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## **Pittsburgh's Tribune-Review, Indy Star and Nashville's NewsChannel 5 Earn Legion's Top Journalism Award**

INDIANAPOLIS (May 12, 2011) – One broadcast station and two newspapers will receive The American Legion's Fourth Estate Award in the competition's first year of multiple categories during the organization's 93<sup>rd</sup> National Convention in Minneapolis in September.

The Fourth Estate Award has been presented annually by The American Legion since 1958 for outstanding achievement in journalism. This year nominations were invited in three categories: print, broadcast, and new media (Internet).

NewsChannel 5, WTVF in Nashville, Tenn., took the top honor in the broadcast category with its series, "NewsChannel 5 Investigates: Veterans Support Organization." The reports exposed the practices of a controversial group, which claimed to help needy veterans. The investigation found that just 16 cents of every dollar raised by the group went to programs for veterans. The investigation unveiled deceptive practices that led to the state ordering the organization to stop collecting donations in Tennessee and hitting the group with a hefty \$50,000 fine for 10 separate violations of the state's Charitable Solicitations Act – one of the largest imposed by the state.

"What is especially impressive about the NewsChannel 5 team's work is that this is the second time their work has earned a Fourth Estate Award – a first in American Legion history," said Jimmie L. Foster, national commander of the organization.

Taking top honor in the print category is the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's* extensive exposé of veterans' homes throughout Pennsylvania. The reports uncovered horror stories such as veterans being administered improper doses of powerful medications and officials ignoring staff allegations of physical abuse of residents. In one case, a pajama-clad patient with dementia and work-related brain damage walked past a manned security desk and out the door on New Year's Eve. His body was found 10 hours later.

As a result of reporting that spanned several months, commandants of some homes resigned or were fired; the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs promised to simplify the asset-

seizure policy; and eventually, one home was cited for violating regulations in the handling of patients' funds.

“The exhaustive and unrelenting search for the truth by the *Tribune-Review* team truly made a difference in the lives of so many veterans and their families,” Foster said. “Reporter Walter F. Roche Jr. and his team provided a shining moment in the annals of great journalism.”

In the Internet (new media) category, the *Indianapolis Star* used its website to present “Hoosier Veterans: Faces of War.” Interviews with 21 Hoosier State veterans from various U.S. wars including World War II and the Global War on Terrorism resulted in a 30-minute video posted on Indystar.com.

“This website encouraged students to ask their parents and grandparents to talk about their military experiences,” Foster said. “For many veterans, that’s an important catharsis and the first-person accounts of this critical history of our country should not be overlooked.”

Previous winners of the award include *Dateline NBC*, *C-SPAN*, *United Press International*, *USA TODAY*, *The Detroit News*, *Fortune Magazine*, *ABC News*, and *Life Magazine*.

The award will be presented during the 93rd National Convention of The American Legion in Minneapolis on Sept. 1, 2011.

“These outstanding journalists have utilized their extensive talents to make a significant difference in the lives of their neighbors,” Foster said. “Journalism doesn’t get any better than that. We thank them for their hard work and we will be honored to present each of them with our highest recognition of journalistic excellence - The American Legion Fourth Estate Award.”

With a membership of 2.4-million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and patriotic youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 14,000 posts across the nation.

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