The American Legion calls for reviewing vulnerabilities at U.S. military bases

(INDIANAPOLIS, December 9, 2019) -- In the wake of the apparent terrorist attack at Naval Air Station Pensacola, the leader of the nation’s largest veterans organization called for greater scrutiny of all foreign nationals visiting or training at U.S. military installations.

“Our hearts break for the victims and families of this horrific attack,” said American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford. “Just like there were signs that U.S. Army Maj. Nidal Hasan adhered to anti-American ideologies before he unleashed his attack at Fort Campbell 10 years ago, there are disturbing reports that Mohammed Alshamrani revealed extremist views on social media before he engaged in Friday’s killing spree. The American Legion finds it disturbing that a military officer from Saudi Arabia had access to a firearm at a location where our own servicemembers were unarmed. Sen. Rick Scott of Florida called for a review of all U.S. military programs that train foreign nationals. The American Legion agrees. We understand the need to train our allies. But we must first ensure that we are not training those who wish us harm.”

Oxford added that the recent anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor is a poignant reminder that America must always be vigilant. “In addition to the tragedy in Pensacola, innocent Americans were killed in recent weeks at Joint Expeditionary Base Fort Story in Virginia and at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard. I recognize each case had entirely different circumstances, but servicemembers and civilian employees of our military work in an inherently dangerous profession. They take these risks on behalf of the United States of America. The American Legion believes that every effort must be made to reduce vulnerabilities and prevent such tragedies. This includes learning from each incident and making the necessary adjustments. It also means offering our complete support, compassion and prayers for those impacted.”

With a current membership of nearly two million wartime veterans, The American Legion, www.legion.org, was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, patriotic youth programs and Americanism. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through nearly 13,000 posts worldwide. From the drafting of the original GI Bill to the creation of the Department of Veterans Affairs, The American Legion is the most influential voice for America’s veterans.

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