The American Legion to Washington: ‘Extend the National Guard!’

(INDIANAPOLIS—May 20, 2020) – The head of the nation’s largest veterans organization called on the White House to extend federal orders to thousands of members of the National Guard whose current deployment in coronavirus relief efforts falls one-day short of the 90-day period required to obtain many benefits including home loans, education and retirement.

“Highly unfair and disturbing,” is how American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford described the plan to award those deployed credit for 89 days of federal service. “I served many years in the North Carolina National Guard. I know the caliber of these outstanding men and women who leave their homes and literally risk their lives so communities across America can be safe during national emergencies,” Oxford said. “The coronavirus pandemic has been devastating for many people. We would be far worse off if we did not have the National Guard setting up field hospitals, cleaning nursing homes and delivering emergency supplies. An 89-day deployment strongly suggests a decision based on accounting rather than what’s needed to truly respond to this emergency. The American Legion is calling for the president to fix this.”

The American Legion, www.legion.org, is the nation’s largest veterans service organization and was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national defense, the care and wellbeing of U.S. military veterans, patriotic youth programs and Americanism.