

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF  
THE AMERICAN LEGION  
May 5-6, 2021  
Virtual**

**Resolution No. 6: Raising Awareness of the Presumptive Service-Connected Condition Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), Also Known as “Lou Gehrig’s Disease”**

**Origin: Americanism Commission**

**Submitted by: Americanism Commission**

WHEREAS, Lou Gehrig has been hailed one of Major League Baseball’s all-time greats as a famed slugger from 1923-1939 with 493 homers in 17 seasons; and

WHEREAS, Gehrig was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame on December 7, 1939; and

WHEREAS, June 2, 1925, was the day when Gehrig started at first base for the New York Yankees, beginning his record streak of 2,130 consecutive games played – a mark which stood until September 1995; and

WHEREAS, Gehrig died on June 2, 1941, at age 37 of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) disease; and

WHEREAS, Patients with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, suffer from the degeneration of nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that affects muscle control throughout the entire body, thereby making it increasingly difficult for a person to eat, walk, talk, and breathe; and

WHEREAS, Gehrig's speech at Yankee Stadium on July 4, 1939, about his diagnosis is still today considered one of the most famous moments in Major League Baseball history; and

WHEREAS, On June 2, 2021, Major League Baseball is beginning a new annual tradition of observing “Lou Gehrig Day” as an avenue for raising awareness for those afflicted with ALS; and

WHEREAS, The ALS Association states that military veterans, regardless of their branch of service, the era in which they served, or whether they served during a time of peace or a time of war, are at a greater risk of dying from ALS than non-veterans, and for reasons as yet unknown, veterans are in fact twice as likely to be diagnosed with ALS than the general population; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) established a presumption of service connection for ALS in which the VA presumes that ALS was incurred or aggravated by a veteran’s service in the military, thereby allowing veterans with ALS and their families and survivors to be eligible for service-connected benefits; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has an opportunity to bring a greater awareness to the connection of ALS and military service through its American Legion Baseball program; and

WHEREAS, This resolution has been reviewed by the Americanism Commission, and with concurrence of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, is now recommended to the National Executive Committee for favorable action; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled virtually on May 5-6, 2021, That the American Legion Baseball program follow suit with Major League Baseball in bringing greater awareness to the condition of “Lou Gehrig’s disease” (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, aka “ALS”), by strongly encouraging every American Legion baseball team to observe a moment of silence before their game(s) each year on June 2 in memory of Major League Baseball’s great Lou Gehrig and all veterans who suffer or have died from ALS, a presumptive service-connected disease; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That this annual commemoration be promoted by National Headquarters in all media channels deemed appropriate and any resources needed for such be handled through the normal budgeting process; and, be it finally**

**RESOLVED, That American Legion baseball teams and posts are encouraged to also promote this annual commemoration within their own local communities.**