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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The American Legion Honors Armed Forces Servicemembers for Volunteer Efforts

INDIANAPOLIS (Aug. 28, 2012) -- 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 Joshua J. Boudreaux, U.S. Army Public Health Command, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.; U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Alvin Balthazar, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; U.S. Marine Corps Sergeant Juan M. Vallejomunoz, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, Okinawa, Japan; U.S. Air Force Staff Sergeant Chris T. Pearson, 579th Dental Squadron, joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, Washington D.C.; and U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Tyler J. Arrowood, Maritime Force Protection Unit, Kings Bay, Ga., during the organization's 94th National Convention, being held here August 28-30.

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

This is the thirteenth 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 Fang A. Wong, presented the awards to the service members along with Lt. Gen. John F. Kelly, USMC, Senior Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense.

"As wartime veterans, Legionnaires understand and embrace the concept of service to our communities, states and nation," Wong said. "Every one of these outstanding military members represents the true spirit of service – a steadfast commitment to serve their country and their fellow Americans."

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.

"Those in uniform today – from all branches of military service – active duty, reserves and National Guard members – often go out of their way to make a difference in the lives of so many others in the communities in which they live," Wong said. "Today, The American Legion honors these outstanding Americans who reflect the great spirit of service to others that the founders of our organization considered essential."

Cmdr. Wong said that these military men and women being honored fit the bill and

are representative of thousands of their peers who make up the finest fighting force in the world.

“Each of them has demonstrated a strong commitment to serving others, a spirit of service that deserves the highest recognition The American Legion can provide.”

Each of the members was selected by their individual services. The American Legion provided for accommodations, meals and travel during their time in Indianapolis. They participated in the ceremonial opening of the convention hosted by J.R. Martinez and were featured in The American Legion National Convention Parade as the newest members of The American Legion and interacted with their fellow veterans of several generations during numerous convention activities.

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Digital photos available on request.

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