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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Legion to support WWII veteran's fight for flagpole**

*'We will pay his legal bills if necessary,' says National Commander*

WASHINGTON – The American Legion has joined the fight being waged by a Medal of Honor recipient against a Virginia homeowner association's demands to remove a flagpole.

Col. Van Barfoot, 90, a World War II and Vietnam veteran, was ordered by the Sussex Square Homeowner's Association to remove the flag pole from his front lawn after he flew the U.S. Flag on Labor Day and Veterans Day. The association is claiming that the flag pole is not "aesthetically appropriate."

"The association underestimated the fight left in this elderly veteran and now they have to contend with the determination and persistence of Col. Barfoot's 2.5 million friends in The American Legion," said National Commander Clarence E. Hill. "Col. Barfoot has hired legal counsel. The American Legion is prepared to help with the expenses and fight these disgraceful actions by the association. Where is the common sense here? Is this anyway to treat any American, much less a true hero like Col Barfoot?"

Fighting for the flag is not new to The American Legion, the nation's leading authority on flag etiquette. Since 1989, The Legion has been fighting for a constitutional amendment that would grant Congress the authority to protect Old Glory from desecration.

"The flag is a symbol of our country," Hill said. "People should fly it proudly. That's all Col. Barfoot wants to do. If he were desecrating the flag, instead, the association couldn't do a thing to stop him. We proudly stand with Col. Barfoot and say 'enough already!' Let him keep the flagpole and fly the flag as often as he wants. He certainly earned that right."

"What the association is doing is especially disgraceful given the fact that our president has ordered another 30,000 troops to Afghanistan in defense of our freedom," added Joseph Caouette, The American Legion's Chairman of Americanism. "I wonder what they think of all of this."

With a current membership of 2.5-million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 14,000 posts across the nation.

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