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Up & Coming:

AUGUST

- 15-19 – American Legion Baseball regional tournaments
- 15 – Child Welfare Foundation grant applications due to National Headquarters
- 23-29 – 84th American Legion National Convention in Charlotte, N.C.
- 23-29 – 82nd Auxiliary National Convention in Charlotte, N.C.
- 23-29 – 31st SAL National Convention in Charlotte, N.C.
- 23-29 – American Legion Baseball World Series in Danville, Va.

SEPTEMBER

- 2 – Labor Day
- 15 – Deadline for History Book Contest entries due to National Headquarters
- 17 – Citizenship Day
- 20 – POW-MIA Remembrance Day
- 20-22 – National Information Conferences in Dallas (Region 4) and Boise, Idaho (Region 8)
- 22-28 – Employ the Older Worker Week

OCTOBER

National Disability/Employment Awareness Month

- 5-6 – SAL Fall NECs in Indianapolis
- 6 – Child Welfare Foundation board of directors meeting
- 6-9 – Auxiliary Presidents and Secretaries Conference in Indianapolis
- 7-10 – National Executive Committee Fall Meetings in Indianapolis
- 16 – Notification of Child Welfare Foundation Grant recipients for 2003
- 25-27 – National Americanism Conference in Indianapolis
- 25-27 – Auxiliary Department Chaplains and Girls State Directors Conference in Indianapolis

Sept. 11 info available

National Headquarters has mailed "Sept. 11: A Day of Remembrance" information packets to all departments and posts. The kits include helpful event-planning information, such as how to prepare public-service announcements, news releases and suggested program agendas.

For more information, contact The American Legion Public Relations Division at (317) 630-1253.



The American Legion
National Headquarters
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THE AMERICAN LEGION Dispatch

A National Headquarters Publication

August 9, 2002

Vol. 12, No. 1



Members of the active-duty military and the National Guard discuss recruiting strategies with Legionnaires during the 39th

Annual Membership Workshop. The discussion was one of three breakout sessions available to attendees.

Stay on the path

Membership is up, but the work is far from over.

Steve Brooks
Editor

When American Legion members gather in Charlotte, N.C., for the 84th National Convention later this month, they will do so approximately 60,000 members stronger.

But celebrating this year's increase shouldn't stand in the way of crafting next year's membership plans.

That point was emphasized during the 39th Annual National Membership Workshop in Indianapolis July 25 to 27. Approximately 425 Legionnaires participated in the workshop, which covered a wide range of membership strategies and tools available for every Legionnaire. But it's important to use those strategies and tools immediately.

"Don't wait to implement new membership programs until after the national convention," National Commander Richard J. "Ric" Santos said. "Right now, you should have a plan on paper. Don't wait – that will be your first error of the year if you do."

"Do not waste this opportunity to prove to your peers who elected or appointed you (to attend the workshop) that they made the right choice. You must act on the knowledge you will gain, build on



National Commander Richard J. "Ric" Santos tells Legionnaires at the workshop that now is the time to have a plan on paper for next year's membership efforts. Waiting until after the national convention will be a mistake.

SEE MEMBERSHIP, PAGE 4

Legion continues fight for pledge

On July 30, The American Legion filed a motion with the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco to overturn the court's recent decision that the Pledge of Allegiance is unconstitutional.

The Legion has petitioned to file an Amicus Curiae, or friend of the court, brief August 19, joining 50 state and territorial attorneys general and the U.S. Senate, among others. "If the 9th Circuit's ruling is allowed to stand, millions of American schoolchildren will be denied the right to recite the Pledge," National Commander Richard J. "Ric" Santos said. "The denial will exist simply because the phrase 'one nation under God' offends one atheist and two judges." The Legion was instrumental in adding the phrase "under God" to the Pledge.

"If the judges had read the Declaration of Independence, this outrage would never have occurred," Santos said. "With its references to 'God,' the 'Creator' and 'divine Providence,' it is clear that our founding fathers did not intend for America to be an atheistic nation. More importantly, the 9th Circuit's decision contradicts the words uttered during the opening of each Supreme Court session: 'God save the United States and this honorable Court.'"

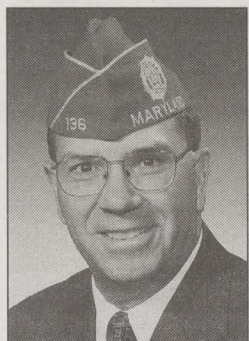
"As national commander of The American Legion, I promise that our organization will stand with the American people all the way to the Supreme Court, if necessary, to correct this grave injustice."

A message from the National Commander:

A job well-done, but not finished

Membership efforts have paid off, but we still have more to do.

As our positive efforts on membership come to fruition, Legionnaires should take great pride in their accomplishments. Our commitment to boost membership is a source of the majority of that pride. As we head into our 84th National Convention, our organization stands at approximately 60,000 members ahead of last year – our second straight year of increasing our membership rolls.



Richard J. Santos

Past National Commander Ray G. Smith told convention delegates two years ago that the membership slide would stop. It did. Last year in San Antonio, I asked you to reach out in all directions in order to build on the previous year's

efforts. We did.

I have seen examples of Legionnaires providing service to America's veterans, its military service members and their families. I have witnessed our work with America's youth, our fight to protect the flag and our efforts to keep the Pledge of Allegiance intact. We provide service and, like I have always believed, through service comes membership. Legionnaires exhibit this philosophy every day through community activities such as veterans benefits seminars, school presentations to educate our youth about patriotism, restoring the graves of those who served or digging deep into their pockets to help the Children's Miracle Network, the Child Welfare Foundation and the National Emergency Fund.

Legionnaires serve this way with membership not in mind. They do it for the sake of serving. By serving, our ranks grow. Eligible American veterans see the good that The American Legion is doing and want to be a part of that. They see the difference that we make. They want to make a difference, too.

It is my firm belief that part of the growth in membership is a direct result of our community service. We have reason to be proud of the results. But pride can not get in the way of our focus toward next year. The membership building blocks are in place. From those building blocks, we must concentrate on improvements for next year. Your membership strategies for next year should be in place for immediate implementation. Building membership provides for the future of our organization. We should always be looking toward the future.

The time is ripe for a larger increase in our membership. The pool of eligible Americans is growing, not shrinking. As the war on terrorism continues, more and more young Americans are enlisting in our armed forces. More and more Reserve and National Guard units are being activated for missions across the globe. More and more military families will need the support of The American Legion. By providing that service and support, membership will come. There has never been a better time for veterans to join our ranks. We need to ensure that they know of the eligibility. We must "ask" them to join our ranks.

We can point to our membership successes of the past two years and say, "Look what we accom-

We need to reach out in all directions to every veteran. Our community services make this not only possible, but attainable.

Your dedication, service and commitment make me proud to call myself your national commander. The past year has seen America under attack, only to bounce back stronger than ever. I can say, without a doubt, that the work of Legionnaires helped make that happen.

We have accomplished so much by working together, starting at the grass-roots level, under the missions spelled out in our preamble:

For God and country we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: to uphold and defend the

"The pool of eligible Americans is growing, not shrinking. As the war on terrorism continues, more and more young Americans are enlisting in our armed forces. More and more Reserve and National Guard units are being activated for missions across the globe. More and more military families will need the support of The American Legion. By providing that service and support, membership will come."

plished." However, a closer look at the numbers shows that in the midst of that success, we are still falling short.

About 19 million Americans eligible for membership in The American Legion. But we only are attracting 2.8 million of those eligible Americans. We are not reaching out in all directions to all of the eligible. We are not maintaining a strong enough presence in our communities. We are not making enough face-to-face contact. We simply are not asking enough veterans and active-duty servicemembers to join.

Even in success, there always is more work to be done. We can be proud of what we have done. But, we can not afford to rest on our laurels. The future of our organization depends on it. We must focus on the younger veteran.

However, we must not ignore the veteran who left the military 50 years ago and never was asked to join.

Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a 100-percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the great wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and goodwill on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

Do not stop now. We have done much, but so much remains to be done. Our membership efforts have been outstanding, but they can get better. Working together and reaching out in all directions will make that happen. We already have proven that. Now let us build on it.

Membership and service do go hand in hand.

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Editorial office: (317) 630-1352
FAX: (317) 630-1280
Online at: <http://www.legion.org>

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EDITOR
Steve B. Brooks
CONTRIBUTORS
James V. Carroll
Matt Grills
Elissa Kaupisch
Jeff Stoffer
SUBSCRIPTIONS
Robin Bowman

Still Serving America

Does your post have an ongoing program or activity that serves your community and can be implemented at posts across the country? Does your post have methods of boosting membership and spreading the Legion message that will work at any post?

Drop us a line and tell us what your post and its members

are doing to demonstrate they are *Still Serving America*.

In submitting your information, please be sure to include your full name, address and telephone number.

Send your news items to: *Still Serving America*, The American Legion Dispatch, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

From the desk of the National Adjutant:

A face behind the cause

Granting Sam Wise a miracle shows results of your generosity.

While I am pleased by the generosity of Legionnaires across the country, I am never surprised by it. After all, we are talking about men and women who laid their lives on the line for this country.

For those who have made that kind of sacrifice, digging deep into their pockets is second nature. As a result, the money pours into the causes the Legion gets behind.

National Commander Richard J. "Ric" Santos set a goal of raising \$500,000 this year for the National Emergency Fund. Legionnaires raised more than \$528,000.

Robert W. Spanogle

This year Legionnaires donated more than \$650,000 to the Child Welfare Foundation. As a partner in the Children's Miracle Network, we've contributed more than \$2.7 million to their affiliated hospitals.

While Legionnaires always are quick to give to a good cause, though sometimes they don't see the fruits of that generosity. They know their money is being put to good use, but they don't know how it personally can affect an individual or family.

That's why I want to tell you about Sam Wise, a child who has benefited directly from the doctors and nurses working within the Children's Miracle Network. At our national convention in Charlotte, Sam and his family will take the stage with CMN spokesperson Marie Osmond as this year's "Miracle Child."

The Children's Miracle Network is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to helping children by raising funds and awareness for 170 children's hospitals throughout North America. Each year these nonprofit hospitals treat more than 17 million children afflicted with diseases, injuries and birth defects of every kind.

A year ago, Sam was born to Perry and Crystal Wise of Concord, N.C. The couple previously had weathered two failed pregnancies and then were dealt another blow when Sam came into this world 16 weeks early, weighing a little more than a pound.

"I didn't get to see him for the first 12 hours after he was born," Crystal said. "When I did get to see him, I couldn't touch him. And his skin was so transparent, I could almost see through him."

"For him to be so small, we knew he was on the fence."

Sam spent the first part of his life in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at The Children's Hospital at Carolinas Medical Center, a CMN affiliate, in Charlotte. He underwent surgery at five days old, followed up with two more intestinal surgeries, two eye surgeries and heart surgery.

"We always were hopeful, but at the same time, we made sure we were prepared for the worst," Crystal said. "We had to be realistic, but we never gave up hope."

Sam later developed pneumonia and contracted an E. coli infection. But the young boy kept making it through his ordeals. Still, he continued to remain hospitalized. His stay stretched to months, which became very hard on his parents.

"You can't imagine what it was like to see all those other mothers with babies in their carriers ... going home ... and having to leave Sam there," Crystal said. "It was heartbreaking."

"The day I came home, I cried the whole day, because I came home and he had to stay."

Sam is one of millions of children on the receiving end of these CMN miracles every year. Thanks to the generosity of Legionnaires, those miracles continue.

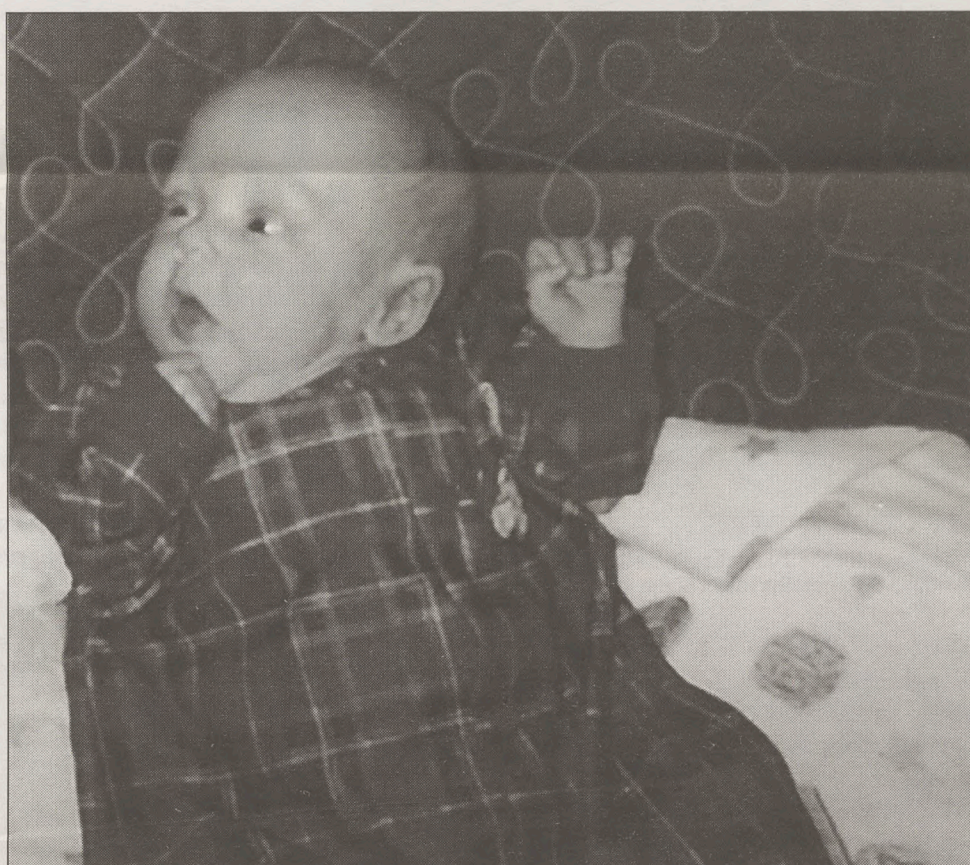
Before Sam could leave the hospital, he needed to gain weight. His parents began counting every pound he gained. When he gained enough weight, Sam was moved to the Neonatal Progressive Care Nursery, more commonly referred to as the "fattenin' up" nursery.

It was there Sam's parents were taught how to address the special needs their son might have, including how to handle medical equipment and recognize warning signs to avoid emergency situations.

Crystal and Perry were patient. They maintained hope. They listened and



When Sam Wise was born 16 weeks premature last August, above, he weighed just one pound. He wasn't able to leave the hospital until December, but through the care he received at a Children's Miracle Network-affiliated hospital, he now weighs more than 13 pounds, below, and is doing well. Sam and his parents will be recognized at the 84th National Convention in Charlotte and are an example of Legion donations at work.



learned. Then they were rewarded.

A week before Christmas, four months after his birth, Sam was taken home. His struggle to learn to breathe, to overcome his many surgeries, to simply survive, finally had taken a turn for the better.

"We were overjoyed he was coming home, but at the same time, we couldn't have the normal mindset of parents taking their newborn home from the hospital," Crystal said. "Everyone wanted to come and see him, but we really couldn't risk him getting any infections. So that was tough."

That was December last year. On Aug. 4, Sam celebrated his first birthday. He now weighs more than 13 pounds and "can be a handful at times," Crystal said. But Mom and Dad are thankful every day they look at their son. And they save a lot of those thanks for the staff at the Carolinas Medical Center.

"We still stay in touch with members of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, usually on a weekly basis," Crystal said. "We still feel very connected to those folks and feel we can't fully express our appreciation for what they did."

"A lot of them say 'We were just doing our job.' But what they did means so much more to us than that."

Sam - who has several family members that are members of the Legion family - is one of millions of children on the receiving end of these CMN miracles every year. Thanks to the generosity of Legionnaires, those miracles continue.

MEMBERSHIP FROM PAGE 1

it, and most importantly, share it."

"We now have a stronger foundation to continue this membership growth going into the 2003 membership year, as well as beyond," National Membership & Post Activities Committee Chairman Dan Dellinger said. "However, we must persist in our efforts to visit the active-duty, Reserve and National-Guard facilities through utilization of the Reconnect programs. And we must keep the Family Support Network alive and functional for those deployed personnel whose families are left behind. We must promote the Blue Star Banner program and be active participants in the Sept. 11 Scholarship Fund."

Dellinger painted a rosy picture of the Legion's membership efforts, noting headquarters post renewals are at 78 percent – up from just 60 percent 10 years ago – while both traditional new and DMS starts are up.

"This has all been possible because of the hard work of our members," Dellinger said. "Other factors may have contributed, but none like those offered through the human touch our members bring. They have certainly reached out in all directions."

"Goals are being met. We are growing. This did not happen because we changed our values. It happened because you asked new veterans to join our



M&PA Committee Chairman Dan Dellinger praised Legionnaires for their membership efforts but challenged them to continue boosting the ranks of the organization.

ranks."

Leading candidate for national commander Ron Conley and former National Legislative Commission Chairman John Brieden echoed Dellinger in suggesting meeting with prospective members face to face is the best way to increase the organization's ranks.

"I believe membership is like Legislative. It's best done on a grass-roots level," he said. "Eyeball to eyeball, person to person, that helps promote membership, and sometimes I think we've lost sight of that."

"It doesn't matter who the national commander of The American Legion is. This organization was founded as a grass-roots organization," Conley said. "It still is a grass-roots organization."

Brieden said two keys to increasing membership are to promote the organization's programs and make an impact on the community level.

"We have to play off our programs. No other organization has the depth of programs The American Legion has," Brieden said. "No other organizations have the programs that touch as many people as The American Legion has. People want to belong to an organization doing good."

"What are people do in their individual communities is what's important. That's what people see. That's what The American Legion is to them."

"There has never been a better time for veterans to come into The American Legion folds," Santos said.



National Membership Assistant Director Michele Steinmetz, left, and M&PA Committee member Al Ford map out strategies

for post development during one of the workshop's breakout sessions. Ford envisions a Legion post for every high school.

"Membership in The American Legion will allow those veterans to continue to serve America."

Up-Close Learning. Workshop attendees were given the opportunity to attend breakout sessions during their stay in Indianapolis.

Al Ford, a member of the National M&PA Committee, and National Membership Assistant Director Michele Steinmetz discussed post development, emphasizing the strategy of having a Legion post for every high school.

They also recommended that every department and district form a New Post/Revitalization Committee and gave direction on how to set up new posts.

The pair also presented a step-by-step guide to conducting a recruiting event.

M&PA Committee member Dale Punch and National Membership Assistant Director Tom Harris discussed the Legion's Reconnect program, including the history of it, who is involved and how to implement a Reconnect program with the active-duty military, National Guard or the Reserves. They also presented Reconnect success stories from Michigan and Georgia.

M&PA Committee member Myron Kirby and National Membership Assistant Director Wade

Habshey led a panel discussion with active-duty military and National Guard recruiters.

Other Presentations.

Members of National Headquarters staff and representatives from Legion corporate partners explained how these programs and corporations can be used to increase membership. Information was provided about TAOOnline.com, one of the first e-recruiting sites for the 500,000-plus job seekers from the military community; the Legion's partnership with First National Bank of Omaha; the Blue Star Service Banner and Family Support Network programs; the Children's Miracle Network; and Team American Legion.

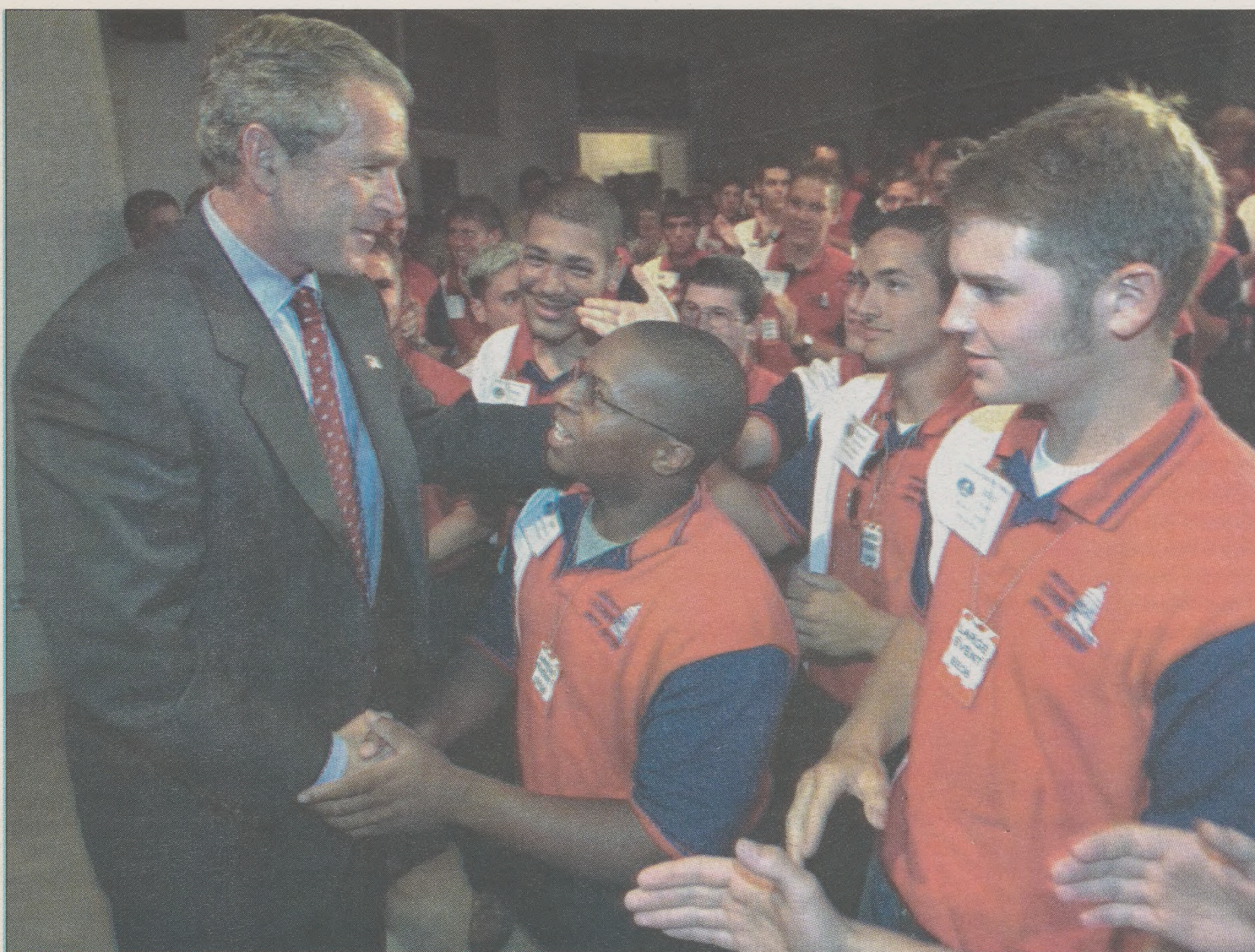
Elsie Bailey, unopposed candidate for next year's Legion Auxiliary national president, asked Legionnaires to include potential Auxiliary members in their recruiting efforts. "Make an impression on them to join our organization," Bailey said. "They may not join this year, but down the road they might."

Command Sgt. Maj. Roger L. Leturno of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command thanked the Legion for its Reconnect efforts and asked Legionnaires to make themselves available to recruiters in their communities as part of a support network.



American Legion Public Relations Director Joe March explains how a program like the Blue Star Service Banner can lead to

membership gains. Workshop attendees were encouraged to emphasize Legion programs when recruiting new members.



President George W. Bush visits with high-school participants in The American Legion's Boys Nation and Girls Nation programs at the Old

Executive Office Building near the White House on July 27. The program lasted from July 19 to 27.

A week of learning in D.C.

Boys Nation participants get up-close view of nation's government.

By Lucia Anderson

Washington D.C., the nation's capital and home to government officials, welcomed the future leaders of the United States from The American Legion Boys Nation program July 19 to 27. Ninety-six high-school students from across the nation gathered on Capitol Hill for a firsthand introduction to the structure and function of the federal government.

At a time when terror has invaded the nation and bad news is the norm, the Legion has proved its dedication to the youth and future of the country with Boys Nation. Two young men from 48 Boys State programs were selected to attend Boys Nation as "senators" from their home states. The young men were selected based on academic record and leadership potential. Each delegate will be entering his senior year in high school, allowing the young man to apply his experience in government to his remaining year of high school and at the same time endorsing and promoting the program among fellow students.

The week of government training combined lectures and forums with visits to federal agencies, institutions, shrines and historical spots in and around Washington. Actual participation in the political process was highlighted throughout the week's activities to include the organization of party conventions and the nomination and election of a Boys Nation president and vice president.

Bradley Johnson of Cary, N.C., was elected Boys Nation president, while Geoffrey Ellis of San Antonio was elected vice president. Both young men took the oath of office in the chambers of the Court of Military Appeals. Judge Sparky Gierke, past national commander of the Legion, administered the oath.

These youthful lawmakers caucused at the beginning of the session, organized into committees and conducted hearings on bills submitted by delegates to the program. Jay Albert of Tulsa, Okla., created a bill that encouraged responsible investment activity and the funding of prescription benefits for senior citizens, with preference given to American veterans and their families. Aaron Brown of Alpharetta, Ga.,

and Robert Huefner of Peachtree City, Ga., submitted a bill to show that the young men of Boys Nation 2002 program condemn the recent actions of the 9th District Federal Circuit Courts while supporting the current Pledge of Allegiance.

During a visit to Capitol Hill, Boys Nation senators met and conversed with representatives and senators from their home states. The delegates also visited monuments and memorials, including the National Mall, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. They also visited Arlington National Cemetery to participate in a special wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The delegates also enjoyed the home cooking of Greenbelt Post 136 and the company of National Commander Richard J. "Ric" Santos in Maryland. The weeks concluded with a visit from President George W. Bush, who had inspirational words for the youth of the nation.

The American Legion is dedicated to strengthening America. The organization's philosophy is to work with the nation's young people and prepare them for the tasks they will face as adults.

The Legion, through its youth activities programs, plays a leading role in the development of tomorrow's informed and responsible citizens.

The week of government training combined lectures and forums with visits to federal agencies, institutions, shrines and historical spots in and around Washington.

NEF Commander's Challenge		
Department	Goal	Contributions
Category 1 (100,000 plus)		
California	\$25,596	\$16,981
Florida	\$21,678	\$6,724
Illinois	\$26,469	\$9,539
Indiana	\$23,775	\$6,093
Minnesota	\$21,753	\$130,782
New York	\$35,443	\$51,083
Ohio	\$27,899	\$21,889
Pennsylvania	\$44,905	\$7,224
Category 2 (70,000 plus)		
Iowa	\$13,332	\$13,982
Maryland	\$14,240	\$40,843
Michigan	\$16,763	\$23,450
New Jersey	\$14,346	\$10,263
Texas	\$15,933	\$11,950
Wisconsin	\$13,604	\$5,891
Category 3 (40,000 plus)		
Georgia	\$8,054	\$13,448
Kansas	\$9,145	\$4,876
Massachusetts	\$11,966	\$12,269
Missouri	\$11,409	\$8,077
Nebraska	\$10,534	\$10,735
North Carolina	\$8,509	\$885
Virginia	\$9,245	\$4,292
Category 4 (25,000 plus)		
Arizona	\$6,966	\$7,976
Connecticut	\$5,638	\$2,000
Kentucky	\$5,832	\$2,775
Louisiana	\$6,781	\$8,657
Maine	\$4,803	\$2,704
Oklahoma	\$5,455	\$7,227
Oregon	\$4,952	\$7,415
South Carolina	\$4,612	\$4,760
South Dakota	\$5,014	\$5,660
Tennessee	\$6,093	\$2,306
Washington	\$6,838	\$474
West Virginia	\$4,970	\$5,675
Category 5 (10,000 plus)		
Alabama	\$4,483	\$7,390
Arkansas	\$4,054	\$395
Colorado	\$4,427	\$5,880
Idaho	\$2,004	\$2,080
Mississippi	\$3,411	\$4,910
Montana	\$2,186	\$1,770
New Hampshire	\$4,454	\$1,331
New Mexico	\$2,518	\$1,240
North Dakota	\$4,372	\$2,546
Rhode Island	\$1,853	\$250
Vermont	\$3,110	\$12,570
Category 6 (under 10,000)		
Alaska	\$1,587	\$4,500
Delaware	\$1,778	\$3,633
Dist. of Columbia	\$608	\$898
Hawaii	\$604	\$1,206
Nevada	\$1,276	\$1,680
Puerto Rico	\$1,602	\$2,200
Utah	\$1,676	\$2,374
Wyoming	\$1,445	\$2,398
Totals	\$500,000	\$528,174

NEF goal reached

At the Commanders and Adjutants Conference during the NEC Fall Meetings, National Commander Richard J. "Ric" Santos issued a National Emergency Fund challenge to each department commander. Departments were encouraged to contact districts and posts to arrange fund-raising projects.

Santos' goal of \$500,000 has been met, as more than \$528,000 was collected during the challenge. Department commanders with the most donations in each of the six Big Twelve categories will go to dinner with the national commander at the national convention this month. Also, all departments that met their assigned goals will receive a plaque from the national commander at the convention.

The Commander's Challenge ended Aug. 1. Above is a current breakdown of each department's goal and where each department finished.

Public-relations materials available to members

A wealth of public-relations materials is available to Legionnaires and is both a phone call away and free of charge. The materials can be obtained by calling (317) 630-1253.

The American Legion's Public Relations Division has a variety of materials available for various media, including television, radio and print journalism. The materials cover multiple Legion initiatives, including youth programs, Reconnect, the Legion's position on the Department of Veterans Affairs CARES study, the Family Support Network and the flag-protection amendment.

"We have videotapes, video training tapes and fillers that can be used for radio and TV spots," said Robert Morrill, chairman of the Public Relations Commission. "The TV spots we have are 30 to 60 seconds in length and are available on VHS. We will supply a Beta tape for any television station who will commit to airing the spots.

"Our radio spots are now produced and distributed on CDs, which most radio stations prefer. It provides for a lot of versatility."

Videos available through the Legion's PR Division include "A Children's Guide to the Pledge of Allegiance," "Reconnect: Who's Wearing My Uniform?" American Legion Baseball, Blue Star Service Banners public-service announcements, "Good PR Equals Membership Success," "Membership: Team, Tools, Publications and Self-Assessment," "Membership Sales Techniques" and "A Day to Remember" PSAs.

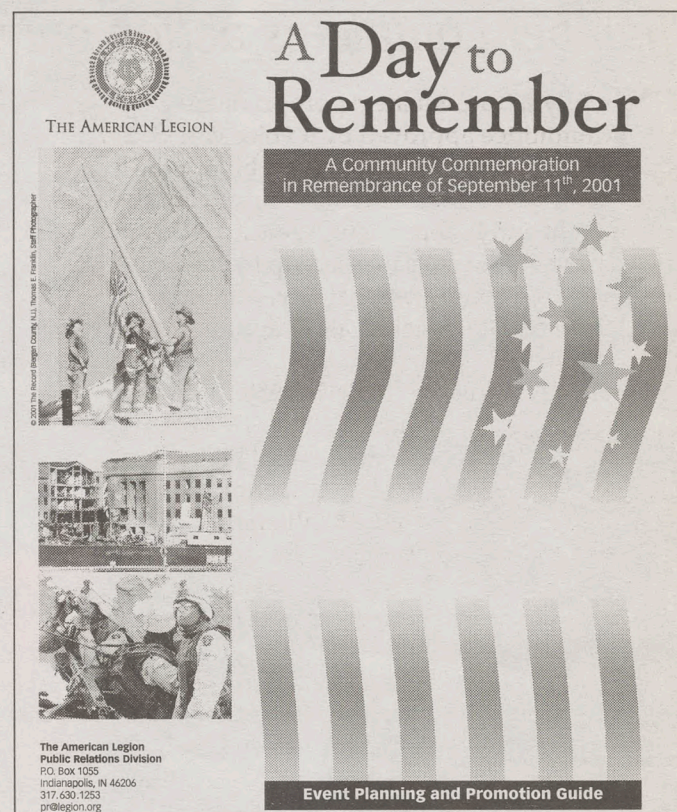
Radio spots available include the Blue Star Service Banner, 61 PSAs plugging Legion programs and issues and a Patriotic Holidays Package, that includes membership radio spots.

The PR Division also has a variety of ad slicks available covering the National Oratorical Contest, flag protection, membership, Junior Shooting Sports, Scouting, and support for the National Guard and Reserves.

"The ad slicks can be used in newspapers, and they can be reproduced as posters, in post newspapers or even in handbills," Morrill said.

Brochures and booklets covering "A Day to Remember," a nationwide military support network, how to write for newspaper opinion pages and the Legion's 2002 public relations handbook are available, as are suggested speeches on dedicating a new post home, flag-retirement ceremonies and every military holiday.

News releases, suggested speeches and a speaker's guide also are available on the Legion Web site at www.legion.org.



Materials such as the "A Day to Remember" booklet are available through The American Legion Public Relations Division. Other materials include suggested speeches, television and radio spots, and ad slicks.

Taps

Vincent G. McAloon Notre Dame, Ind.

Vincent G. McAloon of Post IT01 (Department of France) passed away May 9 at age 92. He was a World War II Army veteran with 45 continuous years of Legion membership.

Mr. McAloon served as department commander from 1963 to 1965, department adjutant from 1986 to 1989 and 1989 to 1991, alternate National Executive Committeeman from 1986 to 1990, department vice commander from 1960 to 1963, National Americanism Council vice chairman from 1966 to 1994, National Distinguished Guests Committee vice chairman from 1964 to 1965, department chaplain from 1981 to 1986, department finance officer from 1966 to 1972, department Public Relations chairman from 1966 to 1968, department service officer from 1991 to 1994 and department Trophies and Awards chairman from 1968 to 1974.

He was a member of the National Americanism Council from 1965 to 1966 and the National Distinguished Guests Committee from 1962 to 1964.

Thomas A. Miller Tampa, Fla.

Thomas A. Miller of Post 111 (Department of Florida) passed away July 17 at age 81. He was a World War II Army Air Corp veteran with 51 continuous years of Legion membership.

Mr. Miller served as National Constitution and By-Laws Committee consultant from 1984 to 1995, department chaplain from 1971 to 1972, department Religious Emphasis chairman from 1971 to 1972, department Constitution and By-Laws chairman from 1972 to 1973, department Legislative chairman from 1972 to 1973, department Resolutions Committee chairman from 1977 to 1984, department Convention chairman from 1989 to 1990, and department judge advocate from 1972 to 1973, 1978 to 1979, 1989 and 1990 to 2002.

He was a member of the National Distinguished Guests Committee from 1969 to 1970 and 1972 to 1974, the National Veterans Preference Committee from 1970 to 1972, the National Membership & Post Activities Committee from 1970 to 1972, the National Legislative Council from 1981 to 1994 and the National Resolution Assignment Committee from 1995 to 2002.

Clifford E. Stoddard Sutherland, Neb.

Clifford E. Stoddard of Post 36 (Department of Nebraska) passed away July 31 at age 57. He was a Vietnam War Navy veteran with 35 continuous years of Legion membership.

Mr. Stoddard served as department vice commander from 1984 to 1985, department Economic chairman from 1995 to 2002, department Employment chairman from 1995 to 2002, department Rehabilitation chairman from 1995 to 2002, department sergeant-at-arms from 1992 to 1993 and department Veterans Preference chairman from 1995 to 2002.

He was a member of the National Foreign Relations Commission from 1998 to 1999 and the National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission Region 6 from 1999 to 2002.

Mr. Stoddard is survived by his wife, Sue, and three daughters and one son.

Condolences and memorials may be sent to the family at 448 N. County Rd., Sutherland, NE 69165-7202.

John P. Swift West Roxbury, Mass.

John P. Swift of Post 167 (Department of Massachusetts) passed away July 29 at age 96. He was a World War II Navy veteran with 58 continuous years of Legion membership.

Mr. Swift served as department commander from 1957 to 1958; alternate National Executive Committeeman from 1957 to 1959; department vice commander from 1954 to 1957; department adjutant from 1966 to 1986; National Membership & Post Activities Committee vice chairman from 1958 to 1959; National Economic Commission vice chairman from 1957 to 1958; National Legislative Council vice chairman from 1975 to 1976 and 1983 to 1986; department Publications chairman from 1995 to 1996; department Security chairman from 1955 to 1956; department Rehabilitation chairman from 1956 to 1957; department Public Relations chairman from 1957 to 1960 and 1989 to 1990; department judge advocate from 1959 to 1960; department Convention chairman from 1968 to 1969 and 1985 to 1986; department Legislative chairman from 1966 to 1967, 1968 to 1975 and 1978 to 1979; department Veterans Preference chairman from 1969 to 1972, 1974 to 1975, 1976 to 1977 and 1978 to 1980; department Membership & Post Activities chairman from 1977 to 1978; and department Housing chairman from 1985 to 1987. He was a member of the National Legislative Commission from 1986 to 2001, the National Constitution and By-Laws Committee from 2001 to 2002, the National Security Training Committee from 1951 to 1954, National Rehabilitation Commission Advisory Board from 1955 to 1956 and 1980 to 1984, the National Membership & Post Activities Committee from 1956 to 1957 and 1966 to 1976, the National Law & Order Committee from 1960 to 1967, and the National Legislative Council from 1977 to 1980, 1999 to 2000 and 2001 to 2002.

Mr. Swift is survived by his wife, Mary, and a daughter.

Donations in his memory can be made to Mt. St. Vincent, 125 Oakland St., Wellesley Hills, MA 02181.

Edward J. White Elko, Nev.

Edward J. White of Post 7 (Department of Nevada) passed away Dec. 28 at age 81. He was a World War II Army veteran with 55 continuous years of Legion membership.

Mr. White served as department commander from 1989 to 1990, department vice commander from 1988 to 1989, department Convention chairman from 1988 to 1991, department Finance chairman from 1984 to 1986, department Religious Emphasis chairman from 1966 to 1967, and department chaplain from 1966 to 1967 and 1987 to 1988.

He was a member of the National Child Welfare Commission Advisory Board from 1960 to 1962 and the National Commission on Children & Youth Region 7 from 1990 to 1992.

Harold O. Wilson Alexandria, Va.

Harold O. Wilson of Post 8 (Department of District of Columbia) passed away June 15 at age 81. He was a World War II Navy and Korean War Army veteran with 47 continuous years of Legion membership.

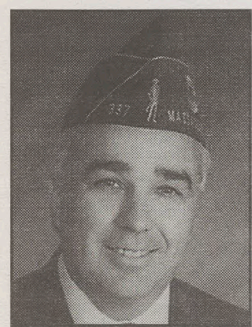
Mr. Wilson served on the National Americanism Council from 1967 to 1969.

Senate panel passes 2003 VA-HUD spending measure

Chamber completes action on all 13 appropriations bills; S. 2797 awaiting House action.

On July 25, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved by a voice vote S. 2797, the fiscal 2003 appropriations bill for the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development and Independent Agencies. The measure was one of four bills marked up by the Senate Appropriations Committee that day, completing action by the Senate panel on all 13 appropriations bills.

Overall, VA would be funded at \$58.2 billion under S. 2797. This is an increase of \$5.4 billion from fiscal 2002 spending amounts and \$3.6 billion more than the president's budget proposal. Each major category of the VA budget for next fiscal year is outlined below.



Paul A. Morin

Veterans Benefits Administration. One of the areas of mandatory spending in the bill, a total of \$28.9 billion was set aside for this overall account area. Areas included in VBA are compensation and pension, readjustment benefits, veterans insurance and indemnities, veterans-housing benefits program, the education-loan fund program, vocational-rehabilitation loans program, American Indian veteran housing-loan program and guaranteed transitional housing loans for homeless veterans program.

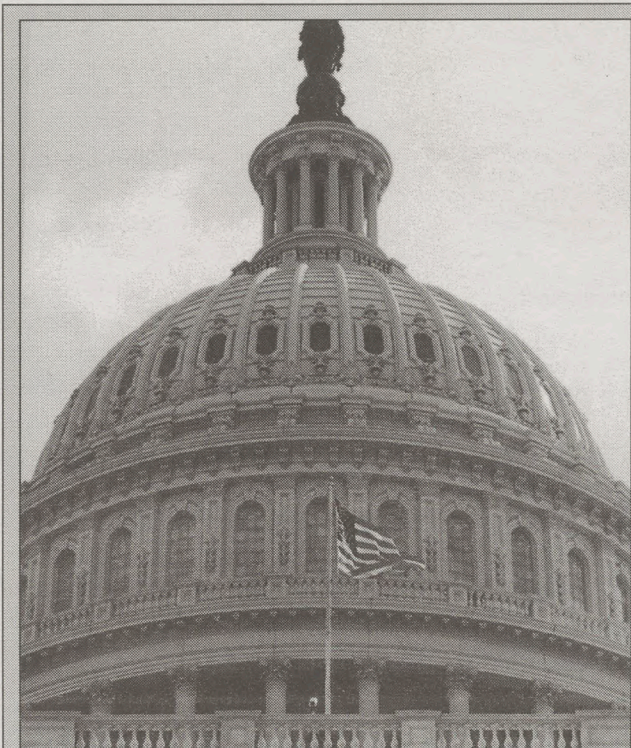
Medical Care. The Senate panel approved \$23.9 billion for direct VA medical care. This amount is \$2.6 billion more than was appropriated in the current year and \$1.2 billion more than the White House proposal for this account. Much of the increase, \$1.1 billion, was needed to offset one of the president's budget proposals that The American Legion vehemently opposes. The fiscal 2003 VA budget proposal included a provision to charge Priority Group 7 veterans a \$1,500 co-payment to enroll in the VA health-care system. The Senate panel resoundingly rejected the co-payment proposal and added the additional funding.

In a related matter, the committee projected that the Medical Care Collections Fund would collect \$1.4 billion in medical-care payments from third parties and other insurance providers to pay for certain veterans' medical care. The Legion consistently has told Congress that the increasingly rosy projections for MCCF collections are unattainable until VA's billing and collections system is brought up-to-date. In addition, the Legion will continue to push Congress to approve Medicare reimbursement legislation that will allow veterans enrolled in VA's health-care system to have their nonservice-connected ailments treated by VA and reimbursed by Medicare.

Medical and Prosthetic Research. S. 2797 would fund this account at \$400 million, \$29 million more than the current year's funding amount and \$6 million more than proposed by the president. VA medical research is recognized around the world for its achievements. The increased funding will allow VA to continue its leadership in this field.

Medical Administration and Miscellaneous Operating Expenses. This account would receive \$70 million from the committee's bill, the same amount as proposed by the White House and an increase of \$3 million from fiscal 2002 spending amounts. This account provides funds for Central Office executive direction, administration and supervision of all VA medical and construction programs.

General Operating Expenses. The committee's measure would fund this account at \$1.3 billion, which is equal to the president's request and an increase of \$100 million from current-year funding.



Dateline: Capitol Hill

This account supports VA staff responsible for processing benefits claims, which is still an area of extreme concern to the Legion.

National Cemetery Administration. This area would be funded at \$133 million under the committee's plan, which is the same as the president's proposal. It is an increase of \$12 million from the fiscal 2002 enacted level. As the World War II-Korean War generation of veterans ages, the number of interments will increase during the next decade. Several new national cemeteries are either opening or planned for the next decade. NCA will be faced with taking care of this increased tempo of interments, upkeep of current national cemeteries and the opening of new cemeteries.

Major Construction. The committee's bill would fund major medical construction projects at \$194 million, equal to the president's budget request and \$11 million more than the current-year funding. Much of this funding will go to major projects to make certain VA medical centers more resistant to seismic disturbances, as well as other construction projects that will cost more than \$4 million. Other funds will be used to update VA facilities in conjunction with the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services, or CARES, project.

Minor Construction. Under the committee's proposal, this account would be funded at \$211 million, the same amount as funded in the current year and proposed by the White House. This account provides for constructing, altering, extending and improving any of the facilities under the jurisdiction or for the use of VA, including planning, CARES activities, assessment of needs, architectural and engineering services, and site acquisition where the estimated cost of a project is less than \$4 million.

State Veterans' Homes Construction Grants. S. 2797 would fund this program at \$100 million, the same amount as contained in fiscal 2002 funding and equal to the fiscal 2003 budget proposal. This account assists individual states in building extended-care facilities for aging veterans who are unable to take care of themselves and cannot be served by a VA facility.

State Veterans' Cemeteries Construction Grants. This account would receive \$32 million from the committee's bill. This is an increase of \$7 million more than fiscal 2002 appropriated levels and the same total as proposed by the White House. This program allows states to construct veterans' cemeteries to alle-

viate the interment needs of veterans whose states have no nearby national cemetery.

The next step for S. 2797 is passage by the Senate. In the other chamber, the House Appropriations Committee has not approved its version of the Senate bill. Further action will not take place in the House until after the August-Labor Day recess.

Concurrent receipt update

House and Senate legislation to initiate full concurrent receipt are now in conference committee. The bills, H.R. 4546 and S. 2514, are the fiscal 2003 Department of Defense authorization measures and set the blueprint for spending in the upcoming fiscal year. In addition, these measures also contain various policy statements, including concurrent receipt.

Each bill contains language to institute full concurrent receipt, which would allow military retirees receiving VA compensation to receive both their retired pay and their VA compensation without subtractions of any kind. However, each bill takes a slightly different route for achieving this end.

Under H.R. 4546, the amount of retirement pay would be phased in during a five-year period, beginning with 30 percent of the otherwise authorized retirement pay in 2003 and increasing to 45 percent in 2004, 60 percent in 2005, 80 percent in 2006 and 100 percent in 2007. The House version only grants concurrent receipt for those disabled military retirees rated 60 percent or above. By contrast, S. 2514 will grant disabled military retirees full concurrent receipt of VA disability pay and military retirement pay to all disabled veterans and would be effective Oct. 1. It grants full concurrent receipt to disabled military retirees with ratings from 10 percent to 100 percent.

The two measures now must go to a conference committee to reconcile differences. Both chambers of Congress have appointed members to the conference committee. It is vital that members of The American Legion family contact these conferees and urge them to support the Senate version of the concurrent-receipt provision. Representatives and senators are on August-Labor Day recess and should be contacted at their state or district offices. Their addresses and phone numbers can be found in the blue pages of your local telephone directory.

Senate: Carl Levin, D-Mich.; Ted Kennedy, D-Mass.; Robert Byrd, D-W.Va.; Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn.; Max Cleland, D-Ga.; Mary Landrieu, D-La.; Jack Reed, D-R.I.; Daniel Akaka, Hawaii; Bill Nelson, D-Fl.; Ben Nelson, D-Neb.; Jean Carnahan, D-Mo.; Mark Dayton, D-Minn.; Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M.; John Warner, R-Va.; Strom Thurmond, R-S.C.; John McCain, D-Ariz.; Robert Smith, R-N.H.; James Inhofe, R-Okla.; Rick Santorum, R-Pa.; Pat Roberts, R-Kan.; Wayne Allard, R-Colo.; Tim Hutchinson, R-Ark.; Jeff Sessions, R-Ala.; Susan Collins, R-Maine; and Jim Bunning, R-Ky.

House: Bob Stump, R-Ariz.; Duncan Hunter, R-Calif.; James Hansen, R-Utah; Curt Weldon, R-Pa.; Joel Hefley, R-Colo.; James Saxton, R-N.J.; John McHugh, R-N.Y. Terry Everett, R-Ala.; Roscoe Bartlett, R-Md.; Buck McKeon, R-Calif.; J.C. Watts, R-Okla.; Mac Thornberry, R-Texas; John Hostettler, R-Ind.; Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga.; Walter Jones, R-N.C.; Van Hilleary, R-Tenn.; Lindsey Graham, R-S.C.; Porter Goss, R-Fla.; Doug Bereuter, R-Neb.; Johnny Isakson, R-Ga.; Joe Wilson, R-S.C.; Billy Tauzin, R-La.; Joe Barton, R-Texas; Dan Burton, R-Ind.; Dave Weldon, R-Fla.; Henry Hyde, R-Ill.; Ben Gilman, R-N.Y.; James Sensenbrenner, R-Wis.; Lamar Smith, R-Texas; John Duncan, R-Tenn.; James Gibbons, R-Nev.; Sherwood Boehlert, R-N.Y.; Nick Smith, R-Mich.; Don Young, R-Alaska; Frank LoBiondo, R-N.J.; Chris



A new coin designed by MTM Coins will pay tribute to retired U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Patrick H. Brady, a Medal of Honor recipient. The front of the coin is above left, the back above right.

Commemorative coin to honor Maj. Gen. Brady

Sale of coins to benefit Citizens Flag Alliance.

A new coin will pay tribute to retired U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Patrick H. Brady, a recipient of the Medal of Honor.



Maj. Gen. Patrick H. Brady

MTM Coins has announced the second in a series of honor coins recognizing American military heroes. The newest coin will honor Brady, who received the Medal of Honor for extraordinary heroism in Vietnam.

Coins come in two versions: a serialized version limited to 50 coins and an unnumbered version. All proceeds from the coins' sale will go to support the Citizens Flag Alliance, a group of individuals and organizations that supports passage of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution protecting the U.S. flag from physical desecration. The amendment also has passed in the House of Representatives and is awaiting action in the Senate.

Brady serves as the chairman of the CFA's board of directors.

The coins are \$10 for the unnumbered version and \$20 for the serialized coins. The coins can be ordered by calling MTM Coins at (866) 278-1306 or e-mailing MTM at mtm@honorcoins.com.

VA announces new committee members

Department of Veterans Affairs

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi has appointed seven new members to the committee that advises him on readjustment programs run by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"The emotional and psychological effects of combat can make the readjustment to civilian life every bit as challenging as the physical injuries we can see," Principi said. "This committee is instrumental in helping to guide VA's efforts in providing the care and services veterans need to successfully transition from military service to family and community life."

The Advisory Committee on the Readjustment of Veterans reviews current VA programs aimed at helping veterans readjust to civilian life and evaluates their effectiveness. The committee assesses availability, ease of access, quality and veteran satisfaction with the services provided.

The new members of the committee are: Michael G. DePaulo of Boston; David J. Greco of Woodbridge, Va.; Allen K. Hoe of Honolulu; Robert W. Maras of Manchester, N.J.; Wade R. Sanders of San Diego; Kenneth O. Stout of Anchorage, Alaska; and Jay A. Weiss, M.D., of Monroe, La.

Committee members update the secretary regarding the nature and character of psychological problems stemming from military service, and recommending policies, organizational changes and services necessary to meet the readjustment needs of veterans in the future.

Of particular interest to the committee is VA's continued support for the care of war-related post-traumatic stress disorder, including community-based Vet Centers and the full range of medical center-based treatment programs.

VA's 206 Vet Centers, located across the nation, have served more than 1.6 million veterans since the program began in 1979. In fiscal 2000, Vet Center staff saw more than 130,000 veterans and provided more than 900,000 visits to veterans and family members.

Although the original legislation authorizing the program restricted readjustment counseling to Vietnam veterans who were at greatest risk at the time, current law allows VA to provide outreach and counseling to any veteran exposed to war-zone stress in any war, conflict or peacekeeping mission.

The committee includes 15 members chosen based on their veteran status, professional leadership experience, and ethnic and geographical diversity. Veterans service organizations and women veterans also are represented.

The committee chairman is John F. Sommer Jr. of Falls Church, Va. Sommer is executive director of the Washington office of The American Legion.

SENATE FROM PAGE 7

Smith, R-N.J.; Michael Bilirakis, R-Fla.; Jeff Miller, R-Fla.; Ike Skelton, D-Mo.; John Spratt, D-Tenn.; Solomon Ortiz, D-Texas; Lane Evans, D-Ill.; Gene Taylor, D-Miss.; Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawaii; Martin Meehan, D-Mass.; Robert Underwood, D-Guam; Tom Allen, D-Maine; Vic Snyder, D-Ark.; Silvestre Reyes, D-Texas; Jim Turner, D-Texas; Ellen Tauscher, D-

Calif.; Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.; George Miller, D-Calif.; John Dingell, D-Mich.; Henry Waxman, D-Calif.; Tom Lantos, D-Calif.; John Conyers, D-Mich.; Nick Rahall, D-W.Va.; Ralph Hall, D-Texas; Nydia Velazquez, D-N.Y.; Corrine Brown, D-Fla.; Donald Manzullo, R-Ill.; Sue Kelly, R-N.Y.; Bob Filner, D-Calif.; and Julia Carson, D-Ind.

The Office of Management and Budget has advised Bush to veto the final DoD authorization bill if it con-

tains any provision relating to concurrent receipt. The president has said on many occasions that veterans have made this country what it is today. He can prove his sincerity by approving concurrent receipt. The Legion continues to support full concurrent receipt for all disabled military retirees

Paul A. Morin is chairman of The American Legion National Legislative Commission.

Eligibility requirements for the Legion, Auxiliary and SAL

The American Legion

Any person is eligible for membership who was a member of the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps or U.S. Coast Guard and assigned to active duty at some time during any of the following periods: April 6, 1917-Nov. 11, 1918; Dec. 7, 1941-Dec. 31, 1946; June 25, 1950-Jan. 31, 1955; Feb. 28, 1961-May 7, 1975; Aug. 24, 1982-July 31, 1984; Dec. 20, 1989-Jan. 31, 1990; and Aug. 2, 1990-present. Merchant Marines who served from Dec. 7, 1941, to Aug. 15, 1945, and have been deemed veterans are eligible for membership. Those who have left the service must have received an honorable discharge. Membership also is open to those who were citizens of the United States at the time of their entry into foreign

armed forces that served with the United States during any of these periods. Service must have been terminated with an honorable discharge or honorable separation.

The American Legion Auxiliary

All women who are eligible for membership in the Auxiliary fall into one of the following categories:

1. The mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, granddaughters, great-granddaughters and grandmothers of members of The American Legion.

2. The mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, granddaughters, great-granddaughters and grandmothers of those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces during any of the eligibility periods listed and who died in the line of duty during such service, or who, having

received an honorable discharge, died after such service.

3. The mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, granddaughters, great-granddaughters and grandmothers of those who were citizens of the United States and who served during any of the eligibility periods in the armed forces of any of the governments who were allies of the United States and who died in the line of duty during such service, or who, having received an honorable discharge, died after such service.

4. Women who are eligible for membership in The American Legion in their own right.

(Eligibility includes step-relatives)

Sons of The American Legion

Eligible members must be a male

descendant, including stepsons and adopted sons, of a member of The American Legion.

Others eligible to join are:

■ Male descendants, stepsons and adopted sons included, of a veteran who died in service during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama or the Persian Gulf War. See specific time periods for service during these conflicts.

■ Male descendants, stepsons and adopted sons included, of a veteran who died subsequent to his or her honorable discharge from service in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama or the Persian Gulf War. The same eligibility periods apply as above.