs) as a way for the President of the United States, on behalf of all Americans, to express appreciation for the service and sacrifice of honorably discharged deceased veterans. All subsequent Presidents have continued the program. Five million PMCs have been issued since the National Cemetery Administration became responsible for administration of the program in 1987. In fiscal year 2005 VA provided more than 487,800 PMCs to the loved ones of deceased veterans.

National Shrine Commitment

Maintaining cemeteries as National Shrines is one of NCA's top priorities. This Commitment includes the establishment of standards of appearance for national cemeteries that are equal to the standards of the finest cemeteries in the world and involves raising, realigning and cleaning headstones and markers to renovate gravesites. Delivered to Congress in 2002, the National Shrine Commitment Report identified 928 projects for repairs, alterations and improvements. The rows of pristine, white headstones that are set at the proper height and correct alignment provide the vista that is the hallmark of many VA national cemeteries. In 2005 VA collected data that showed that 70 percent of headstones and/or markers in national cemeteries are at the proper height and alignment; 72 percent of headstones, markers, and niche covers are clean and free of debris or objectionable accumulations; and 84 percent of gravesites in national cemeteries had grades that were level and blended with adjacent grade levels. In 2005 National Shrine Commitment projects were initiated at 13 national cemeteries. These projects will raise, realign, and clean more than 110,000 headstones and markers and renovate gravesites in nearly 100 acres. While attending to these highly visible aspects of our national shrines, VA also maintained roads, drives, parking lots, and walks; painted buildings, fences, and gates; and repaired roofs, walls, and irrigation and electrical systems.

Annual Report of the Medical Consultant

Dr. Ann Marie Gordon joined the Staff as the Senior Medical Consultant on September 18, 2000. She is a practicing physician with experience in internal medicine and occupational medicine.

The Medical Consultant acts as a source of medical and technical knowledge to the Appeals Representatives at the Appeals and Special Claims Unit at the Board of Veterans' Appeals and the Claims Representatives at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Regional Office, Washington, D.C. These representatives submit inquiries to the Medical Consultant with the VA claims folder for review and evaluation as to the appropriate course of action in presenting the case to the either the Board of Veterans Appeals, the VA Regional Office, or the Director, Compensation and Pension Service. The Medical Consultant after reviewing and evaluating the case may (1) discuss the case with the representative and or (2) prepare a statement explaining the case including providing medical references and a medical opinion relative to the issues.

The American Legion Service Officers in the field also submit difficult cases for review and evaluation to the Medical Consultant. This is accomplished by requesting that the case be called-in for an administrative review or by submitting copies of appropriate portions of the VA claims folder. The Medical Consultant responds directly to the Service Officers.

The Medical Consultant is an advisor to the Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission on Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical matters, as well as, the attorneys at NVSLP. Each consultation is usually on an informal basis and discussed among several key VA&R staff members.

A laptop personal computer has been purchased for the Medical Consultant's use to enable her to keep in touch with daily operations and to present lectures at various schools of training.

During the past year, the Medical Consultant has discussed medical questions with individual Appeals Representatives and Claims Representatives for about 198 cases. She has reviewed 51 cases and submitted written reports on 32 of these cases. The research and medical opinions provided by the Medical Consultant have resulted in numerous grants and remands for additional development.

Additionally, the Medical Consultant has conducted six medical training sessions for the Appeals and Special Claims Unit staff this year and has also conducted presentations at the Washington and Indianapolis Department Service Officer Schools and the Department of New York's Service Officer training.

Government Life Insurance Activities

The United States Government, acting through the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), directly administers four life insurance programs for veterans of the World War I, World War II and Korean War periods, as well as two special on-going programs for veterans in certain service-connected disabled categories. These programs are administered under the titles of United States Government Life Insurance (USGLI) for World War I era veterans, National Service Life Insurance (NSLI) for World War II era, Korean War era and Service-Disabled veterans (SDVI—Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance), and Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) for totally disabled veterans who are approved grants for specially adapted housing purposes by the DVA. The USGLI and NSLI programs currently have some 1.58 million policies in force as of May 31, 2006, with a combined life insurance coverage of some $ 11 billion dollars. Dividend distributions for participating policies in these programs amount to approximately $400 million dollars annually. NSLI processes some 100,000-120,000 claims annually in addition to a very high number of other policy transactions as the program's policies are individual in nature and are composed of diverse plans of insurance. The VMLI program insures some 2500 veterans with approximately $166 million dollars of coverage in force. Currently these programs are operated out of the VA Insurance Center in Philadelphia, PA. Recently, the National Association of Insurance Commissioners approved the use of the 2001 Commissioners Standard Mortality Table as the new mortality standard for life insurance. Since the law allows the VA Secretary to set the mortality table for the VMLI

program, VA has determined it will begin using the 2001 table, rather than the 1958 table currently in use, effective October 1, 2006. This is expected to reduce premiums for the program an average of 37 percent.

In addition to the life insurance programs directly operated by the DVA, the Department also has supervisory authority and responsibility over two other major government life insurance program issues. These are the 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), spouses and dependents, and to separated veterans and to retired and separated reservists (VGLI). The SGLI and VGLI programs are administered by the Prudential Insurance Company at a center in Newark, NJ (the Office of Servicemembers Group Life Insurance - OSGLI), with all administration and other program expenses being paid by the policyholders from a portion of their insurance premiums, save for the extra hazard mortality experience of wartime periods when general tax revenues take over. These insurance issues are solely group Term insurance without dividends, disability benefits, or diverse types of permanent plans with equity values such as the individual policy contracts contained in the DVA's NSLI program. On March 31, 2006 SGLI provided some 5.46 million active duty and reserve personnel, spouses and dependents with more than $ 1. 05 trillion dollars of life insurance coverage, while VGLI covered some 418,500 veterans with insurance in excess of $ 48 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 2500-3500 death claims annually with minimal other transactions due to the very limited nature of the coverage as group term insurance only. Currently, claims arising from military operations in the Middle East and Central Asia are processed in less than two business days from the time the last required document is received at OSGLI. In 1992 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. The amount of VGLI a veteran can hold cannot be in excess of the amount of SGLI he or she held in service. In 1997 Retired Reservists, instead of being insured under the SGLI program until age 60 or the receipt of their first retired pay check, were merged into the VGLI program to allow them the option of retaining their coverage as long as desired. Reservists leaving reserve service without the amount of time needed for full retirement may 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. Effective April 1, 2001 those entering active duty were automatically covered for a full $250,000 under SGLI as authorized by Public Law 106-419, and members of the Individual Ready Reserve who have volunteered for assignment to a mobilization category were also made eligible for SGLI coverage under that law. . In addition, Public Law 107-14 authorized other program enhancements to the SGLI program, effective November 1, 2001, which allows up to $100,000 in spousal coverage on a paid premium basis, and provides $10,000 free life insurance coverage for a member's children. These dependent coverages still cannot, at present, be carried over into the VGLI program and cannot be doubled in the case of both parents being in service. However, while the member's SGLI is in force, spousal coverage can be converted to a private plan of insurance with a participating commercial company upon written application in the same manner as a VGLI policy may be so converted. The American Legion insurance unit presented supporting testimony on these legislative changes as they improved greatly the range of financial options available to veterans in these programs, not only at the time of their separation from service, but in later years as their life situation changed as well, and as they permit the SGLI and VGLI programs to more effectively compete with private insurers who have the privilege of excluding applicants as desired and who may, in the case of certain military associations, be co-located on military bases.

New SGLI legislation was enacted in May 2005. Public Law (PL) 109-13, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and

Tsunami Relief of 2005, was signed into law May 11, 2005 and contained provisions for increases in the Dept. of Defense (DOD) Death Gratuity, for increases in the amount of maximum coverage under the Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program, and for a new SGLI group policy rider for Traumatic Injury Protection. However, the Act stipulated the increases for Death Gratuities and SGLI coverage to become effective on September 1, 2005, and to terminate on September 30, 2005 in accordance with the federal fiscal year. The SGLI Traumatic Injury Protection Rider became effective December 1, 2005 and the Act did not stipulate a cancellation date for this benefit. Effective September 1, 2005 SGLI coverage was automatically increased to $400,000 from the current $250,000, and was the new maximum amount of SGLI coverage permitted for the period covered by the Act. Servicemembers electing lesser amounts must do so in $50,000 increments. Spousal and dependent coverage was not impacted by the legislation. The Act specified certain spousal and beneficiary notification requirements for members changing beneficiary designations or electing lesser amounts of coverage. The Act also provided for the group traumatic injury insurance rider to be attached to the group coverage provided under SGLI, the premium cost of which to the insured was to be $1.00 per month. This injury protection ranges from $25,000 to $100,000 in accordance with a disability schedule which has been published and which is composed of a list of physical traumatic injuries involving significant loss of use of physical or mental abilities caused by such injury. Coverage under this rider began December 1, 2005. A retroactive provision for qualifying injuries from October 7, 2001 to the effective date was also provided for. The Secretary of Defense certifies to the SGLI center the individuals qualifying for retroactive payments. Servicemembers must be covered by SGLI to have this rider, and for members insured under SGLI the rider is mandatory. Rider coverage ceases on midnight on the date the member separates from the uniformed service. No retroactive period was contained in the legislation for the $150,000 SGLI increase, but this was addressed through the Dept. of Defense's Death Gratuity benefit instead, as insurance underwriting requirements did not permit new coverage increases to be applied retroactively.

On September 30, 2005 the SGLI enhancement Act of 2005 (PL 109-80) was enacted which made permanent the increase in the maximum allowable SGLI regular coverage from $250,000 to $400,000, and which included various spousal notification requirements for beneficiary changes. This last requirement, for an insured married at the time of making a beneficiary election, that the Secretary of Defense notify the insured's spouse should the insured at any time take action to either reduce the amount of coverage or to name a beneficiary other than the insured's spouse, did not meet with the support of The American Legion. It has historically been the belief of The American Legion that this type of fundamental insurance benefit is a special contract between the service member (or veteran in the case of veteran's coverage) and the federal government, and is a matter personal and sacrosanct to those who serve (or have served) the nation in uniform, and that an insured's beneficiary information should not be released to third parties without the consent of the insured. Such spousal notification, however, does not affect a member's right to elect or change his/her beneficiary designation or amount of SGLI coverage at any time.

Further recent legislative changes in the SGLI program included PL 109-163, enacted January 6, 2006, which authorized the payment of an allowance to service members serving in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom for an amount equal to the premium of $150,000 of SGLI coverage, affording them $150,000 of free SGLI coverage provided they did not decline such coverage, and PL 109-233 enacted June 15, 2006. PL 109-233 extends the duration of SGLI coverage from one to two years for service members who are totally disabled upon the date of their separation from active duty or reserve status, effective upon the date of enactment for members released before October 1, 2011. For members released on or after October 1, 2011 this period is reduced to eighteen months. Service members who were released within one year of the enactment date are also eligible for this extended coverage period. This legislation also provided the Secretary of Veterans Affairs the sole authority to determine the period of time between the date of a traumatic event and the date a member suffers a qualifying loss for all losses under the Traumatic SGLI (TSGLI) program. The law also removed the previously existing statutory requirement that quadriplegia, paraplegia, or hemiplegia occur within

one year of the traumatic injury. As of June 2006 the VA intends to develop regulations increasing this period to two years.

The American Legion's National VA&R insurance unit at the Philadelphia, PA center had initiated and worked with the DVA insurance management staff to provide added protection to those veterans leaving service in a totally disabled and life threatening status, to attempt to ensure these veterans do not lose coverage (as happens periodically) due to misunderstanding certain requirements of the SGLI to VGLI transfer system stemming from inconsistencies in the manner these are explained to them as they out process from various military facilities, or failing to respond in a timely manner to initial insurance invitations and premium billings, etc. Recommended safeguards included such items as automatic coverage and premium deduction start-ups from military retired pay or DVA disability compensation, policy liens for past due premiums, and closer contacts between the SGLI/VGLI administering office and veterans in this category. DVA insurance management completed a staff study through the military service departments, the Defense Manpower Data Center, DPC Austin and OSGLI on the methods such individuals can be identified, and has created an Outreach program to contact by telephone and with additional letters veterans in this class, and advise them of their VGLI options as needed. Currently, separating service members who have been discharged on disability retirement at a rating of 50% to 100% by their branch of service are contacted. Of those contacted by phone, some 83% apply for either the SGLI Disability Extension (free coverage for one year) or VGLI coverages. An on-line SGLI/VGLI manual is available to all military out processing centers to ensure these have immediate access to correct information concerning the requirements for veterans being separated to convert their in-service SGLI coverage to VGLI coverage, and in February 2004 a detailed Insurance Needs Calculator was added to the VA Insurance website, for veterans to use to assess their life insurance needs and compare VGLI coverage to other insurance options. The Calculator includes VA, Social Security and military benefits in the final assessment. VGLI policyholders also have the ability now to access their policy information through the VA website as well, using passwords and policy information. In 2002-2003 both VGLI and SGLI premiums were reduced; VGLI an overall 40% from 1998 levels, and a 19% reduction for SGLI premiums effective July 1, 2003 with a simultaneous reduction in SGLI spousal rates as well. Effective July 1, 2006, however, a slight increase in SGLI basic premium rates from the previous rate of 6.5 cents per month per $1,000 of coverage to one of 7 cents per month per $1,000 will take place due to program costs. Also effective July 1, 2006 premium rates for dependent SGLI coverage will be reduced for all age groups by an average of 10%, reflecting a better than forecasted claims experience in the Family SGLI program portion. For all programs the Department of Veterans Affairs administers and/or supervises some 7.45 million life insurance policies for military personnel, spouses, dependents and veterans, with a total in-force coverage of over $ 1.1 trillion dollars.

In the SDVI program many disabled veterans annually continue to take advantage of the new supplemental Service-Disabled insurance provided in the legislative changes of 1992, whereby an additional $20,000 of coverage may be purchased by those veterans having a basic Service-Disabled policy and who become totally disabled before age 65. The American Legion VA&R office continues to maintain a special notification system for those veterans who choose The American Legion as their representative and who are applying for Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (SDVI) coverage to ensure they are informed as early as possible of these additional benefits. This is particularly needful as the current DVA system may, in certain areas such as during the time period while a disability compensation claim is awaiting adjudication in a VA Regional Office, be faulty in communicating information on benefits such as disability premium waivers and supplemental coverage to veterans who may qualify for it and who may very well be in life threatening (and therefore time constrained) conditions. A special activity was initiated in this benefit area in 2004 and continued into 2005 by the VA Compensation and Pension Service to address concerns that many service-connected disabled veterans were not being informed enough on the program. A mailing on SDVI notification was included with the annual cost-of-living increase letters, reaching approximately 2.3 million veterans, resulting in many thousands of new applications being received, and continuing

to be received, from both veterans directly and through DSO/VSO offices nationwide. To assist in this project, SDVI applications have also been made available on the VA's Insurance website through an Autoform program whereby applications can be made, saved, printed for mailing or submitted electronically as desired. This new tool became active March 5, 2004.

The DVA Insurance Center continues their on-going effort to provide better service and program enhancements to their veteran policyholders by periodically updating their computer and communication systems, both as part of the overall DVA area networks and through the Internet, and placing ever more records and transaction activities, previously done on paper, into their on-line computer systems. Beginning in Summer 2001, the DVA Insurance Center accelerated a planned program of transforming their insurance operation into a wholly computerized system no longer utilizing paper insurance files, but using imaging technology instead to replace paper files with electronic ones. The impetus for this was to create space in the Philadelphia Regional Office and Insurance Center for one of the three regional Pension Centers which have been organized to assist in the reduction of the national backlog in compensation and pension cases. The new insurance system, known as VICTARS (Veterans Insurance Claims Tracking and Response System) permits on-screen display of all file documents that would previously have been maintained in a paper insurance folder, and gives VA insurance specialists the ability to input and process claims, transactions and responses to inquiries with far greater speed than any earlier system used to date, and to maintain a full history of such in the policyholder's new electronic file. In connection with this new software package, VA employees have been provided with large screen display monitors and updated capacity high speed computers required by the new programming. Currently, over 6 million images are available to insurance specialists via their desktop computers. All previous paper insurance folders (over 2.5 million) have now been retired to a nearby Federal Records Center, but are still available for recall as may be needed on certain cases. This accomplishment has resulted in savings of some $1 million annually. Insurance services are further augmented by automated assistance and call routing facilities added to a toll free number (an expansion of the VA's Insurance Center telephone unit has been completed to handle an increasing work load), by acceptance of faxed correspondence, claims, and transaction requests, through responding to inquiries and transaction requests received at the VA insurance Internet address (http://www.insurance.va.gov/), and by providing comprehensive insurance information through links to the VA's Home Page and VA's insurance Home Page. Additionally, in accordance with the federal initiative to have all or most government disbursements done by Direct Deposit (Electronic Transfer of Funds) the VA Insurance Center has completed actions for the direct deposit of monthly insurance installment awards to beneficiaries and those policyholders receiving monthly annuities. All monthly insurance award/annuity payments are by electronic transfer of funds to these insurance payees unless otherwise requested by the payee. In this vein, all policy loan, dividend refund and cash surrender payments are also sent to an insured's bank account if VA benefits are or were on direct deposit, or if an insured is paying premiums by automatic deduction from a checking account, unless requested otherwise. New settlement claim forms for death settlements will contain blocks for beneficiaries to include bank information should they wish insurance settlement checks transferred to them electronically. As with the VGLI program, NSLI policyholders may now also access their account information through the VA's insurance website with a PIN number, and perform certain transactions such as policy loan applications. For VMLI there is now also an on-line Insurance Needs Calculator, similar to that for VGLI, available as well.

Several insurance initiatives are now pending in Congress for 2006. H.R. 2747 seeks to increase the coverage maximum under the Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance from its current level of $90,000 to one of $200,000, to reflect a more realistic appraisal of housing costs in the nation, and Congress is also considering a provision to include stillborn births coverage under the SGLI Family program. The American Legion has supported both of these proposals.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Service Units:
DVA Insurance Center at Philadelphia, PA and St. Paul, MN DMC Center

The American Legion Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission Staff at Philadelphia consists of a Chief of Insurance Activities/Insurance Representative and one Secretary. An associated office at the St. Paul center has one Supervisor/VA&R Representative and one Secretary.

The Chief of Insurance Activities and the Insurance Representative must have a thorough knowledge of government life insurance laws, regulations, and transaction and adjudication procedures, and be able to analyze them correctly in order to properly represent insured veterans and their beneficiaries. The Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Director and other interested personnel are kept informed on policy matters, changes in DVA administrative procedures and all related areas to include new legislative initiatives. NSLI re-open periods for service-disabled and non-service disabled veterans with increased face value coverages continues to be an American Legion legislative effort. In connection with the milestone change in insurance operations in Philadelphia to a paperless office as described earlier, The American Legion VA&R unit there has obtained new computer equipment equivalent in capacity to that used in the DVA Insurance Center, and which enabled switchover to the VA's change to the Windows 2000 operating system. Coordination has also been effected with the DVA Pension Center management in both Philadelphia and St. Paul for the creation of a system whereby the national VA&R staff personnel can process pension inquiries from Department and Veterans Service Officers as they may require.

Daily operations involve a full range of insurance services to include the representation of insured veterans and their beneficiaries, the review of insurance case files and supporting evidence and Claims files as required, the furnishing of status reports and account assistance to insureds, beneficiaries, accredited field representatives and DVA adjudicative and accounts personnel, close liaison with Department Service Officers and other field personnel to ensure prompt and complete service, and the input to, review of, and where necessary the correction of DVA actions and records both on cases involving disability and death claims, and on those involving any of a wide variety of insurance accounting and financial transactions that occur on active and matured accounts. General insurance information and guidance is provided to field service officers across the United States, along with assistance in the preparation of insurance appeals and claims submittals. Coordination with DVA executive and program management personnel is conducted on both individual cases and broad policy/administrative matters. A telephone fax capability added to the Philadelphia office has greatly expedited claims processing by enabling rapid receipt of documents needed to complete transactions and claims that would otherwise be significantly delayed due to mailing times, particularly in emergency cases. The Philadelphia office has been heavily involved in the large increase in SDVI applications and related appeals cases for 2004 and 2005, occasioned by the mass mailing of SDVI notifications to virtually all service-connected veterans mentioned earlier. Information and staff analysis for the recent major legislative benefit increases under PL 109-13 and PL 109-80 was provided in 2005-2006, along with staff analysis and VA coordination for insurance legislation involving the enhancements to the SGLI program, and American Legion Resolutions for an increase in the face value maximum coverage of SDVI from the current $10,000 to a maximum of $15,000 to $20,000, a re-opened period for insurance to cover both service-connected and non-service connected veterans, and an extension of the time limit for SDVI application from the present two years from date of last new service-connected Rating to five years, plus the inclusion of Ratings for increases in that eligibility criteria as well. Coordination was, and continues to be, effected with the VA Deputy Assistant Director for Insurance for such legislative increases, and suggestions that were presented to VA in 2005 for the provision of a continually updated news report addition on the VA website for such changes have been implemented.

The Philadelphia office is provided with newer computer systems for both internal operations and to interface with the DVA networks and the Internet. These are operational and have Internet (E-Mail at AMGLAVE@VBA.VA.GOV) and VA Benefits Delivery Network access. The St. Paul office provides similar operations, staff representation and nationwide veteran's service in the field of DVA Debt Management operations (The

DVA's Debt Management Center is located at the VA St. Paul center), which now comprise its main mission as transfer of all insurance accounts to Philadelphia has been completed, and in casework involving the VA Pension Center also located at the St. Paul facility.

For the period July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006 the following activities of The American Legion's Philadelphia and St. Paul offices were reported:

Insurance & Debt Management

Letters Received	8,069
Letters Written	7,960
Disability Insurance Claims	1,730
Death Insurance Claims	2,755
Insurance Folders Reviewed	3,737
In-Force Insurance Policy Accounts Reviewed	4,931
Telephone Contacts	6,048
Personal Contacts	3,826
Submittal Memorandums & Reports	3,367
DVA Case Responses Processed: Insurance and Debt Management Cases	10,736
*Live Claims, Evidence and Other Submittals Presented	12,798

**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 general inquiries, and debt management case supporting documents.*

Debt Management/St. Paul Pension Center:
(DMC = Debt Management Center)

DMC Original Claims	2,056
DMC Case Audits	3,194
DMC Debt Waiver Cases	3,086
Pension Center Inquiries/Transactions	2,833
Pension Center VSO Responses Processed	51,255

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 seventeen Appeals Representatives.

Within the Table of Organization, the Deputy Director for Claims Service is responsible for the activities of the Board of Veterans' Appeals Unit, the Military Review Board Unit, Appeals Management Center and Washington Regional Office staff.

Cases at the Board of Veterans' Appeals Unit are reviewed and written briefs are submitted on the appellant's behalf or a personal hearing is conducted before a Veterans Law Judge of the Board of Veterans' Appeals with the appellant. The Board of Veterans' Appeals Unit consists of an Office Manager, a Senior Medical Consultant, three secretaries, and thirteen Appeals Representatives. 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. This intense veterans law training program provides hands-on education for interested service officers.

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 (WRO). The WRO's jurisdiction is currently limited to only those residing within the city limits of the District of Columbia. In addition to our two representatives at the WRO, an additional appeals representative works exclusively on remands that are processed at the Appeals Management Center located at the WRO.

The Military Review Boards Unit reviews records prepares written briefs and also 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 to this unit.

Board of Veterans Appeals

This report reflects the activities of The American Legion's Board of Appeals and Special Claims Unit (Appeals Unit) for the period July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2006. The Office Manager of the Appeals Unit during the first half of this period was Derek Davey until his resignation in November 2005. Samuel Gilmore, Jr. assumed the position of Office Manager on January 30, 2006.

During the twelve months, the Appeals Representatives reviewed a total of 6,131 cases. Included in the above total were 178 completed personal hearings in Washington, DC with American Legion Appeals Representatives' advocacy.

During this reporting period, the Board of Veterans' Appeals rendered a total of 34,182 decisions, which included 7,307 (21.3%) with American Legion representation. These decisions consisted of 1,339 (21.8%) approvals, 2,842 (40.5%) remands, 2,446 (39.8%) denials, and 139 (2%) others. The last category includes administrative withdrawals, vacated cases, deaths, and dismissals. The above figures represent a 2.2% increase in appeal approvals, a 13.9% decrease in remands and a 4.6% increase in denials over the previous 12 month period.

The Special Claims Service of the Unit reviewed and disposed of 6 cases involving requests by Department Service Officers of The American Legion in obtaining Administrative Review by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Central Office, Compensation and Pension Service.

The Board of Veterans Appeals (Board) in conjunction with the VA Central Office has placed increased emphasis in correction of Duty to Notify and Duty to Assist provisions, inclusive of adequacy of VA examinations (Compensation and Pension examinations). As of June 30, 2006, there was 2,408 American Legion represented cases in the Appeals Management Center (AMC) system, inclusive of AMC Resource Centers in Huntington and Cleveland. These cases have priority in adjudication. The original appeals backlog at the Board is such that currently appeals with docket dates of approximately September 2004 are being adjudicated. Our production emphasis is necessitated to Board and Court remands primarily, with completion of earlier dated original appeals as able. At the beginning of July 2005, The American Legion Appeals Unit production trend was 3 original appeals Informal Brief Presentations (IHP) to one remand case. At the end of June 2006, the trend was 9 remand IHPs to one original case.

Military Review Boards Unit

Title 10, United States Code, sections 1552 and 1554, provide statutory authority for the existence and operation of the Military Discharge Review Boards and the Boards for Correction of Military Records.

During the period 1 July 2005 through 30 June 2006 the staff of the Military Review Boards Unit provided advise, assistance, representation and other services to applicants and petitioners seeking consideration by the Department of Defense review and correction boards in more than 1500 instances. These involved such issues as upgrade of character of service, change of narrative reason for discharge, entitlement or amendment of physical disability severance or retirement, issuance or reissuance of military awards or decorations and other corrections to military records. Of these actions, 38 personal hearings were held and documentary review briefs were submitted in 420 cases. The following is a breakdown of the actions by the respective service boards.

Boards for Correction of Military Records

	Presented	Allowed	Percentage
U.S. Air Force	26	4	15
U.S. Army	106	21	20
U.S. Navy	87	5	6
U.S. Coast Guard	0	0	0

Military Discharge Review Boards

	Presented	Allowed	Percentage
U.S. Air Force	29	4	14
U.S. Army	67	34	51
U.S. Navy	103	7	7
U.S. Coast Guard	2	0	0

The various boards are having continuing success in their efforts to reduce the processing time for an individual's application. This action has been in response the increased Congressional oversight and concern regarding the board's timeliness of review, questions of independence from active components and a lack of satisfaction by many applicants. The following are current projected timeframes. All of the boards are exceeding mandated requirements.

Air Force Discharge Review Board
documentary review ..... 10-12 months
hearing review—Washington, DC ..... 10-12 months
hearing review—travel panel ..... 12-18 months
Air Force Correction Board
documentary review ..... 11-12 months
Army Discharge Review Board
documentary review ..... 8-10 months
hearing review—Washington, DC ..... 8-10 months
hearing review—travel panel ..... 12-18 months
Army Correction Board
documentary review ..... 10-12 months
Navy / Marine Corps Discharge Review Board
documentary review ..... 11-12 months
hearing review—Washington, DC ..... 10-12 months
Navy/Marine Corps Correction Board
documentary review ..... 11-12 months
DHS Coast Guard Discharge Review Board
documentary review ..... 10-12 months
hearing review—Washington, DC ..... 10-12 months
DHS Coast Guard Correction Board
documentary review ..... 10-12 months

The Military Review Board Unit staff also produces and supplies training materials for our service officers and instructional guides for our applicants.

Staff Workload

Part of the overall activity of the various offices of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission is reflected in the annual volume of incoming and outgoing correspondence. During this period, tens of thousands of letters, E-mails and Faxes were received from claimants, service officers, and VA officials. Correspondence received by the VA Insurance Activities Units in Philadelphia, PA and St. Paul, MN, was in excess of 8,000 and outgoing correspondence exceeded 7,900 pieces, with over 10,700 casework responses to DSOs/VSOs processed for Insurance (Philadelphia) and Debt Management (St. Paul). The St. Paul office also handled over 51,000 pension case responses to DSOs/VSOs.

The combined workload for the Board of Veterans Appeals Unit, the Military Review Boards Unit, and the VA Insurance Activities Unit exceeded 11,000 cases.

Department Service Officers School

The National Organization continues to authorize the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) Commission to conduct twice yearly training schools for the Department Service Officers and other accredited representatives of The American

Legion. It represents the organization's ongoing commitment to developing a network of highly trained and experience service officers who can carry out the VA&R program at the department level.

The purpose of these sessions is to provide current information about changes in veterans' law and VA adjudication policies and help accredited American Legion service officers to improve their advocacy skills. The program of instruction includes basic training for new service officers, and advanced training on issues relating to claims processing, disability ratings, personal hearings, development of appeals, and the interpretation and application of precedent decisions by the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. Instructors include members of the National Association of Department Service Officers; Mr. Ron Abrams, Esq., Joint Executive Director, National Veterans Legal Services Program; and staff of the VA&R Division. Guest speakers from the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense and other agencies are also invited to brief participants on relevant and timely issues.

The primary goal of this training program, which began in 1985, is to enhance the skills and effectiveness of accredited American Legion service officers. A secondary goal is to provide the school participants with the latest information on veterans' benefits, which they can, then, share with other service officers in their respective departments.

The Departments' participation in and support for the program remains very high. The first session of the 2005 school was held February 22-25, 2006 at the Hyatt Hotel on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. There were 90 service officers in attendance. The Department Service Officers Seminar and the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Washington Conference took place the following week. The second session of 2006 was held July 27-29, 2006 at the Radisson City Center Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana. There were 110 service officers in attendance.

Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service

National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission Chairman, Dave Rehbein, has led the VA&R Commission's continuing efforts to re-invigorate The American Legion's involvement in VAVS, and in particular, to incorporate VAVS activity across the spectrum of Legion programs, particularly those involving youth and young adults. This initiative has been developed as a Legion family effort by looking at ways to integrate the efforts of the Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of the American Legion.

The VAVS Committee made several recommendations regarding ways to enhance the recognition of volunteers, and the VAVS Liaison Committee explored several ways that the Legion Family could work together to promote VAVS volunteers. In particular, the Auxiliary has developed a VAVS Training Program as part of their National Information Conferences that will be available to the Legion Family.

The link between the Legion Baseball web page and the VAVS Student Volunteer web page has proven to be very successful, and the presentation on VAVS at Boys Nation has been well-received. Overall, the effort to enhance Legion VAVS participation has borne some results as the number of Legion volunteers has shown an increase.

The VAVS National Deputy Representatives attended the fifty-ninth meeting of the VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC) that was held in Phoenix, AZ. The meeting included business sessions and educational workshops, and was highlighted by the NAC Volunteer of the Year Awards and the presentation of the James H. Parke Scholarship Award to Miss Jennifer Kelly. The Parke Memorial Scholarship Award was established in honor of the first Director of VA Voluntary Service, who is also the founding father of the VAVS National Advisory Committee, and is awarded to exceptional VAVS student volunteers.

National Field Service

The National Field Service (NFS) mission is to promote universal access to high quality health care for veterans and their families through advocacy, service, and support. At the National Convention in Nashville, TN in 2004, Resolution 206 "Annual State of VA Medical Facilities Report" was renewed. This resolution continues the requirement of

an annual publication of the "State of VA Medical Facilities Report." This report is compiled through site visits conducted by the National Commander's System Worth Saving Task Force members and/or the staff of The American Legion Field Service Unit.

The NFS, along with the task force members continue to address objectives by conducting site visits, conducting patient focus groups, and making recommendations to the Veterans Health Administration and Congress.

From January 2006 to June 2006 the Task Force and staff completed a total of 45 site visits. Worth noting is that over the past three years every VAMC and all four Level I Polytrauma Centers have been visited. The Task Force also made special visits to North Chicago where the new Federal Facility is located, and the Gulf region to take a first hand look at the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and to get a sense of what type of resources will be needed to get the medical system up and running to full capacity for veterans in the area.

During the reporting period Field Service operated at 100% strength. Each Field Service Representative is assigned oversight responsibility for a number of VHA's 21 VISNs. They are also participants on several committees, councils and advisory boards at both the National and VISN levels. Most importantly, the NFS provide advocacy and assistance to hundreds of veterans who otherwise would have gone without needed health care.

Accredited Representatives

In completing VA Form 21-22, "Power of Attorney," the claimant appoints The American Legion as accredited representative in a claim for benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is the duty of the organization to provide assistance, advice, and counsel to veterans, survivors and dependents so as to ensure their rights are protected and they receive all benefits to which they may be entitled under the law. The American Legion, as a Congressionally chartered organization, conducts this service program through the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission. Accredited Representatives of The American Legion provide formal representation in claims before VA regional offices or the Board of Veterans Appeals. Their respective Departments have recommended these representatives for accreditation because of their knowledge, experience, and expertise in the field of federal benefit programs, especially those provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

To become an Accredited Representative of The American Legion, a formal application (VA Form 2-21) must be submitted to the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, 1608 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006, with an accompanying endorsement signed by the Department Commander or Department Adjutant. The Director, as the National Certifying Officer, or the Deputy Director for Claims Service, as Assistant National Certifying Officer, will review and forward the request to the General Counsel of VA for action. This form is never sent directly to the General Counsel, as accreditation will not be granted unless the request has been certified by the organization. Upon approval of the application, the individual is recognized by VA as an Accredited Representative of The American Legion and will receive official notification of this action from VA. The accreditation will remain in effect until such time as the Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission 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 138 requests for accreditation and 94 requests for cancellation were received from the Departments and submitted to VA for necessary action. As of June 30, 2006, there were 1,601 Accredited Representatives of The American Legion with 59 pending accreditation. Any questions concerning the proper procedure or regulations pertaining to accreditation of individuals or their activities should be submitted to the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission in the Washington office.

Personnel and Organization

The following changes occurred in the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division at the Washington office from July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005.

New hires for the Field Service Unit included Jacob Gadd and Chad Martin. Alec Petkoff was promoted to Assistant Director for Policy and Research and Scott Sundsvold was promoted to Appeals Representative Discharge Review Board. This is a newly created position. New hires at the BVA Unit included:

Jasmine Davis, Secretary
Sam Gilmore, Office Manager
Althea Holmes, Appeals Representative
Robert Fenstermacher, Appeals Representative
Philip Riley, Appeals Representative
Joseph Rice, Appeals Representative/Acting Team Leader
Jeremy Ford, Appeals Representative
Ron Chamrin, Appeals Representative
Paul Grant, Appeals Representative
Queen Baker, Appeals Representative
Joe Grassi, Appeals Representative
Desiree Tiggart, Appeals Representative

The most current table of organization of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission as of June 30, 2005, is as follows:

Director 1
  Administrative Assistant 1
Deputy Director for Health Care 1
  Field Representatives 4
  Secretary 1
Deputy Director for Claims Services 1
  Administrative Assistant 1
Supervisor, Review and Correction Boards 1
  Review Board Representative 2
  Secretary 1
Office Manager, Board of Vets. Appeals Unit 1
  Appeals Representatives 13
  Secretaries 3
  Medical Consultant 1
Assistant Director for Program Management 1
  Secretary 1
Assistant Director for Policy and Research 1
Assistant Director for Health Policy 1
  Secretary 1
Assistant Director for Outreach 1
Total Personnel—Washington office 38
Insurance Field Office: Philadelphia, PA
Chief of Insurance Activities 1
  Secretary/Transcriber 1
Debt Management Center, St. Paul, MN
  Supervisor 1
  Secretary/Transcriber 1
VA&R TOTAL 42

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 country, such as the National Convention, Department Conventions, Department Seminars and Service Officers Schools, the Conferences and fact-finding trips.

The Field Service staff visited 45 hospitals along with members of The System Worth Saving Task Force. Select VA&R staff also participated in two Department Service

Officers Schools, while the entire staff attended the Annual Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, DC.

Certificates Of Appreciation

Under authority of May 1958 NEC Resolution, we have continued the program of awarding a Certificate of Appreciation to officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs, upon their retirement or resignation, For Services Rendered and Cooperation Extended in Connection with The American Legion's Rehabilitation Program. Under criteria established in line with the enabling resolution, nominations for the award are submitted by Department or National officials of The American Legion twice a year. The nominations are considered by a committee of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission at meetings preceding the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Conference, and the National Convention. The Committee recommends to the Commission the names of those considered deserving of the Certificate.

Nine Certificates of Appreciation have been awarded during the period July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2006, for an overall total of 1,304 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.

Fifty-Three Citations For Meritorious Service And Loyal Cooperation In The American Legion's Veterans Affairs And Rehabilitation Program Were Presented During The Period July 1, 2005 To June 30, 2006. Since This Type Of Recognition And Appreciation Began, 4,935 Citations For Meritorious Service Have Been Presented.

Persian Gulf War Task Force

The American Legion created the Persian Gulf Task Force in October 1995 to enhance The American Legion's services to our newest generation of war veterans, their families, and their advocates. As Congress has not officially ended the Gulf War era and numerous operations and peacekeeping activities have taken place since the end of the Gulf War, the role of the Task Force has been expanded to serve the needs and interests of veterans who serve in these operations, as well as those who will participate in such deployments in the future. As U.S. troops are currently deployed overseas to fight the war on terrorism and Operation Iraqi Freedom, this new role is even more significant. Heeding the "lessons learned" of the 1991 Gulf War and avoiding similar post war/deployment problems is of great concern to The American Legion and we are continuing to monitor all pre and post deployment initiatives and concerns.

The Task Force has vigorously approached its mission and has undertaken many efforts to accomplish it. These efforts include various forms of outreach, oversight of scientific and clinical studies, oversight of DoD investigations and programs, 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 has undergone major reorganizations. The former Assistant Director for the Persian Gulf War Task Force, who had been temporarily transferred to the Indianapolis Headquarters since July 2001, returned to the Washington, D.C. Headquarters in August 2004. In January 2005, he was promoted to Deputy Director for Claims Services. Then, The Health Policy Analyst was promoted to Assistant Director for Health Policy in June 2005. With this promotion, The Task Force was given an expanded scope. In addition to being responsible for topics addressing war-related health issues and environmental hazards, The Assistant Director covers women veterans' issues and health care policy related issues. The Deputy Director for Health is now the immediate supervisor of the Assistant Director for Health Policy/the Task Force.

The Task Force conducted numerous veteran outreach activities, department and service officer training sessions, VA medical center site visits and other initiatives in 2005

in Washington, D.C. and Washington State. These events improved our outreach to Gulf War veterans and improved Legionnaires' ability to serve these veterans within their communities.

Staff has also traveled extensively within the medical and professional communities to closely follow issues of concern to veterans of the Vietnam War, Gulf War, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Task Force is significantly involved with the work of the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the Deployment Health Support Directorate (DHSD) as they explore matters of interest to the many veteran communities. The Task Force worked with IOM and the Legion's magazine and newsletter staff to announce the IOM' s SHAD study in the June and July 2005 issues of The Dispatch and The Legion magazine, respectively. This important study will examine the health of those participants who have been identified by DoD. The study will not, however, determine the health effects associated with specific exposures.

The Task Force has worked other VA&R staff members to assist soldiers who were severely wounded in Iraq and their families, to ensure that they are receiving quality care and to see if The Legion can offer any of its services to mitigate any burdens placed on them due to their current situations. This assistance includes providing referrals for information and legal services, and maintaining contact to remain aware of progress in their cases.

Disability compensation remains a top priority for the Task Force. For more than a decade, nearly 75% of claims filed for medically unexplained/undiagnosed illnesses (Gulf War veteran's illnesses) have been denied by the VA. The Task Force identified the major reasons for this extraordinarily high denial rate and worked directly with members of Congress to develop legislation to correct and further clarify ambiguous language in the undiagnosed illness law in order to enable scores of ill Gulf War veterans, many of whose claims were previously denied, to receive the benefits to which they are rightfully entitled. To this end, the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001 (PL 107-103) was signed into law by the President on December 27, 2001. Although we were successful in convincing VA to notify those Gulf War veterans whose claims were previously denied of the change in the law and the opportunity to reopen their claims, the denial rate for these types of claims remains high. Therefore, we will continue to request feedback from our Department Service Officers in conjunction with our efforts to closely scrutinize VA's implementation of the Gulf War-related provisions in PL 107-103.

The lack of baseline data on various exposures due to improper record keeping during the Gulf War has resulted in roadblocks and impediments to Gulf War-related research. In February 2002, the Assistant Director for the Task Force was appointed to a newly established VA research advisory committee on Gulf War veterans' illnesses. This 12-person committee, comprised of medical doctors, scientists, Gulf War veterans, and VSO representatives, is charged with advising the Secretary of Veteran Affairs on the future of Gulf War-related research. During the last three years this panel has been considering areas of research that have not been thoroughly explored in the past. Although the Assistant Director was promoted to Deputy Director for Claims Services, he remains an active member of the Committee. The American Legion's direct participation in this process enhances our ability to represent the interests of the Gulf War veteran community.

The Task Force has continued its steady oversight of the Department of Defense's (DoD) efforts to investigate exposures of troops in the Gulf to environmental agents, and the implementation of "lessons learned" from the Gulf War. DoD has made some progress in these efforts, but it has not found any clear causes of these illnesses.

Additionally, all of 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 related to medical surveillance and depleted uranium training. However, DoD has recently made some improvements in its medical surveillance programs to facilitate electronic documentation of events as they happen in the field. DoD has also introduced another post-deployment health assessment to be implemented 3-6 months upon the service members' return. This new assessment will focus on the adverse health effects-especially mental health difficulties-that the service members experience after they have attempted to resume their lives. The Task Force has testified before both the Senate and House

Veterans Affairs Committees regarding this issue and will continue to monitor DoD's efforts in this regard.

The Task Force continues to work with DHSD, which falls under jurisdiction of the Under Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, to ensure that Gulf War veterans' issues are not treated as a secondary matter. DHSD will continue to investigate and monitor issues pertaining to Gulf War veterans' illness, as well as deployment-related health concerns in general.

The Task Force is working closely with other staff members of VA&R to heighten awareness of women veterans' issues. Of the almost 700,000 service members deployed to the Gulf during the war, nearly 35,000 were women, composing most of the same positions as their male counterparts. There is an increasing interest in the role of women in our services, as well as their care within the VA. The Task Force remains a strong advocate for those women who so honorably served and continue to serve our country. The Assistant Director actively participates in a women veterans forum—hosted by the Southeast Veterans Service Center—to address the needs of homeless veterans in the Washington, DC area, keeping the center informed of services provided by The American Legion and providing input for future consideration. This forum also serves to provide information on needs of female homeless veterans that The American Legion may need to consider in its national policy. The Assistant Director also attends meetings of the VA's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans to keep abreast of emerging topics. We will continue to follow these matters closely.

The Task Force has expanded its scope to include environmental hazards, such as Agent Orange, ionizing radiation, mustard gas, and Project 112/Operation Shipboard Hazard and Defense (SHAD) and chemical and biological testing, experienced by veterans of past wars and operations. It works closely with other divisions in the National Headquarters in order to provide the best service possible to these veterans, their families, and the service officers helping them.

Other activities undertaken by the Assistant Director this year include updating the Guide for Women Veterans; working with the Field Service Unit to construct and edit the System Worth Saving report for 2006; requesting that the VA contact DOD and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for more information and a list of participants of psycho-chemical testing conducted during the Vietnam War Era, since little known about long-term health effects associated with the LSD experiments and participants have encountered difficulty when seeking care over the years; requesting that VA stay vigilant on herbicide exposure in Gagetown, Canada, since the Maine National Guard has trained there for decades and the Canadian government admits to spraying every year since the 50's; and requesting that representatives from the American Pain Foundation, and the VA's Women Veteran Center and the Office of Research and Development attend the National Convention to address the leadership on issues related to pain and women veterans health, respectively.

The Assistant Director for Health Policy was appointed the VA's Veterans' Advisory Committee on Environmental Hazards in December 2005. The Committee advises the Secretary on issues related to adverse health effects of ionizing radiation and depleted uranium exposure. This appointment will expire in November 2009.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
National President Carol Van Kirk

The 2005-2006 program year of the American Legion Auxiliary was marked by the extraordinary effort of the organization at all levels in response to the devastating hurricanes and other natural disasters that devastated much of our nation.

The year also brought significant changes in the business processes for the organization as the longtime National Secretary retired and her replacement took the helm in January 2006. After many years, the American Legion Auxiliary's Washington, D.C. office was re-established in February 2006. Ongoing realignment of personnel and processes continue with a goal toward improving both the efficiency and effectiveness of the operations of the nation's largest patriotic women's organization.

The Auxiliary raised over $160,000 in support of the Department of Veterans Affairs polytrauma centers in VA Medical Centers. These funds helped supply special adaptive computer carts for wounded service personnel being treated in the centers and will be used to support community integration for polytrauma patients as well.

Together, American Legion Auxiliary volunteers make a huge impact. It would take one individual working nonstop 24 hours a day for nearly 350 years to equal the time the Auxiliary volunteers gave this year.

Within the following activity area summaries, the passion of this organization's human effort is underscored as members serve America's veterans, the military and their families, the children of America and their local communities.

Americanism Committee
Karen Lowe, Williamsport, Indiana

Fifty-four students from around the United States assembled in Valley Forge, Penn. for four-days of leadership and citizenship training, plus a first-hand history lesson. These students were winners of an essay contest entitled "Freedom Isn't Free."

Christine Donahue of Whitmore Lake, Mich., was selected for the Girl Scout Achievement Award.

Nearly 23,000 students from across America in grades 3-12 took part in the annual Americanism essay contest, writing on the topic: "What Freedom Means to Me."

More than 75,000 pocket flags were folded and mailed to U.S. military troops, making a grand total of 800,000 flags shipped to date.

Units presented 90,000 flags to schools and organizations, spending $64,000 and giving 7,000 volunteer hours. Certificates of Appreciation for individuals and businesses for flying Old Glory numbered more than 5,000. Ten thousand Blue and Gold Star Banners were presented.

More than 12,000 units reported volunteering nearly 13,000 hours and donating $56,000 working with The American Legion on its Junior Shooting, Oratorical and Baseball programs.

One disappointment for the entire American Legion family was the failure of the United States Senate to pass the flag protection amendment—just one vote shy of the support needed.

Annual reports show that members spent $535,000 and donated nearly 170,000 volunteer hours promoting the Americanism program.

Children and Youth Committee
Desi Stoy, Perrysville, Ohio

The National Children and Youth Committee emphasized three areas this year: family support, the Youth Hero Award and traditional programs.

In an effort to strengthen America's families, units participated in National Family Week activities by hosting their own events, lending support to others and opening their post homes. Volunteers also provided valuable assistance through the Family Support Network of The American Legion by baby sitting, running errands, providing transportation, offering financial support and numerous other tasks that benefited military families. Concentrated efforts to reach out to children of activated or deployed service personnel were dubbed "Project Reach Out for Kids."

Efforts to showcase positive heroic acts of physical valor by America's youth honored 47 with Youth Hero Awards.

Other efforts included programs such as providing Josh dogs and books to families; contributing to the Children's Miracle Network; providing Songs of Love; giving Foster Care support and awareness; contributing to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation; and promoting child health and safety issues.

Through their units and departments, members donated cash and goods totaling $2,360,815, volunteered 348,901 hours and assisted 368,381 children across the country.

Community Service Committee
Ruth Proctor, Rotunda West, Florida

Efforts by members of the American Legion Auxiliary to help communities where needed were widespread. Thousands worked community service projects and many people's lives were changed. Members donated an abundance of clothing, food and truckloads of goods and furniture to help the victims of natural disasters. They worked with Habitat for Humanity to rebuild homes for many left without shelter. In service to communities, 935 units donated nearly $335,000.

"Make A Difference Day" involved 925 units with 15,000 senior and junior members working a total of 250,320 hours.

Nearly 2,650 units of blood were donated as 2,450 Auxiliary units participated by offering refreshments and transporting donors to blood donor sites.

Donations from 3,126 units amounted to $355,467 for cancer research and $255,127 to assist patients with transportation, bills and other needs.

Education Committee
Lynne Wild, Lincoln, Nebraska

The Education program of the American Legion Auxiliary gives young and old an opportunity to participate and share ideas concerning our country, its history and its future. With 60 percent of the units reporting, 4,107 volunteers gave nearly 10,000 hours and nearly $16,000 was spent for flags, videos, DVDs, comic books and other handouts.

During American Education Week 1,588 units visited 4,598 schools. More than $76,800 was spent and 93,143 people received candy bars, apples, breakfasts, lunches, certificates or other tokens of appreciation.

Literacy activities assisted 19,019 children and 11,521 adults with reading skills. Units reported 23,107 hours and $28,661 spent promoting literacy.

More than 1,300 volunteers assisted with "Read Across America" or other reading programs. Donations exceeded $17,000 and 17,283 hours were shared benefiting 44,000 children. Junior members gave an additional 9,172 hours and $10,411 as they participated in this program as well as tutoring younger students in math and other subjects.

Teacher Appreciation Week in May recognized 42,711 people at 2,160 schools with $61,202 expended by 1,125 units. "Connect with the Schools" continues to grow with 486 new schools contacted.

Department scholarships provided $209,375 to assist students with post-secondary education. Units gave scholarships totaling $805,727 and also donated $16,567 to the Spirit of Youth scholarship fund, $14,314 to the American Legion Legacy Scholarship, and $124,939 to other scholarships offered in their communities.

The *PACT* booklets (Post-Auxiliary Community Together) were used by The American Legion family to plan their education program and work with their communities and schools. Resource materials were made available to students with 6,000 *Need A Lift?* booklets, 19,434 Guides for Parents and Students, 14,445 educational comic books, 481 "America's Veterans" videos, and 473 "For Which It Stands" flag DVDs presented.

Unit members served as monitors for test sessions, adopted school grades, provided flags, flag poles, dictionaries, rulers, school supplies, backpacks, puzzles and more. Donations of store receipt tapes, box tops and labels for redemption allowed schools to receive computers and other equipment for the students.

Girls State Committee
Kris Nelson, Baxter, Minnesota

Girls State and Girls Nation planners challenged leaders to: accept and embrace diversity when choosing staff members; charter an American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Alumni Unit; include a program segment concentrating on veterans; update programs always keeping in mind the age of the attendees; and showcase the American Legion Auxiliary throughout Girls State sessions.

Taking up the challenge the Department of California was the first department to

charter an E-Unit consisting mostly of Girls State alumnae. The unit is thriving. In the Department of Florida all District Presidents were encouraged to charter Girls State alumni units. Samsung Scholarship applications were used as a membership tool in the Department of Arizona. For the first time the Department of Louisiana hosted a Girls State session and sent two senators to Girls Nation. They were proud to have accomplished this goal during a time when recovering from Hurricane Katrina was also foremost on their minds.

Veterans were highlighted when the Nebraska Girls Staters toured the National Guard, the Department of Pennsylvania Girls Staters created a memory wall hanging of pictures and mementos of loved ones serving in the armed forces, and Minnesota veterans conducted a flag disposal ceremony. The Department of South Dakota dedicated their 60th session to the 22 military personnel with ties to South Dakota who have died in Iraq and Kuwait for our country.

The Department of Washington Auxiliary featured the video "One Nation Under God" and included the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action table ceremony. The Departments of Illinois, Washington and Maine included flag ceremonies and flag etiquette education. The Department of Wisconsin added Americanism and Community Service special interest groups to their week at Girls State, and the Department of Minnesota produced a mock Girls State skit for members attending Fall Conference to solicit new staff volunteers.

The Department of West Virginia received front page coverage in the Wheeling News Register highlighting visits from Governor Joe Manchin, III and Secretary of State Betty Ireland. The Departments of Texas and Montana both developed Girls State Web sites and the Department of Missouri created a DVD highlighting Missouri Girls State. Advances in technology enabled many departments to highlight their weeks with immediate updates, enable on-line voting and Internet surfing to research content information for bills and speeches.

Ninety-six girls attended Girls Nation, July 22-29. The 'senators' learned the process of federal government through hands-on participation. They were able to visit their state's senators and representatives on Capital Hill and were privileged to be guests of the White House, the State Department and the Pentagon. At the Pentagon they learned a new appreciation of our veterans and military personnel. Elected as Girls Nation President was Noor Oweis of Ellicott City, Md., while Angela Cobian of Littleton, Colo., was elected Vice President.

Legislative Committee
Penny Maklary, Douglas, Arizona

The purpose of the Legislative Council is to further the interests and legislative goals of The American Legion through personal contacts to elected representatives in Congress. Priority issues addressed were: the Flag Protection Amendment; the FY 2007 Veterans Administration Budget; Medicare reimbursement; the preservation of America's values; opposition to TRICARE enrollment fee increases, deductibles and prescription co-payments; and Social Security.

Legislative successes were due to the efforts of grassroots volunteers with a desire to make a difference by writing letters and utilizing their computers to contact representatives urging them to take action.

Special legislative events were held by 1,110 units, including 400 meetings, 250 rallies, 28 town hall gatherings and 180 meet-the-candidates sessions.

17,400 unit members were active letter writers with the largest target of those efforts being members of the U.S. Senate. The White House received 935 letters, members of the House of Representatives heard from 4,610 members, while state and local lawmakers heard from 6,000. Those letters generated more than 7,000 replies.

An additional 12,350 contacts were made by phone, fax, e-mail or telegram.

Units submitted 103 activities for consideration for publication in the Congressional Record with 73 of those making it into this important national record book.

Membership Report
Terry Porter, Grand Junction, Colorado

Departments worked to get 1,150 previous Direct Mail Solicitation recruits moved to local units with hope of retaining them. The National level Direct Mail Solicitation (DMS) program was discontinued this year. Three departments, Delaware, New Mexico and Arizona reached all-time high membership numbers in 2005-2006.

Congratulations to Pennsylvania, Arizona, Florida, New Mexico, Delaware, Philippines, Mississippi, Idaho, Alabama, Virginia, Puerto Rico, and Rhode Island, all of which exceeded last year's membership as of June 7. By July 5 New Mexico hit 102 percent and Delaware, Idaho, Mississippi, and Puerto Rico all reached that 101 percent mark.

National Security Committee
Rita Navarrete, Albuquerque, New Mexico

The Auxiliary's National Security program focuses on support for the troops, emergency preparedness, support for The American Legion National Security programs and local Awareness Assemblies.

Supporting our military continues to be top priority. The Department of Wisconsin unveiled a special project called "One Box." The goal was to have each unit send one box of comfort items to service personnel in Afghanistan or Iraq. The result was that 927 boxes were sent.

A unit in Connecticut took over the Christmas "Toys for Tots" Campaign when their local Marine National Guard Unit was mobilized. A California unit received a donation that enabled them to provide eight Webcams to the Bob Hope USO Center at Los Angeles International Airport. Soldiers can now be seen by their loved ones while talking on line.

More than $44,306 was spent promoting the Blue Star Banner Program. Service families overseas benefited from store coupons worth $6,301,095.

Department Chairmen in 39 departments stressed the importance of emergency preparedness to include Citizen Corps, READY America and Fire Safety. More than 25,100 hours were volunteered and nearly $22,000 spent in keeping members informed of the need to be ready for any emergency.

This year $33,282 was spent in supporting Crime Prevention and the ROTC/JROTC programs. In addition, 23,338 hours were volunteered in carrying out the related activities.

Units were encouraged to plan and conduct an Awareness Assembly. The 424 units who conducted this program helped 4,000 members receive information to enhance their program knowledge.

Members of the American Legion Auxiliary worked 51,500 hours and spent more than $335,800 to support members of the National Guard and Reserves and their families. The USO received $97,500 and enjoyed 9,884 hours of service. The 'Toasty Toes' program kept members knitting for 25,500 hours and spending nearly $38,000. Making comfort quilts took 42,000 hours and another $57,000. Members also continue to support and promote the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action program donating $22,600 and 16,800 hours this year.

Poppy Committee
Mary E. Davis, Lacey, Washington

According to reports from 38 departments 5.6 million poppies were ordered and donations exceeded $2.3 million.

Additionally, units sent poppies to troops stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan to let them know they are not forgotten. Other units distributed poppies and flags, and told the poppy story when they hosted naturalization ceremonies.

Units spread the poppy story in a variety of ways. Some partnered with schools to promote creative activities such as poppy poster contests, and poppy coloring activities. Other fun activities included contests for hat decorating, jewelry making, wreath art,

centerpiece and memorial creations. Juniors, also, were included in poppy creating activities as well as Memorial Day activities. Department chairmen attended Junior conventions and Girls State sessions to tell the poppy story and to demonstrate the artistic challenge of creating a poppy.

Another Department traditionally sponsors a 'Poppy Shop.' This open house honors their veteran poppy artists and because it is held at a State Veterans' Home, it affords the residents quality time with the American Legion family.

Public Relations Committee
Priscilla Imburgia, Pittsford, New York

Reports tell of 4,000 interviews with reporters and 25,000 newspaper articles.

A Wyoming unit used public access television for Support Our Troops activities and their department president did a Veterans Creative Arts Festival public service announcement (PSA), which aired for a month on radio stations throughout Wyoming and western South Dakota. Other departments also reported an increase in PSA use with a total of 4,600.

Many states held public relations workshops to assist units.

Departments that have worked closer with national staff are achieving greater coverage on major events and the National President's visits with news releases transmitted from the national office. Working with staff has also made departments more aware of how to use the National President visit as a tool to achieve publicity. Maryland gained attention by sponsoring Naturalization Court and included the National President as the opening speaker.

Many units holding poppy poster contests increased their public relations mileage by displaying them around their community. Florida noted a unit's Christmas parade salute for a National Guard unit in Iraq. Blue Star Banner projects, Girl Staters, and scholarships were media favorites. Various projects benefiting Children's Miracle Network hospitals were widely covered thanks to partnering with their PR staff. Troops abroad won't forget the American Legion Auxiliary members sending them pocket flags, cooling vests and other items.

Racking up 8,100 aired programs is commendable. The increase to more than 8,000 letters and awards of appreciation given to print media signals members are creating strong relationships to help get out their message.

An all-new national Web site took the lead on image building. The fresh, professional site is designed to give the visitor a bounty of quickly found facts and data.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee
Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan, Madison, Wisconsin

Auxiliary members accepted the challenge this year to "Grant the Last Wish" for a terminally ill veteran. Twenty-one units reported on this new program and the support was frequently above and beyond. Unit members provided fishing trips, played Taps at funerals, contributed monetarily to two veterans, brought a sister to visit, provided a new DVD player and movies to watch, video games, a baseball cap for a favorite home team, favorite candy, a 'boom box,' purchased phone cards, took a veteran to a football game, took a veteran to their home for dinner, ferried veterans to a casino night, arranged for a military funeral in a cemetery of their choice, provided rides to family members to visit their loved one, arranged transportation for a veteran to see his daughter in South Carolina, transported a veteran by ambulance to visit his home for Christmas, presented a quilt to a female veteran, provided a weekend trip for a veteran and his family, paid the heating bill for six months for an indigent veteran, and replaced the Auxiliary emblem on a ring for a dual member before her death. And the list could go on.

During February's "National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans" members participated in parties, provided valentines, juice, coffee and doughnuts, cards and gifts, played Bingo, made home made cookies, tray favors, and centerpieces. They gave the veterans new blankets, clothing and toiletries.

Two hundred sixty-nine Gift Shops were held this past year at a total cost of $662,115.

Project CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment Local Education and Networking Groups) brought donations of clothing, food, rent, utilities, cheer items, sleeping bags, laundry items, free physicals and medical and dental care, haircuts, blankets, hygiene items, lap robes, mittens, hats, gloves and scarves, quilts, ice cream socials, bed linens, towels, phone cards, hot meals, and in some instances arrangements for housing and necessary household furnishings for homeless veterans.

It was an active program year with more than 1.5 million veterans served and $5.6 million spent. The tally of volunteers reached more than 67,000.

Crowe Chizek and Company LLC
Member Horwath International

Members of the National Finance Commission
The American Legion National Headquarters
Indianapolis, Indiana

We have audited the accompanying consolidated statements of financial position of The American Legion National Headquarters and its wholly owned subsidiary as of December 31, 2005 and 2004 and the related consolidated statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended. These 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 auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits 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 as of December 31, 2005 and 2004, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Crowe Chizek and Company LLC
Crowe Chizek and Company LLC

Indianapolis, Indiana
March 1, 2006

	2005	2004
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 1,917,159	$ 1,381,375
Accounts receivable		
Emblem Division	100,047	41,190
Publications Division	1,176,332	953,777
Other	847,634	1,016,308
Prepaid expenses and deposits	616,721	731,414
Deferred membership expense	7,330,341	4,296,136
Inventories		
Emblem Division	1,910,534	2,099,652
Publications Division	658,333	487,104
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	48,012	61,809
Beneficial interest in trust	405,500	-
Prepaid pension expense	16,703,768	16,504,933
	31,714,381	27,573,698
Investments		
Segregated for restricted and reserved funds	22,790,512	22,416,614
Segregated for Washington, D.C. building	2,146,419	2,023,384
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	916,163	932,165
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Fund	35,119,582	38,317,792
Other	33,969,589	36,543,285
Special account – endowment fund	2,079,362	2,132,015
General account – endowment fund	5,862,361	6,013,212
	102,883,988	108,378,467
Property and equipment		
Washington, D.C. real estate		
Land	80,000	80,000
Building	4,484,147	4,484,147
Indianapolis real estate		
Land	389,264	389,264
Building	3,611,779	3,611,779
Furniture, fixtures and equipment		
National Headquarters, Indianapolis, Indiana	4,673,647	5,072,769
Washington, D.C.	1,010,105	965,045
Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc.	886,830	878,153
	15,135,772	15,481,157
Accumulated depreciation	(8,123,834)	(8,077,391)
	7,011,938	7,403,766
	$ 141,610,307	$ 143,355,931

(continued)

	2005	2004
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	$ 2,178,275	$ 1,839,795
Scholarships payable	874,044	928,731
Deposits on emblem merchandise sales	102,001	163,228
Deferred advertising income	148,691	119,039
Deferred dues income	19,356,625	19,834,053
Deferred income – direct membership solicitation	2,546,874	1,128,318
Accrued vacation benefits	540,107	563,562
Other liabilities	895,280	460,250
Notes payable	2,774,142	2,925,294
Deferred dues income – Paid-Up-For-Life memberships	14,156,061	20,007,766
Life memberships due to states and local posts	23,908,013	26,057,105
	67,480,113	74,027,141
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted – general	21,589,719	15,493,870
Unrestricted – designated		
Citizens Flag Alliance	48,012	61,809
Computer reserve	500,000	500,000
Convention reserve	100,000	100,000
Convention stabilization	240,275	556,842
Employee insurance stabilization	100,000	100,000
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Fund	411,711	1,640,050
Real estate reserve	2,553,096	2,602,898
Reserve fund	2,198,448	2,263,190
Restricted fund	20,573,647	20,133,375
Youth programs (Life Insurance Plan)	3,659,892	4,196,834
Veteran's rehabilitation/child welfare (special account)	2,000,000	2,000,000
Sons of the American Legion	511,754	967,769
Others	805,968	896,048
	55,292,522	51,512,685
Temporarily restricted		
Buick scholarship	682,716	694,855
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	922,137	933,042
Samsung scholarship	2,437,232	2,703,141
National Emergency Fund	1,524,788	1,254,963
Others	1,746,760	1,074,958
	7,313,633	6,660,959
Permanently restricted		
Samsung scholarship	5,000,000	5,000,000
American Legion Endowment Fund	6,524,039	6,155,146
	11,524,039	11,155,146
Total net assets	74,130,194	69,328,790
	$ 141,610,307	$ 143,355,931

See accompanying notes to financial statements

The American Legion National Headquarters Consolidated Statements of Activities
Year ended December 31, 2004

	Unrestricted General	Unrestricted Designated	Unrestricted Total	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Grand Total
Revenue, gains and other support						
National member dues	$ 20,968,656	$ 2,037,690	$ 23,006,346	$ -	$ -	$ 23,006,346
Direct membership solicitations	2,038,819	-	2,038,819	-	-	2,038,819
Member service fees income	1,475,827	507,863	1,983,690	-	-	1,983,690
Financial program income	284,903	-	284,903	-	-	284,903
Sales of emblem items	10,021,586	-	10,021,586	-	-	10,021,586
Advertising	8,686,645	-	8,686,645	-	-	8,686,645
Contributions	1,089,614	-	1,089,614	704,081	43,620	1,837,315
Label and printing fees	1,717,060	-	1,717,060	-	-	1,717,060
Sales – HPC	743,941	-	743,941	-	-	743,941
Interest and dividends, net of trustee fees of $218,764	493,592	1,397,613	1,891,205	922,258	-	2,813,463
Net realized gains (losses)	3,606	(194,900)	(191,294)	15,123	(27,007)	(203,178)
Other	1,255,680	762,729	2,018,409	-	-	2,018,409
	48,779,929	4,510,995	53,290,924	1,641,462	16,613	54,948,999
Net assets released from restriction	1,146,852	-	1,146,852	(1,146,852)	-	-
Net assets released from designation	4,015,427	(4,015,427)	-	-	-	-
Total revenues, gains and other support	53,942,208	495,568	54,437,776	494,610	16,613	54,948,999
Expenses						
Salaries	11,952,184	-	11,952,184	-	-	11,952,184
Employee benefits	2,705,451	-	2,705,451	-	-	2,705,451
Cost of sales - Legion	7,215,602	-	7,215,602	-	-	7,215,602
Cost of sales – HPC	603,681	-	603,681	-	-	603,681
Direct publication	10,744,666	-	10,744,666	-	-	10,744,666
Executive and staff travel	851,379	-	851,379	-	-	851,379
Commission and committee	1,368,432	-	1,368,432	-	-	1,368,432
Printing and postage	2,209,734	-	2,209,734	-	-	2,209,734
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,121,141	-	1,121,141	-	-	1,121,141
Office and other operating	9,755,825	-	9,755,825	-	-	9,755,825
Occupancy and usage	1,994,054	-	1,994,054	-	-	1,994,054
Special projects and programs	2,725,381	-	2,725,381	-	-	2,725,381
	53,247,530	-	53,247,530	-	-	53,247,530
Change in net assets before net unrealized gains (losses)	694,678	495,568	1,190,246	494,610	16,613	1,701,469
Net unrealized losses – PUFL annuity	(545,000)	-	(545,000)	-	-	(545,000)
Net unrealized gains (losses) - investments	(276,453)	376,062	99,609	281,022	(111,116)	269,515
Change in net assets	(126,775)	871,630	744,855	775,632	(94,503)	1,425,984
Net assets, beginning of year, as previously reported	16,486,323	34,530,489	51,016,812	5,636,345	11,249,649	67,902,806
Prior period adjustment	(248,982)	-	(248,982)	248,982	-	-
Net assets, beginning of year, as restated	16,237,341	34,530,489	50,767,830	5,885,327	11,249,649	67,902,806
Transfer of funds	(616,696)	616,696	-	-	-	-
Net assets, end of year	$ 15,493,870	$ 36,018,815	$ 51,512,685	$ 6,660,959	$ 11,155,146	$ 69,328,790

See accompanying notes to financial statements

The American Legion National Headquarters Consolidated Statements of Activities
Year ended December 31, 2005

	Unrestricted General	Unrestricted Designated	Unrestricted Total	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Grand Total
Revenue, gains and other support						
National member dues	$ 20,446,989	$ 2,053,836	$ 22,500,825	$ -	$ -	$ 22,500,825
Direct membership solicitations	2,324,017	-	2,324,017	-	-	2,324,017
Member service fees income	1,476,238	392,935	1,869,173	-	-	1,869,173
Financial program income	402,585	-	402,585	-	-	402,585
Sales of emblem items	9,979,778	-	9,979,778	-	-	9,979,778
Advertising	8,481,743	-	8,481,743	-	-	8,481,743
Contributions	326,013	-	326,013	3,053,881	564,630	3,944,524
Label and printing fees	1,728,606	-	1,728,606	-	-	1,728,606
Sales - HPC	612,992	-	612,992	-	-	612,992
Interest and dividends, net of trustee fees of $242,055	596,060	1,434,707	2,030,767	789,486	-	2,820,253
Net realized losses	(48,501)	(230,850)	(279,351)	(199,491)	(40,666)	(519,508)
Other	1,914,922	265,419	2,180,341	-	-	2,180,341
	48,241,442	3,916,047	52,157,489	3,643,876	523,964	56,325,329
Net assets released from restriction	2,561,581	294,935	2,856,516	(2,856,516)	-	-
Net assets released from designation	4,536,315	(4,536,315)	-	-	-	-
Total revenues, gains and other support	55,339,338	(325,333)	55,014,005	787,360	523,964	56,325,329
Expenses						
Salaries	11,103,087	-	11,103,087	-	-	11,103,087
Employee benefits	2,872,249	-	2,872,249	-	-	2,872,249
Cost of sales - Legion	7,864,453	-	7,864,453	-	-	7,864,453
Cost of sales - HPC	474,656	-	474,656	-	-	474,656
Direct publication	10,635,653	-	10,635,653	-	-	10,635,653
Executive and staff travel	752,508	-	752,508	-	-	752,508
Commission and committee	1,651,630	-	1,651,630	-	-	1,651,630
Printing and postage	2,121,720	-	2,121,720	-	-	2,121,720
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,384,524	-	1,384,524	-	-	1,384,524
Office and other operating	9,470,847	-	9,470,847	-	-	9,470,847
Occupancy and usage	2,329,963	-	2,329,963	-	-	2,329,963
Special projects and programs	5,059,366	-	5,059,366	-	-	5,059,366
	55,720,656	-	55,720,656	-	-	55,720,656
Transfer from convention stabilization to general fund	366,497	(366,497)	-	-	-	-
Change in net assets before net unrealized gains (losses)	(14,821)	(691,830)	(706,651)	787,360	523,964	604,673
Net unrealized gains - PUFL annuity	6,401,784	-	6,401,784	-	-	6,401,784
Net unrealized losses - investments	(84,119)	(1,831,177)	(1,915,296)	(134,686)	(155,071)	(2,205,053)
Change in net assets	6,302,844	(2,523,007)	3,779,837	652,674	368,893	4,801,404
Net assets, beginning of year, as restated	15,493,870	36,018,815	51,512,685	6,660,959	11,155,146	69,328,790
Transfer of funds	(206,995)	206,995	-	-	-	-
Net assets, end of year	$ 21,589,719	$ 33,702,803	$ 55,292,522	$ 7,313,633	$ 11,524,039	$ 74,130,194

See accompanying notes to financial statements

The American Legion National Headquarters Consolidated Statements of Cash Flow
Year ended December 31, 2005 and 2004

	2005	2004
Cash flows from operating activities		
Change in net assets	$ 4,801,404	$ 1,425,984
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash from operating activities		
Depreciation expense	812,432	835,173
Loss on sale of fixed assets	1,535	19,313
(Gain) loss on sale of investments	519,508	(74,620)
Unrealized (gain) loss on investments	2,205,053	(254,723)
(Gain) loss on Paid-Up-For-Life annuity	(6,401,784)	545,000
Contributions restricted for long-term purposes	(564,630)	(43,620)
Accounts receivable	(112,738)	412,223
Prepaid expenses and deposits	(84,142)	(140,346)
Deferred membership expense	(3,034,205)	226,050
Inventories	17,889	426,577
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	13,797	13,050
Beneficial interest in trust	(405,500)	-
Accounts and scholarships payable	283,793	(607,251)
Deferred income	(689,460)	(1,788,649)
Other accrued liabilities	411,575	(180,462)
Net cash from operating activities	(2,225,473)	813,699
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of property and equipment	(422,139)	(1,084,354)
Purchase of investments	(80,525,205)	(55,798,574)
Sales and maturities of investments	83,295,123	55,499,858
Net cash from investing activities	2,347,779	(1,383,070)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Contributions restricted for long-term purposes	564,630	43,620
Payments on line of credit	(151,152)	(143,367)
Net cash from financing activities	413,478	(99,747)
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	535,784	(669,118)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	1,381,375	2,050,493
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	$ 1,917,159	$ 1,381,375
Supplemental cash flows information		
Income taxes paid	$ 296,928	$ 41,290
Interest paid	151,404	160,396

See accompanying notes to financial statements

The American Legion National Headquarters Notes to Financial Statements
Year ended December 31, 2005 and 2004

NOTE 1 – NATURE OF OPERATIONS AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

General: The American Legion National Headquarters (Legion) is a national veterans organization which was declared to be a corporate body by an Act of the United States Congress on September 16, 1919.

According to the Original Act and Subsequent Amendments, the purpose of the Legion is, "To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to promote peace and goodwill among the peoples of the United States and all the nations of the earth; to preserve the memories and incidents of the two World Wars and the other great hostilities fought to uphold democracy; to cement the ties and comradeship born of service; and to consecrate the efforts of its members to mutual helpfulness and service to their country."

Approximately 40% of the Legion's income each year is derived from membership dues (including amounts allocated for magazine subscriptions). An additional 15% is generated through advertising for *The American Legion Magazine*. Another significant source of income is Emblem Sales, which includes the sale of apparel, jewelry, and other items bearing the American Legion Emblem. Income is expended by the Legion on several different programs including *The American Legion Magazine*, Emblem Sales, veterans assistance and rehabilitation, youth programs and others. The Legion's youth programs include American Legion Baseball, The National Oratorical Contest and Boy's Nation.

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues, expenses, gains, losses and other changes in net assets during the reported period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

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); the American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation (ALEF); and the National Emergency Fund (NEF) (collectively, the Legion). All material inter-organizational accounts and transactions have been eliminated in consolidation. 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. American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation, a tax-exempt Indiana corporation, was created to provide permanent funding for the rehabilitation of American veterans and assistance to orphans of veterans. The National Emergency Fund is a tax-exempt trust established to provide gifts and grants to relieve suffering and ameliorate financial hardship incurred by American Legion members, families and posts.

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, except for those investments held or part of a managed portfolio. The first $100,000 of deposits per financial institution is insured by a government agency.

Inventory: Inventory consists of Emblem items held for sale, magazine paper and publication rights and is stated at the lower of cost or market. Inventory items are valued at average cost. Supplies which are not intended for sale are expensed when purchased.

Investments: Investments held by Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc. (HPC), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Legion, are classified as held-to-maturity securities and are carried at amortized cost. Realized gains or losses are determined based on the amortized cost of the specific security sold. Interest and dividend income, adjusted by amortization of purchase premium or discount, is included in earnings. Securities with declines in fair value below amortized cost that are other than temporary are written down to fair value by a charge to earnings.

All other Legion investments are carried at fair value. Realized and unrealized gains and losses are reflected in the consolidated statements of activities. Premiums or discounts on investments are generally recognized at the time of disposal or maturity.

Property and Equipment: Expenditures for property and equipment and items which substantially increase the useful lives of existing assets and are greater than $300 are capitalized at cost. The Legion provides for depreciation on the straight-line method at rates designated to depreciate the costs of assets over their estimated useful lives.

Depreciation on buildings is computed on the straight-line method using a 30-year life. All other capital assets are depreciated over lives ranging from three to seven years.

Collections: The Legion owns many collectible military-related items and historical documents which were not recorded as they were acquired. It is often impracticable to determine a value for collections and accordingly, the Legion has concluded that they need not be capitalized. These items have been or are in the process of being appraised for insurance purposes.

Support and Revenue: The Legion reports gifts of cash and other assets as restricted support if they are received with donor stipulations that limit the use of the donated assets. When a donor restriction expires, that is, when a stipulated time restriction ends or purpose restriction is accomplished, temporarily restricted net assets are reclassified to unrestricted net assets and reported in the statement of activities as net assets released from restrictions.

Dues Income and Expense: Dues are recognized as income over the applicable membership period, which is on a calendar-year basis.

In addition to other methods of obtaining new members, the Legion uses direct mail and other direct marketing approaches. The income generated from direct membership solicitation is recognized over the applicable membership period (calendar year). The direct-response expenses incurred in obtaining new members are deferred and written off in the subsequent membership year.

Income Taxes: The Legion is exempt from federal income taxes under section 501(c)(19) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. ALEF and NEF are exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. None of these organizations are considered to be private foundations. The Legion is subject to income tax on unrelated business income. The Legion paid and incurred expense of $65,928 and $0 in income taxes in 2005 and 2004.

HPC records income tax expense based on the amount of taxes due on its tax return plus deferred taxes computed based on the expected future tax consequences of temporary differences between the carrying amounts and tax bases of assets and liabilities, using enacted tax rates. Federal and state income tax expense is recorded for HPC, a for-profit corporation, as incurred, and is disclosed in Note 14.

Fair Value of Financial Instruments: The carrying amount of all financial instruments of the Legion approximate their fair values, with the exception of held-to-maturity investments as disclosed in Note 5.

Expense Allocation: Expenses have been classified as program services, management and general, member development and fund raising based on actual

The American Legion National Headquarters Notes to Financial Statements
Year ended December 31, 2005 and 2004

direct expenditures. Additionally, some expenses are allocated among departments based upon estimates of the amount of time spent by Legion employees performing services for these departments.

Prior Period Adjustment: An error resulting in the misclassification of net assets between the Legion and NEF has been corrected in the current year. The information presented in these statements for the year ended December 31, 2004, has been adjusted to correct amounts presented for that period. The prior period adjustment affects previously reported unrestricted net assets of the Legion and temporarily restricted net asset of NEF. Adjustments to net assets at January 1, 2004, are as follows:

Net assets at January 1, 2004, as previously reported	$67,902,806
Reduce Legion unrestricted, general net assets	(248,982)
Increase NEF temporarily restricted net assets	248,982
Net assets at January 1, 2004, as restated	$67,902,806

NOTE 2 – COLLECTIONS

The Legion owns many collectible military-related items and historical documents which were not recorded as they were acquired. It is often impracticable to determine a value for collections and accordingly, the Legion has concluded that they need not be capitalized. These items have been appraised, or are in the process of being appraised for insurance purposes and are as follows:

	Appraisal Date	Replacement Value
World War II Posters	03/11/2005	$472,919
Military Unit Histories	03/18/2005	$112,410
Original GI Bill	not complete	
Firearms Collection	not complete	
Uniforms	not complete	
Other Collections	not complete	

NOTE 3 – INVESTMENT IN AFFILIATE

The Legion, in conjunction with approximately 120 other organizations, has created a nonprofit corporation known as The Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc. (CFA) for the purpose of aiding in the campaign to secure a constitutional amendment empowering the Congress and the States to enact legislation to protect the Flag of the United States of America from physical desecration.

CFA recognized a decrease in net assets of $13,797 and $13,050 in 2005 and 2004, repectively. Accordingly, the Legion's investment in CFA has been decreased by these amounts and corresponding changes have been reflected in unrestricted designated net assets for 2005 and 2004.

NOTE 4 – BENEFICIAL INTEREST IN CHARITABLE LEAD TRUST

In 2005, the ALEF was named a beneficiary of a charitable lead trust. Under the charitable trust, the ALEF is to receive quarterly distributions in the amount of $9,919 for 15 years, or until the funds of the trust are exhausted. Based on the term of the trust and a 5.4% discount rate, the present value of future benefits expected to be received by the ALEF was estimated to be $405,500 at December 31, 2005, and is recorded as a permanently restricted asset.

NOTE 5 – INVESTMENTS

The carrying amount, unrealized gains and losses, and fair value of debt securities held-to-maturity held by HPC at December 31, 2005, are as follows:

2005	Carrying Amount	Unrealized Gains	Unrealized Losses	Fair Value
Due within 1 year	$221,970	$ -	$345	$221,625
Due 1-5 years	671,358	-	10,841	660,517
Total	$893,328	$ -	$11,186	$882,142

The carrying amount plus accrued interest for these investments was $901,381 at December 31, 2005. HPC had no investments at December 31, 2004.

The market value for all other investments at December 31 are as follows:

2005 Market

	Segregated for Restricted and Reserve Funds	Segregated for Washington D.C. Building	Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Program	Other	Total
U.S. Government obligations	$ 21,720,362	$ 2,090,695	$ 881,997	$ 17,298,001	$ 25,048,305	$ 67,039,360
State and Municipal Bonds	-	-	-	156,999	-	156,999
Corporate Bonds	-	-	-	8,394,810	3,255,221	11,650,031
Foreign Bonds	-	-	-	-	31,817	31,817
Common and preferred stocks	-	-	-	8,346,940	854,049	9,200,989
Mutual funds	-	-	-	-	383,173	383,173
Money market accounts	811,917	35,910	26,846	581,813	11,044,917	12,501,403
Accrued interest	258,233	19,814	7,320	341,019	392,449	1,018,835
	$ 22,790,512	$ 2,146,419	$ 916,163	$ 35,119,582	$ 41,009,931	$ 101,982,607

The American Legion National Headquarters Notes to Financial Statements
Year ended December 31, 2005 and 2004

	2004 Market					
	Segregated for Restricted and Reserve Funds	Segregated for Washington D.C. Building	Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Program	Other	Total
U.S. Government obligations	$ 21,814,545	$ 1,970,794	$ 884,276	$ 16,482,398	$ 26,242,108	$ 67,394,121
State and Municipal Bonds	-	-	-	336,006	-	336,006
Corporate Bonds	-	-	-	10,671,213	3,907,899	14,579,112
Foreign Bonds	-	-	-	-	33,013	33,013
Common and preferred stocks	-	-	-	9,705,550	-	9,705,550
Mutual funds	-	-	-	-	1,885,973	1,885,973
Money market accounts	353,474	29,273	35,534	761,963	12,257,849	13,438,093
Accrued interest	248,595	23,317	12,355	360,662	361,670	1,006,599
	$ 22,416,614	$ 2,023,384	$ 932,165	$ 38,317,792	$ 44,688,512	$ 108,378,467

NOTE 6 – LONG TERM DEBT

In 2003, the Legion refinanced its long-term debt on its facility for Emblem Sales, Information Technology, Member Benefits and HPC. This debt is payable in monthly installments of $25,213, including interest, beginning July 30, 2003, with a stated rate of 5.3% and final payment due August 1, 2018. The outstanding balance on long-term debt is $2,774,142 and $2,925,294 for 2005 and 2004.

The future maturities for the line of credit are as follows:

2006	$ 158,662
2007	167,276
2008	176,561
2009	185,939
2010	196,036
Thereafter	1,889,668
	$ 2,774,142

NOTE 7 – LEASES

The Legion has several noncancelable operating leases, primarily for facilities, computer equipment, copiers and cash registers that expire over the next three years. Rental expense for these leases aggregated $412,508 in 2005 and $544,286 in 2004.

Future minimum lease payments under operating leases are as follows:

2006	$ 358,251
2007	95,200
2008	2,616
	$ 456,067

In addition, the Legion has a lease with the State of Indiana for rental of the National Headquarters building in Indianapolis through June 30, 2006. 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 $505,000 and $409,000 in 2005 and 2004. Insurance coverage is included in the Legion's general insurance policy.

NOTE 8 – PAID-UP-FOR-LIFE MEMBERSHIP FUND

The National Executive Committee approved the establishment of a life membership plan available to any member of a participating department. In accordance with the plan, the assets of the Paid-Up-For-Life (PUFL) Membership Fund are segregated in a trust account from which funds equal to the annual dues of life members are withdrawn for current operations each year. The trust agreement provides that the Legion has the right to withdraw part or all of the assets of the trust account and to modify or terminate the trust agreement at its discretion.

Under the terms of the PUFL program, participating member's national, state and local dues are paid by the Legion for the remainder of the individual's life. Management has estimated and recognized a liability for the future payments to state and local Legion organizations. Likewise, management has deferred recognition of the national dues portion of the members' payment. Deferred PUFL dues are recognized in annual amounts equal to the national dues in effect each year. The liability and deferred revenue amounts are estimated by the Legion's actuaries using PUFL membership summaries and discount rates comparable to the Legion's recent investment performance.

NOTE 9 – RESTRICTED AND RESERVE DESIGNATED FUNDS

The restricted fund is designated for use by the National Finance Commission and National Executive Committee of the 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. The Legion transferred $48,198 and $150,000 in 2005 and 2004.

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 10 – 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 segregated bank trust account (named The American Legion Life Insurance Plan) under control of the Legion for use in youth programs.

The Legion's National Executive Committee has directed that monies within The American Legion Life Insurance Plan used to fund The National Oratorical Contest, Boys' Nation, American Legion Baseball, and other youth programs of the Legion. At December 31, 2005, $1,065,000 in funds had been approved for use in designated programs during 2006.

NOTE 11 – 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 descendents of Korean War veterans and other wars in which U.S. servicemen and servicewomen participated. Such scholarships are administered by the Legion.

Contributions to The American Legion Endowment Fund are recorded as increases in permanently restricted net assets, the income from which is to be used to support the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation and Children & Youth activities of the Legion.

NOTE 12 – NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM DESIGNATION

Net assets were released from designations by satisfying the designations previously established.

	2005	2004
Purpose designations accomplished		
Paid-Up-For-Life memberships	$ 2,269,325	$ 2,207,915
Youth programs (Life Insurance Plan)	1,078,262	1,070,892
Sons of The American Legion	456,015	500,275
Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc.	138,797	13,050
Other	593,916	223,295
	$ 4,536,315	$ 4,015,427

NOTE 13 – 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.

	2005	2004
Purpose restrictions accomplished		
Overseas graves decoration	$ 25,921	$ 27,723
Scholarships and grants (including relief aid)	2,535,660	689,169
Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and Children & Youth programs	294,935	429,608
Other	-	352
	$ 2,856,516	$ 1,146,852

NOTE 14 – INCOME TAXES

The provision for income taxes for HPC consists of the following:

	2005	2004
Income tax expense		
Currently payable		
Federal	$ 191,408	$ 4,914
State	53,663	3,678
Deferred		
Federal	5,760	25,040
State	1,440	6,260
	$ 252,271	$ 39,892

The components of the net deferred tax (liability) asset are as follows:

	2005	2004
Asset		
Net operating loss carryforward	$ 11,300	$ 17,200
Liability		
Other	(50,900)	(49,600)
	$ (39,600)	$ (32,400)

The deferred tax asset and liability are included in other prepaid expenses and deposits and other liabilities, respectively, in the statement of financial position.

The tax provision is higher than the statutory provision due to the effect of non-deductible expenses.

NOTE 15 – 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 plan's assets consist of investments mostly in equity and debt securities. The asset investment policy is a lower risk strategy. The following table sets forth the Legion's target allocation for 2006 and percentage of plan assets at December 31, 2005 and 2004.

Asset Category and Target Allocation	2005	2004
Equity Securities (30 – 40%)	31%	40%
Debt Securities (50 – 70%)	67%	59%
Other (0 – 10%)	2%	1%

Historical returns of multiple asset classes were analyzed to develop a risk-free real rate of return and risk premium for each asset class. The overall rate for each asset class was developed by combining a long-term inflation component, the risk-free real rate of return, and the associated risk premium. A weighted average rate was developed based on those overall rates and the target asset allocation of the plan.

Weighted-average assumptions	2005	2004
Discount rate	5.50%	5.75%
Expected return on plan assets	9.00%	8.50%
Rate of compensation increase	2.00%	2.00%

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, 2005 and 2004.

	2005	2004
Benefit obligation	$(41,795,955)	$(37,939,380)
Fair value of plan assets	46,824,232	47,710,767
Funded status	$5,028,277	$9,771,387
Accumulated benefit obligation	$39,887,243	$36,004,727
Prepaid benefit cost recognized in the statement of financial position	$16,703,768	$16,544,933
Benefit cost	$(26,395)	$(73,327)
Employer contribution	178,532	180,339
Benefits paid	1,921,273	1,553,721
Measurement date	12/31/2005	12/31/2004

Estimated future benefit payments:

2006	$2,226,767
2007	2,290,300
2008	2,402,751
2009	2,574,706
2010	2,774,743
Years 2011-2015	15,080,800

HPC maintains a defined-contribution plan under Section 401(k) of the Internal Revenue Code. Elective deferrals are available to employees 21 years of age who have completed one year of eligible service. HPC may make discretionary contributions to this plan. The company's discretionary contributions to the plan in 2005 and 2004 were $51,114 and $0, respectively.

NOTE 16 – FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

The following represents a functional breakdown of the American Legion National Headquarters' expenses by program and supporting services.

Program services	2005	2004
Veterans programs and services	$32,749,318	$29,971,200
Americanism and Children & Youth activities	2,735,629	2,694,746
Flag education and legislation	244,904	305,100
	35,729,851	32,971,046
Supporting services		
Management and general	$14,537,769	$14,665,673
Member development	5,402,751	5,560,556
Fund-raising	50,285	50,255
	19,990,805	20,276,484
	$55,720,656	$53,247,530

Member development includes direct response advertising expense of $3,110,065 and $3,329,063 for the years ended December 31, 2005 and 2004.

NOTE 17 – 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.

Supplementary Information
Report of Independent Auditors

Crowe Chizek and Company LLC
Member Horwath International

Members of the National Finance Commission
The American Legion National Headquarters
Indianapolis, Indiana

Our report on our audit of the consolidated financial statements of the American Legion National Headquarters for 2005 and 2004 appears on page 1. That audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the consolidated financial statements taken as a whole. The supplementary information described in the table of contents is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the consolidated financial statements. The consolidating information is presented for purposes of additional analysis of the consolidated financial statements rather than to present the financial position, results of operations, and cash flows of the individual companies. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and, in our opinion, is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the consolidated financial statements taken as a whole.

Crowe Chizek and Company LLC

Indianapolis, Indiana
March 1, 2006

The American Legion National Headquarters Reconciliation of Internal Financial Statements to Audited Financial Statements
Years ended December 31, 2005 and 2004

	2005	2004
Change in net assets - internal financial statements	$ (14,821)	$ 694,678
Change in net assets before net unrealized gains (losses) not included in internal financials		
Unrestricted designated	(691,830)	495,568
Temporarily restricted	787,360	494,610
Permanently restricted	523,964	16,613
	604,673	1,701,469
Net unrealized gains (losses)		
General	6,317,665	(821,453)
Unrestricted designated	(1,831,177)	376,062
Temporarily restricted	(134,686)	281,022
Permanently restricted	(155,071)	(111,116)
Change in net assets - audited financial statements	$ 4,801,404	$ 1,425,984

Supplementary Information

The American Legion National Headquarters Consolidating Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2005

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc.	Eliminations	Total
ASSETS						
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 1,105,216	$ 20,348	$ -	$ 791,595	$ -	$ 1,917,159
Accounts receivable						
Emblems	100,047	-	-	-	-	100,047
Publications	1,176,332	-	-	-	-	1,176,332
Related party	-	-	25,516	486,822	(512,338)	-
Other	825,540	77	-	43,083	(21,066)	847,634
Prepaid expenses and deposits	589,122	1,924	-	25,675	-	616,721
Deferred membership expense	7,330,341	-	-	-	-	7,330,341
Due from American Legion Endowment Fund	2,000,000	-	-	-	(2,000,000)	-
Inventories						
Emblem division	1,910,534	-	-	-	-	1,910,534
Publication division	658,333	-	-	-	-	658,333
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	48,012	-	-	-	-	48,012
Beneficial interest in trust	-	405,500				405,500
Prepaid pension expense	16,703,768	-	-	-	-	16,703,768
	32,447,245	427,849	25,516	1,347,175	(2,533,404)	31,714,381
Investments						
Segregated for restricted and reserve funds	22,790,512	-	-	-	-	22,790,512
Segregated for Washington, D.C. building	2,146,419	-	-	-	-	2,146,419
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	916,163	-	-	-	-	916,163
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Fund	35,119,582	-	-	-	-	35,119,582
Other	31,508,259	-	1,559,949	901,381	-	33,969,589
Special account – endowment fund	-	2,079,362	-	-	-	2,079,362
General account – endowment fund	-	5,862,361	-	-	-	5,862,361
Investment in HPC	2,402,294	-	-	-	(2,402,294)	-
	94,883,229	7,941,723	1,559,949	901,381	(2,402,294)	102,883,988
Property and equipment						
Indianapolis real estate						
Land	389,264	-	-	-	-	389,264
Building	3,611,779	-	-	-	-	3,611,779
Washington, D.C. real estate						
Land	80,000	-	-	-	-	80,000
Building	4,484,147	-	-	-	-	4,484,147
Furniture, fixtures and equipment						
National Headquarters, Indianapolis	4,673,647	-	-	-	-	4,673,647
Washington, D.C.	1,010,105	-	-	-	-	1,010,105
Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc.	-	-	-	886,830	-	886,830
Accumulated depreciation	(7,422,740)	-	-	(701,094)	-	(8,123,834)
	6,826,202	-	-	185,736	-	7,011,938
Total assets	$ 134,156,676	$ 8,369,572	$ 1,585,465	$ 2,434,292	$ (4,935,698)	$ 141,610,307

(continued)

Supplementary Information

The American Legion National Headquarters Consolidating Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2005

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc.	Eliminations	Total
LIABILITIES						
Accounts payable	$ 2,371,915	$ 820	$ 60,677	$ 257,201	$ (512,338)	$ 2,178,275
Scholarships payable	874,044	-	-	-	-	874,044
Accounts payable – Legion	-	2,000,000	-	21,066	(2,021,066)	-
Deposits on emblem merchandise sales	102,001	-	-	-	-	102,001
Deferred advertising income	148,691	-	-	-	-	148,691
Deferred dues income	19,356,625	-	-	-	-	19,356,625
Deferred income – direct membership solicitation	2,546,874	-	-	-	-	2,546,874
Accrued vacation benefits	540,107	-	-	-	-	540,107
Other liabilities	741,551	-	-	153,729	-	895,280
Notes payable	2,774,142	-	-	-	-	2,774,142
Deferred dues income Paid-Up-For-Life Memberships	14,156,061	-	-	-	-	14,156,061
Life memberships due to state and local posts	23,908,013	-	-	-	-	23,908,013
	67,520,024	2,000,820	60,677	431,996	(2,533,404)	67,480,113
NET ASSETS						
Unrestricted – general	21,989,717	-	-	-	(399,998)	21,589,719
Unrestricted – designated						
Citizens Flag Alliance	48,012	-	-	-	-	48,012
Computer reserve	500,000	-	-	-	-	500,000
Convention reserve	100,000	-	-	-	-	100,000
Convention stabilization	240,275	-	-	-	-	240,275
Employee insurance stabilization	100,000	-	-	-	-	100,000
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Fund	411,711	-	-	-	-	411,711
Real estate reserve	2,553,096	-	-	-	-	2,553,096
Reserve fund	2,198,448	-	-	-	-	2,198,448
Restricted fund	20,573,647	-	-	-	-	20,573,647
Youth program (Life Insurance Plan)	3,659,892	-	-	-	-	3,659,892
Veterans' rehabilitation/child welfare (special account)	2,000,000	-	-	-	-	2,000,000
Sons of the American Legion	511,754	-	-	-	-	511,754
Other	961,255	(155,287)	-	-	-	805,968
	55,847,807	(155,287)	-	-	(399,998)	55,292,522
Temporarily restricted						
Buick scholarship	682,716	-	-	-	-	682,716
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	922,137	-	-	-	-	922,137
Samsung scholarship	2,437,232	-	-	-	-	2,437,232
National Emergency Fund	-	-	1,524,788	-	-	1,524,788
Others	1,746,760	-	-	-	-	1,746,760
	5,788,845	-	1,524,788	-	-	7,313,633
Permanently restricted						
Samsung scholarship	5,000,000	-	-	-	-	5,000,000
American Legion Endowment Fund	-	6,524,039	-	-	-	6,524,039
	5,000,000	6,524,039	-	-	-	11,524,039
Shareholders' equity,						
Common stock	-	-	-	1,000	(1,000)	-
Additional paid-in capital	-	-	-	397,577	(397,577)	-
Retained earnings	-	-	-	1,603,719	(1,603,719)	-
Total net assets	66,636,652	6,368,752	1,524,788	2,002,296	(2,402,294)	74,130,194
	$ 134,156,676	$ 8,369,572	$1,585,465	$ 2,434,292	$ (4,935,698)	$ 141,610,307

(See report of independent auditors on supplementary information.)

Supplementary Information

The American Legion National Headquarters Consolidating Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2004

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc.	Eliminations	Total
ASSETS						
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 563,059	$ 10,464	$ -	$ 807,852	$ -	$ 1,381,375
Accounts receivable						
Emblems	41,190	-	-	-	-	41,190
Publications	953,777	-	-	-	-	953,777
Related party	-	-	-	882,983	(882,983)	-
Other	1,035,528	4,851	-	71,401	(95,472)	1,016,308
Prepaid expenses and deposits	656,644	1,888	-	72,882	-	731,414
Deferred membership expense	4,296,136	-	-	-	-	4,296,136
Due from American Legion Endowment Fund	2,000,000		-	-	(2,000,000)	-
Inventories						
Emblem division	2,099,652		-	-	-	2,099,652
Publication division	487,104		-	-	-	487,104
Investment in affiliate (CFA)	61,809		-	-	-	61,809
Prepaid pension expense	16,504,933		-	-	-	16,504,933
	28,699,832	17,203	-	1,835,118	(2,978,455)	27,573,698
Investments						
Segregated for restricted and reserve funds	22,416,614	-	-	-	-	22,416,614
Segregated for Washington, D.C. building	2,023,384	-	-	-	-	2,023,384
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	932,165	-	-	-	-	932,165
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Fund	38,317,792	-	-	-	-	38,317,792
Other	35,247,620	-	1,295,665	-	-	36,543,285
Special account – endowment fund		2,132,015	-	-	-	2,132,015
General account – endowment fund		6,013,212	-	-	-	6,013,212
Investment in HPC	2,018,059	-	-	-	(2,018,059)	-
	100,955,634	8,145,227	1,295,665	-	(2,018,059)	108,378,467
Property and equipment						
Indianapolis real estate						
Land	389,264	-	-	-	-	389,264
Building	3,611,779	-	-	-	-	3,611,779
Washington, D.C. real estate						
Land	80,000	-	-	-	-	80,000
Building	4,484,147	-	-	-	-	4,484,147
Furniture, fixtures and equipment						
National Headquarters, Indianapolis	5,072,769	-	-	-	-	5,072,769
Washington, D.C.	965,045	-	-	-	-	965,045
Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc.	-	-	-	878,153	-	878,153
Work in progress – Washington, D.C. building	-	-	-	-	-	-
Accumulated depreciation	(7,416,987)	-	-	(660,404)	-	(8,077,391)
	7,186,017	-	-	217,749	-	7,403,766
Total assets	$ 136,841,483	$ 8,162,430	$ 1,295,665	$ 2,052,867	$ (4,996,514)	$ 143,355,931

(continued)

Supplementary Information

The American Legion National Headquarters Consolidating Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2004

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc.	Eliminations	Total
LIABILITIES						
Accounts payable	$ 2,381,223	$ 3,307	$ 40,702	$ 297,548	$ (882,985)	$ 1,839,795
Scholarships payable	928,731	-	-	-	-	928,731
Accounts payable – Legion		2,077,754	-	51,515	(2,129,269)	-
Deposits on emblem merchandise sales	163,228	-	-	-	-	163,228
Deferred advertising income	119,039	-	-	-	-	119,039
Deferred dues income	19,834,053	-	-	-	-	19,834,053
Deferred income – direct membership solicitation	1,128,318	-	-	-	-	1,128,318
Accrued vacation benefits	563,562	-	-	-	-	563,562
Other liabilities	374,506	-	-	85,744	-	460,250
Notes payable	2,925,294	-	-	-	-	2,925,294
Deferred dues income Paid-Up-For-Life Memberships	20,007,766	-	-	-	-	20,007,766
Life memberships due to state and local posts	26,057,105	-	-	-	-	26,057,105
	74,482,825	2,081,061	40,702	434,807	(3,012,254)	74,027,141
NET ASSETS						
Unrestricted – general	15,860,070	-	-	-	(366,200)	15,493,870
Unrestricted – designated						
Citizens Flag Alliance	61,809	-	-	-	-	61,809
Computer reserve	500,000	-	-	-	-	500,000
Convention reserve	100,000	-	-	-	-	100,000
Convention stabilization	556,842	-	-	-	-	556,842
Employee insurance stabilization	100,000	-	-	-	-	100,000
Paid-Up-For-Life Membership Fund	1,640,050	-	-	-	-	1,640,050
Real estate reserve	2,602,898	-	-	-	-	2,602,898
Reserve fund	2,263,190	-	-	-	-	2,263,190
Restricted fund	20,133,375	-	-	-	-	20,133,375
Youth program (Life Insurance Plan)	4,196,834	-	-	-	-	4,196,834
Veterans' rehabilitation/child welfare (special account)	2,000,000	-	-	-	-	2,000,000
Sons of the American Legion	967,769	-	-	-	-	967,769
Other	969,825	(73,777)	-	-	-	896,048
	51,952,662	(73,777)	-	-	(366,200)	51,512,685
Temporarily restricted						
Buick scholarship	694,855	-	-	-	-	694,855
Overseas Graves Decoration Fund	933,042	-	-	-	-	933,042
Samsung scholarship	2,703,141	-	-	-	-	2,703,141
National Emergency Fund	-	-	1,254,963	-	-	1,254,963
Others	1,074,958	-	-	-	-	1,074,958
	5,405,996	-	1,254,963	-	-	6,660,959
Permanently restricted						
Samsung scholarship	5,000,000	-	-	-	-	5,000,000
American Legion Endowment Fund	-	6,155,146	-	-	-	6,155,146
	5,000,000	6,155,146	-	-	-	11,155,146
Shareholders' equity,						
Common stock	-	-	-	1,000	(1,000)	-
Additional paid-in capital	-	-	-	397,577	(397,577)	-
Retained earnings	-	-	-	1,219,483	(1,219,483)	-
Total net assets	62,358,658	6,081,369	1,254,963	1,618,060	(1,984,260)	69,328,790
	$ 136,841,483	$ 8,162,430	$1,295,665	$ 2,052,867	$ (4,996,514)	$ 143,355,931

(See report of independent auditors on supplementary information.)

Supplementary Information

The American Legion National Headquarters Consolidating Statement of Activities December 31, 2005

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc.	Eliminations	Total
Revenue, gains and other support						
National member dues	$ 22,500,825	$ -	$	$ -	$ -	$ 22,500,825
Sales of emblem items	9,979,778	-		-	-	9,979,778
Sales – HPC	-	-		7,175,641	(6,562,649)	612,992
Advertising	8,481,743	-		-	-	8,481,743
Direct membership solicitation	2,324,017	-		-	-	2,324,017
American Legion Endowment Fund income	384,929	-		-	(384,929)	-
Contributions	1,012,388	564,630	2,367,506	-	-	3,944,524
Affinity income	402,585	-		-	-	402,585
Label and printing fees	1,728,606	-		-	-	1,728,606
Member service fees income	1,869,173	-		-	-	1,869,173
Investment income, net of fees	2,366,424	384,176	45,665	23,988	-	2,820,253
Net realized losses	(445,691)	(33,112)	(40,705)	-	-	(519,508)
Other	2,180,341	-		-	-	2,180,341
Net income in subsidiary	384,235	-		-	(384,235)	-
	53,169,353	915,694	2,372,466	7,199,629	(7,331,813)	56,325,329
Expenses						
Salaries	11,103,087	-	-	-	-	11,103,087
Employee benefits	2,872,249	-	-	-	-	2,872,249
Cost of sales	8,011,033	-	-	-	(146,580)	7,864,453
Cost of sales – HPC	-	-	-	5,556,287	(5,081,631)	474,656
Direct publications	10,635,653	-	-	-	-	10,635,653
Executive and staff travel	752,508	-	-	-	-	752,508
Commission and committee	1,651,630	-	-	-	-	1,651,630
Printing and postage	2,121,720	-	-	-	-	2,121,720
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,384,524	-	-	-	-	1,384,524
Office and other operating	9,725,218	27,497	-	1,018,771	(1,300,639)	9,470,847
Occupancy and usage	2,089,628	-	-	240,335	-	2,329,963
Special projects and programs	2,941,842	384,929	2,117,524	-	(384,929)	5,059,366
	53,289,092	412,426	2,117,524	6,815,393	(6,913,779)	55,720,656
Change in net assets before net unrealized gains (losses)	(119,739)	503,268	254,942	384,236	(418,034)	604,673
Net unrealized gains (losses) – PUFL	6,401,784	-	-	-	-	6,401,784
Net unrealized gains (losses) - investment	(2,004,051)	(215,885)	14,883	-	-	(2,205,053)
Change in net assets	4,277,994	287,383	269,825	384,236	(418,034)	4,801,404
Net assets, beginning of year, as restated	62,358,658	6,081,369	1,254,963	1,618,060	(1,984,260)	69,328,790
Net assets, end of year	$ 66,636,652	$ 6,368,752	$1,524,788	$ 2,002,296	$ (2,402,294)	$ 74,130,194

(See report of independent auditors on supplementary information.)

Supplementary Information

The American Legion National Headquarters Consolidating Statement of Activities December 31, 2004

	American Legion National Headquarters	American Legion Endowment Fund	National Emergency Fund	Haynes and Partners Communications, Inc.	Eliminations	Total
Revenue, gains and other support						
National member dues	$ 23,006,346	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 23,006,346
Sales of emblem items	10,021,586	-	-	-	-	10,021,586
Sales – HPC	-	-	-	5,160,270	(4,416,329)	743,941
Advertising	8,686,645	-	-	-	-	8,686,645
Direct membership solicitation	2,038,819	-	-	-	-	2,038,819
American Legion Endowment–Fund income	415,611	-	-	-	(415,611)	-
Contributions	1,350,582	43,620	443,113	-	-	1,837,315
Affinity income	284,903	-	-	-	-	284,903
Label and printing fees	1,717,060	-	-	-	-	1,717,060
Member service fees income	1,983,690	-	-	-	-	1,983,690
Investment income, net of fees	2,345,722	408,533	48,870	10,338	-	2,813,463
Net realized losses	(195,816)	(5,932)	(1,430)	-	-	(203,178)
Other	2,190,200	-	-	-	(171,791)	2,018,409
Net income in subsidiary	62,407	-	-	-	(62,407)	-
	53,907,755	446,221	490,553	5,170,608	(5,066,138)	54,948,999
Expenses						
Salaries	11,952,184	-	-	-	-	11,952,184
Employee benefits	2,705,451	-	-	-	-	2,705,451
Cost of sales	7,347,097	-	-	-	(131,495)	7,215,602
Cost of sales – HPC	-	-	-	4,187,372	(3,583,691)	603,681
Direct publications	10,744,666	-	-	-	-	10,744,666
Executive and staff travel	851,379	-	-	-	-	851,379
Commission and committee	1,368,432	-	-	-	-	1,368,432
Printing and postage	2,209,734	-	-	-	-	2,209,734
Scholarships, grants and awards	1,121,141	-	-	-	-	1,121,141
Office and other operating	9,677,403	30,526	-	749,039	(701,143)	9,755,825
Veterans and child programs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Occupancy and usage	1,994,054	-	-	171,791	(171,791)	1,994,054
Special projects and programs	2,343,963	415,611	381,418	-	(415,611)	2,725,381
	52,315,504	446,137	381,418	5,108,202	(5,003,731)	53,247,530
Change in net assets before net unrealized gains (losses)	1,592,251	84	109,135	62,406	(62,407)	1,701,469
Net unrealized gains (losses) – PUFL	(545,000)	-	-	-	-	(545,000)
Net unrealized gains (losses) - investment	421,731	(153,853)	1,637	-	-	269,515
Change in net assets	1,468,892	(153,769)	110,772	62,406	(62,407)	1,425,984
Net assets, beginning of year, as previously reported	61,138,658	6,235,138	895,209	1,555,654	(1,921,853)	67,902,806
Prior period adjustment	(248,982)	-	248,982	-	-	-
Net assets, beginning of year, as restated	60,889,676	6,235,138	1,144,191	1,555,654	(1,921,853)	67,902,806
Net assets, end of year	$ 62,358,658	$ 6,081,369	$1,254,963	$ 1,618,060	$ (1,984,260)	$ 69,328,790

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