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**From:** March, Joseph H.  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 30, 2011 1:25 PM  
**To:** Public Relations Division  
**Subject:** The American Legion Honors Armed Forces Servicemembers for Volunteer Efforts

**The  
American  
Legion**



*For God and country*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **The American Legion Honors Armed Forces Servicemembers for Volunteer Efforts**

MINNEAPOLIS (Aug. 30, 2011) -- Representatives from the five armed services were honored today by the nation's largest wartime veterans' organization.

The American Legion presented the Spirit of Service award to U.S. Army Sergeant Stephen Alder, 6<sup>th</sup> BN, 52<sup>nd</sup> Aviation Regiment, Los Alamitos, Calif.; U.S. Navy Petty Officer First Class Megan Donnell, Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md.; U.S. Marine Corps Sergeant Caraballo Pietri, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Headquarters and Service Battalion, Va.; U.S. Air Force Staff Sergeant Brandyn M. Walter, 31st Civil Engineer Squadron, Aviano, Italy; and U.S. Coast Guard Seaman Jacob Lowery, Coast Guard Training Center Petaluma, Calif., during the organization's 93rd National Convention, being held here August 30- Sept. 1.

The award was presented for each of the recipient's volunteer service in their local communities.

This is the twelfth annual presentation of the award, which includes shaped, etched glass mounted on a marble base, as well as a one-year membership in The American Legion.

National Commander Jimmie L. Foster, who presented the awards to the service members along with Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz, Commanding General of the United States Army Reserve Command, explained the purpose of the award.

"These men and women we honor with the Spirit of Service award not only serve their country in military uniform, but they go far beyond that by volunteering countless hours in their local communities. These people just keep giving and giving. They don't ask for recognition, but we feel strongly that they deserve it."

To receive this recognition the individual must be an outstanding military professional – and be actively involved in volunteer projects in the community during off-duty hours. They are selected for the award by their individual services, based on recommendations from their commands.

“The American Legion is all about service to our communities, our veterans and our youth,” Foster said. “That’s what we do day after day. And our award recipients epitomize that spirit of leadership and caring for their fellow citizens. They are being honored for serving the young, the elderly, their churches and schools. These are the uncommon silent heroes we all treasure in communities across the nation.”

Commander Foster also said, “Each of these individuals represents the best our country has to offer. They serve and sacrifice far beyond the norm. They truly define the spirit of service in America today.”

The American Legion provided accommodations, meals and travel during their time in Minneapolis. They participated in the ceremonial opening of the convention hosted by motivational speaker Daniel “Rudy” Ruettiger of whom the movie “Rudy” was based. They were featured in The American Legion convention parade and introduced at several functions during the American Legion convention.

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*Photos available on request to [jmarch@legion.org](mailto:jmarch@legion.org)*

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