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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Obama to Address Legionnaires

WASHINGTON (July 13, 2011) -- President Barack Obama has accepted an invitation from American Legion National Commander Jimmie L. Foster to speak in person at the nation's largest gathering of veterans and their families Aug. 30 in Minneapolis.

"It is always an honor to welcome the commander-in-chief at our national convention, but it is more meaningful than ever this year, as we look back on recent progress regarding the compassionate care of our nation's wounded warriors, veterans, and the families who care for them, and as we look forward to challenges and opportunities alike for the Department of Veterans Affairs," Foster said. "The nation's largest organization of wartime veterans is deeply interested in the administration's vision for the future of our economy, our national security and VA. We are all in this together."

Foster, who met with Obama earlier this year in the Oval Office to discuss a variety of high-priority American Legion issues, said he is excited to hear the president address the Legion.

Foster added that "The American Legion stands ready to welcome home the men and women of our armed forces. They have fought with courage, skill and selflessness in the global war on terrorism. They come home to rural towns, urban neighborhoods and everything in between. It is our duty as a nation to extend appreciation for their sacrifices, and help ensure they can succeed and prosper here at home."

Foster said The American Legion's nationwide corps of service officers, Heroes to Hometowns coordinators and Family Support Network volunteers is working diligently to help returning troops and newly discharged veterans successfully readjust to civilian life. "And as it has done since 1919, The American Legion will continue to stand in honored remembrance of those who made the ultimate sacrifice under our flag, in the name of all it represents."

More than 10,000 Legionnaires and others will be in Minneapolis for the 93rd National Convention. Minneapolis was the site of the first American Legion National Convention, in 1919.

With more than 2.4 million members, The American Legion is the nation's largest veterans service organization. The Legion works daily with Congress, VA, the White House and in communities across the nation to promote the interests of veterans, national security, youth, and Americanism through a variety of programs and services.

More information on the president's address to the Legion, including media credentialing, will be available at a later date.

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