

# THE AMERICAN LEGION Dispatch

January 22, 2010 • Vol. 19, No. 5

A National Headquarters Publication

VETERANS AFFAIRS

## Legion launches benefits calculator

The American Legion has launched a new online tool aimed at helping veterans and their families learn about and understand the benefits entitled to them. The American Legion Veterans Benefits Calculator gives veterans and their families a simple questionnaire and easy access to service officers who can help them with their claims.

“This tool proves useful and provides enough information to let veterans know where to get started,” said John Hickey, American Legion Department Service Officer for Indiana. “Many veterans do not realize some of the benefits they are entitled to, and this will help them get pointed in the right direction.” Hickey and other Legion service officers assisted in the calculator’s development.

American Legion department service officers offer free advice and guidance to veterans who are dealing with VA and other government agencies.

“The American Legion has department service officers across the nation that are trained to help veterans,” Hickey said. “Many people don’t know we are here, and this tool is a step in the right direction.”

### How the module works

1. Answer a few questions about your military service.

Link: <http://www.legion.org/benefitscalculator/>

2. Once finished, the module lists possible benefits, including contact information for department service officers (DSOs) who can assist you.

3. Contact a DSO for more individualized information.

4. DSOs are also available to help with paperwork and other government agencies that provide hard-to-find benefits.

If possible, have the following ready when you make your call to a DSO:

- DD Form 214 (issued at the time of separation)

See *Members* on Page 4

See *Calculator* on Page 3

## MEMBERSHIP

# NEW AND RENEWED

*Leading candidate will focus on both areas in upcoming year.*

By Steve Brooks

Jimmie Foster believes it’s important to bring new members into The American Legion. But the leading candidate for 2010-2011 national commander believes renewing former members is just as important.

That’s why Foster, if elected, will focus his national commander’s incentive program on renewals. His Lucky 7 program – introduced during the Jan. 8 National Membership & Post Activities Committee meeting – will award a special pin to Legionnaires who bring in at least two new members and five renewals.

“I want you to continue to get new members,” said Foster, the national commander’s representative to the National Legislative Commission. “But also I want you to keep the ones we have. We do a dynamic job getting new members. But I think we do a terrible job with those going out the back door.

“I think a lot of that is after you get their money the first time, you don’t actually communicate with them. You might meet them one time at the post. You don’t ask them what they would like to do, or how involved they would like to become in your post, your organization. The lack of



National Membership & Post Activities Committee member Michael Tokarz asks a question while fellow committee member Vincent Troiola listens. The pair, and the rest of the committee, were in Indianapolis in January to discuss several membership issues. *Steve Brooks*

communication drives them out the back door.”

Personal contact was also a theme during the meeting, which gave committee members a briefing on the new Legion Web site, [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org), and spokesperson training.

“Personal touch is my theme,” Foster said. “I like talking to people, shaking their hands. I like to see ... what’s on your mind. I was post adjutant for either 17 or 18 years. (With) personal contact as an adjutant, you know who the members are.

You call them and say, ‘Hey Billy, hey Dale, I see you haven’t renewed.’ The personal contact means you’ll get the chance to get that person. It shows that you really care.”

Foster praised programs like Legion Riders that are tailored toward special-interest groups. “Keep in mind that every person has a desire, want or interest,” he said.

But it’s the organization’s many programs, from top to bottom, that make the Legion stand apart from

other VSOs, Foster said.

“I think our product sells itself,” he said. “I’d like to know any other organization that does what we do with the resources we do have available. We need to communicate that. We need to tell the public.”

Foster said his slogan will be S.A.V.E.D.: Serving America’s Veterans Every Day. It’s something he truly believes in.

“Get (veterans) in our organization, he or she, you’ll

 THE AMERICAN LEGION  
P.O. BOX 1055 • INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO. 719  
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206

### COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

**Legion, Scouting united in service**

PAGE 2

### NATIONAL ADJUTANT'S COLUMN

**A safe, learning environment**

PAGE 3



### LEGION RACING

**Johnson to race in 10 ARCA events this season**

PAGE 5

### ONLINE MEDIA

**2010 webcast schedule set**

PAGE 4

### LEGION BASEBALL

**Registration off to strong start**

PAGE 5

PLANNER

FEBRUARY

Americanism Month

- 1 Department submissions for National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award
- 7 Four Chaplains Sunday
- 12 Lincoln's Birthday
- 15 President's Day
- 22 Washington's Birthday
- 24-27 Department Service Officers School, Washington
- 27-28 Auxiliary Mid-Year NEC Meeting, Washington
- 28 National VA&R Conference, Washington
- 28 Washington Conference and Auxiliary Awareness Assembly

MARCH

- 1 Eagle Scout of the Year applications due to department headquarters
- 1-3 Washington Conference and Auxiliary Awareness Assembly, Commission and Committee Meetings

APRIL

Children & Youth Month

- 1 Eagle Scout of the Year applications due to National Headquarters
- 1 Child Welfare Foundation grant applications available
- 2 Good Friday
- 4 Easter
- 4-10 American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Week

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

# Legion, Scouting united in service

**ON MY HONOR I WILL DO MY BEST TO DO MY DUTY TO GOD AND MY COUNTRY AND TO OBEY THE SCOUT LAW; TO HELP OTHER PEOPLE AT ALL TIMES; TO KEEP MYSELF PHYSICALLY STRONG, MENTALLY AWAKE, AND MORALLY STRAIGHT.**

Young men recite these words every day in homes, churches, schools, community centers and American Legion posts. They stand straight, raise their right hands, extend three fingers skyward, and repeat in unison the words of the Scout Oath.

Adopted a year after the Scouting movement arrived here from Britain in 1910, the oath is a time-honored pledge to uphold specific values – moral integrity, discipline, helpfulness, fitness and duty above self among them – that can guide young people throughout their lives.

Much like the preamble to The American Legion's constitution, the Scout Oath is a tenet as relevant today as it was a century ago. On Feb. 8, 2010, Boy Scouts of America celebrates 100 years of shaping the character of America's youth.

Intended as an avenue to direct young people to become productive citizens and leaders, Scouting can proudly reflect on a century of making differences in communities across our country.

Recognized as worthy of the Legion's support at our first national convention in 1919, Boy Scouts of America has had an enduring connection with military service and the nation's largest veterans service organization ever since.



**Clarence E. Hill**  
National Commander

Today, the Legion charts more than 2,700 Scouting units and serves more than 72,000 Scouts.

Last May, the Legion's National Executive Committee passed a resolution reaffirming our support of Scouting. In recent years, we have stood by Boy Scouts of America in its fight to determine its own leadership and membership criteria, and to continue meeting in public facilities.

In 2003, the Legion's Americanism Commission established The American Legion and Scouting Square Knot Award to recognize Legion family members who work tirelessly to strengthen our 90-year partnership; since then, nearly 400 Square Knot Awards have been given.

In addition, The American Legion Life Insurance Committee provides annual scholarship awards for The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year. The winner receives a \$10,000 scholarship awarded over four years; three runners-up each receive \$2,500 scholarships.

And every year, the Americanism Commission awards the Frank N. Belgrano Jr. Trophy to the Legion department that has rendered outstanding service to Scouting.

The American Legion and Scouting are connected by shared values, and by a mutual commitment to serve God and country. A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent. So, too, is a Legionnaire.

In appreciation of all we have shared since 1919, I am honored to render Boy Scouts of America a 100th-anniversary salute and offer best wishes for another century together.

*Clarence E. Hill*

Memoranda

**VETERANS ON CAMPUS: SAME STRUGGLES, SAME STEREOTYPES?**

In February, The American Legion will host a conference on biases veterans face when leaving the military and entering college. "Veterans on Campus: Same Struggles, Same Stereotypes?" will include representatives from academia, the veterans community and Congress. The conference will run from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Feb. 28 at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, and is co-sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans Institute and Student Veterans Association of America.

To register, contact Economic Division Assistant Director Robert Madden:

✉ [rmadden@legion.org](mailto:rmadden@legion.org)  
☎ (202) 861-2700

**REGISTER NOW FOR THE AUGUST LEGACY RUN**

Registration forms for the 2010 Legacy Run to the 92nd National Convention in Milwaukee are now available online. The registration fee is \$50 for riders (\$60 after Aug. 1) and \$25 for passengers (\$50 after Aug. 1). The fee for supporters is \$50. A goal of \$450,000 has been set for the run, which raises money for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. Riders will depart from Indianapolis on Aug. 22 and arrive in Milwaukee on Aug. 26.

🌐 [www.legion.org/riders](http://www.legion.org/riders)

# Dispatch

Published monthly.  
Printed by HNE Printers, Columbus, Ind.  
All American Legion publications are entitled and encouraged to reproduce all staff-written stories within, but please credit *Dispatch* as the source.  
A proud member of The National American Legion Press Association.

Correspondence and letters to the editor:  
**The American Legion Dispatch**  
P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206  
Subscriptions or customer service:  
(317) 630-1298  
Annual subscription rate: \$15  
Editorial office: (317) 630-1352  
Fax: (317) 630-1280  
Online: [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

STILL SERVING AMERICA

Does your post have a unique community program, an innovative recruiting method or a creative way of spreading the Legion message that could be implemented at posts across the country? Tell us how your post and its members are *Still Serving America*.  
In submitting your information, include your full name, address and telephone number. Send your items, labeled *Still Serving America*, to the correspondence address at left.

EDITOR  
Steve B. Brooks  
CONTRIBUTORS  
James V. Carroll  
Matt Grills  
Jeff Stoffer  
DESIGNER  
Carolyn R. West

ACTIVATION

Want to get involved in one of The American Legion's many national programs? Do you have a question about veterans affairs, national defense or what is going on in Washington? All you have to do is pick up the phone or send an e-mail.

**American Legion Divisions**

**Americanism/Children and Youth**  
(317) 630-1203  
[acy@legion.org](mailto:acy@legion.org)  
**Finance**  
317-630-1222  
[finance@legion.org](mailto:finance@legion.org)  
**Internal Affairs**  
(317) 630-1330  
[ia@legion.org](mailto:ia@legion.org)  
**Legislation**  
(202) 263-2981  
[leg@legion.org](mailto:leg@legion.org)  
**National Convention**  
(317) 630-1292  
[dholmes@legion.org](mailto:dholmes@legion.org)  
[bwilliams@legion.org](mailto:bwilliams@legion.org)

**National Emblem Sales**

(888) 453-4466  
[emblem@legion.org](mailto:emblem@legion.org)  
[emblem.legion.org/](http://emblem.legion.org/)

**National Security/Foreign Relations**

(202) 861-2700  
[nsfr@legion.org](mailto:nsfr@legion.org)

**Public Relations**

(317) 630-1253  
[pr@legion.org](mailto:pr@legion.org)

**The American Legion Magazine**

(317) 630-1298  
[magazine@legion.org](mailto:magazine@legion.org)

**The American Legion Library**

(317) 630-1366  
[library@legion.org](mailto:library@legion.org)

**Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**

(202) 861-2700  
[var@legion.org](mailto:var@legion.org)

**Programs**

**American Legion Baseball**

(317) 630-1249  
[jquinlan@legion.org](mailto:jquinlan@legion.org)  
<http://legion.org/baseball>

**American Legion Child Welfare Foundation**

(317) 630-1202  
[www.cwf-inc.org](http://www.cwf-inc.org)

**American Legion Endowment Fund**

(317) 630-1202

**Boys Nation**

(317) 630-1207  
[acy@legion.org](mailto:acy@legion.org)

**Family Support Network**

(317) 630-1395  
(800) 504-4098  
[familysupport@legion.org](mailto:familysupport@legion.org)

**Junior Shooting Sports**

(317) 630-1249  
[mbuss@legion.org](mailto:mbuss@legion.org)

**Legion College**

(317) 630-1265  
[wsloan@legion.org](mailto:wsloan@legion.org)

**National Emergency Fund**

(317) 630-1321  
[ia@legion.org](mailto:ia@legion.org)

**National Oratorical Contest**

(317) 630-1249  
[mbuss@legion.org](mailto:mbuss@legion.org)

## NATIONAL ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

# A safe, learning environment

Post 194's after-school program in Augustine, Fla., is still flourishing.

By Daniel S. Wheeler

Going to bat for veterans and military personnel is what gets The American Legion air time on network news programs and editorial space in national publications. It's what earns us face time with the president of the United States, the VA secretary, and U.S. senators and representatives.

But our organization has another side, one that doesn't get nearly as much publicity but matters equally. This side is our dedication to community service – namely, to the young people in our communities.

One of the four pillars of The American Legion is our Children & Youth programs. Since 1919, Legionnaires have understood that taking an interest in our country's youth today makes for a better America tomorrow. Those Children & Youth programs are administered at the national level, but they start locally.

They start with initiatives like the after-school program that has been in place for more than a dozen years at Alton Green Memorial Post 194 in St. Augustine, Fla. Four hours a day, Monday through Friday, more than 20 local underprivileged and at-risk elementary students come to Post 194 to do their homework in a safe, friendly atmosphere. Tutorial assistance is provided, as is moral guidance.

The Kids Safe Zone program has been a huge success, said Past Post 194 and Past Fifth District Commander Greg White, who along with other Legionnaires was in at the start of the program.

"We have an elementary school right by our post, and we had a lot of kids who were failing because their homework wasn't getting done," White said. "We talked, and we asked ourselves, 'Why not have an after-school program at our post that utilizes us helping kids doing their homework in a safe environment?' We talked to the school principal, to the guidance counselor, to the school board. It went from there."

Early on, several post members involved with the program were retired teachers, but after they passed away, White said the post needed to do something to replace those teachers. Partnering with the Department of Justice's Weed and Seed program – which focuses on crime prevention and community revitalization – the post got the funding to pay retired teachers to come in for

four hours a day, five days a week, to continue to help the students with their homework.

"We've got people helping out who served as teachers for 30 years," White said. "Because of that, the community reaction has been overwhelming. There has been a waiting list since the program's inception. We had one parent who paid \$500 a month for child care for her third grader. She told us she had been paying that and not getting half the results she was getting through our free program.

"It's a safe haven for these kids, but there's also the academic aspect. The key is that it works. It's not a mirage. It works."

National Commander Clarence Hill has seen the program up close several times. He raved about it on his Facebook page following a recent trip through his home department. "Every time I see what that program is doing, I walk away impressed," Hill said. "This is an example of how big of an impact a Legion post can make upon its community. We're not just veterans helping veterans; we're veterans helping people."

Post 194 even supports their youth as they get older. The post's Chase-Rescorla Scholarship Fund, created to honor Legionnaires Leo C. Chase and Rick Rescorla, awards scholarships to local students in the names of Chase and Rescorla. The fund can be used toward a student's college or trade-school tuition and books.

"To me, it's all about educating our kids," Post 194 Commander Septimus Connor II said. "We're helping them with their homework, and we're keeping them out of trouble. Then we're helping them down the road. That's big."

A common theme among many of the national meetings I attend is that we need to publicize all of the good things we are doing in our communities. We need to tell our story. And it's true. You deserve the credit for what you do.

But that's not why the Legionnaires at Post 194 or Legionnaires anywhere, for that matter, do what they do. They do it because it's in their hearts to help people. They do it because they want to make a difference, a difference that counts.

And like in St. Augustine, where young students have a safe place to do their homework, setting themselves up for a better future, the Legionnaires from Post 194 are making that difference.

## YOUR WORDS

## 'Why I Love My Post'

The Dispatch wants you to tell us, and the rest of The American Legion, why you love your post. Send your 200- to 300-word submissions and related photos to [legionnews@legion.org](mailto:legionnews@legion.org).

### LINCOLN POST 89, PHILADELPHIA

What I love about my post is the love and togetherness that The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion and ladies Auxiliary members do for our community and each other.

The first time I stepped into Lincoln Post 89 was right after my weekend drill. Several of my fellow soldiers and I went there for a few hours. The members welcomed us with open arms. We were served with a smile and made to feel right at home.

After going to the post on several occasions, I decided to become a member, remembering that the post represents all veterans, and especially those who paid the ultimate price.

My first two years as a member, I served as the post judge advocate, and it was two amazing years of my life. I now hold the position as the post adjutant, and it's an honor to be put in this position by my comrades.

During my years as a member of Post 89, what inspired me the most about my post is our community involvement. Every October for Halloween, the Auxiliary bags and distributes candy to our community's children. We have a big Thanksgiving dinner, and all are welcome. And all our members participate in delivering Christmas baskets for families in need.

Our members meet the first Sunday of each month to plan upcoming events – fundraisers to put money back into our community. We all work as a team to make each event that we have special, and we enjoy ourselves at the same time.

As the post adjutant, I love my job, my comrades and their families, and I plan to do my best, and be the best there is for God and my country.

*Juanita B. Reaves, Post 89 adjutant*

## AMERICANISM

## Flag co-sponsors needed in House, Senate

Legionnaires are asked to rally support for the flag amendment in both the House and Senate.

House Joint Resolution 47, introduced by Rep. Jo Ann Emerson, R-Mo., currently has 80 co-sponsors. Thanks to the efforts of Legionnaires in the departments of West Virginia, Wyoming, South Dakota, Montana and Idaho, all of those respective states' representatives are now co-sponsors.

The amendment, which reads, "The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States," currently is assigned to the House Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties.

H.J. Res 47's companion piece in the Senate – S.J. Res. 15, introduced by Sen. David Vitter, R-La. – has 26 co-sponsors. The measure has been referred to the Senate's Committee on the Judiciary.

Since the 1989 Supreme Court decision *Texas v. Johnson* struck down flag-protection laws, the Legion and other members of the Citizens Flag Alliance have worked tirelessly toward gaining the passage of a constitutional amendment to protect Old Glory from acts of physical desecration.

To keep up to date on the flag amendment and all other pieces of legislation moving through Congress, visit:

<http://www.legion.org/legislative>

Calculator from Page 1

- Service Medical Records (outpatient), dental records, entrance and separation examination reports
- Inpatient hospitalization records (private or military)
- Private outpatient medical records (if applicable)
- Personnel file
- Line of Duty (LOD) investigation reports
- Overseas or temporary duty (travel) orders

## VETERANS AFFAIRS

## Prescription copayment increase delayed

A scheduled \$1 increase in veterans' medical copayments will be delayed until June 30, VA has announced.

Out-of-pocket payments were formerly set to raise to \$9 for pharmaceuticals treating ailments not connected to military service, per 30-day supplies of medicine.

During this delay period, VA will also keep \$960 as the maximum for annual out-of-pocket payments for pharmaceuticals for non-service-related conditions. The \$960 cap will not apply to veterans in Priority Groups 7 and 8. The yearly maximum out-of-pocket payment was scheduled to increase to \$1,080.

There are no copayments associated with the treatment of conditions related to military service.

**Members from Page 1**

save the organization," he said. "You may save he or she's life."

Legislative Commission Consultant Fang Wong told a story of receiving scholarship money and a medal from The American Legion as a young student and how it affected him later on in life.

"I joined the Legion because I wanted to. I joined the Legion because something happened to me when I was a little boy growing up in Chinatown," Wong said. "When you go out there and push your programs, your Children & Youth and Americanism thing, don't ever think that it means nothing. It means something. If you touch one (person), it's worth it. With membership, those are the things you can show people. There are success stories out there."

National Adjutant Daniel S. Wheeler said that while the Legion's Direct Mail Solicitation program does a great job bringing members into the organization, there needs to be follow-up.

"They get a letter. For many of them, that is the only voice of The American Legion that they've ever heard," Wheeler said. "Yet your reputation is so great that they get that one letter from someone they've never heard of, that asks them to send money to someplace they've never been. They trust the reputation, and they trust the fact you're doing so much good that they go ahead and write the check out. Then they sit back and wait to hear

the result of their having answered your mailing.

"Too often, they hear nothing, and when they hear nothing, they become a bit disillusioned about what they thought they knew about The American Legion."

It's up to each individual Legionnaire to make sure those DMS members remain in the organization.

"All you have to do is knock on the door, say 'welcome to The American Legion, I'm here to invite you down to the post,'" Wheeler said. "Those people might not become active, but they have finally completed that loop for when they answered that letter. There's a person who's counting on you. A person who believes in you. A person who's waiting to hear back from you. If you don't ever get back to him, he loses faith and becomes disillusioned. It's so much harder signing them up the second time after you've lost them the first time."

Committee members were briefed on a new Web project called MyLegion.org, which will add an audience-interactive aspect to the [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) overhaul. The Legion Web site, re-launched on Nov. 9, is now in the midst of stage 2 developments – including MyLegion.org, which will use a social network to connect Legionnaires with their posts. The new area of the Web site will feature enhanced membership administration tools for post officers, including the

ability to retrieve lists of potential members within a certain distance of their post to help grow local membership. Ultimately, the network is designed to be fully searchable, so a Legionnaire in Wisconsin, for instance, could search for and find a Legionnaire in Nevada, or a member with similar interests. The Legion has offered American Legion Post Officers Portal as an online membership administrative resource for several years, with great success. Post membership tools offered within MyLegion.org will be an extension of ALPOP, and many features will be available free of charge, which is important for smaller posts, said Joe Gallagher, American Legion Information Technology deputy director. "Most posts have under 200 members and struggle to attain a presence on the Web," he said.

Users can create personal profiles on MyLegion.org, and post officers can keep members informed about what's going on at their local post. Additionally, opportunities to fulfill reporting obligations – like filing a Consolidated Post Report – and many other administrative tools are included. MyLegion.org is being released to five pilot departments in the first quarter of 2010 and will be available to all departments by the end of the third



M&PA Committee Chairman Dale Barnett of Georgia opens his committee's meeting on Jan. 8. Steve Brooks

quarter. Departments and posts will be notified as MyLegion.org becomes available in each state.

Likewise, the Legion continues to test online renewals in five departments. A membership ad-hoc committee studied the legal, logistical and technological changes necessary for full adoption of online renewals late last year. Such a shift would require a constitutional change by the National Convention. "We're going to do whatever we can do to make membership as convenient and efficient as possible," M&PA Chairman Dale Barnett said. "We really think this is going to be in the best interest of the organization."

**ONLINE MEDIA**

## 2010 webcast schedule announced

More American Legion events and activities than ever before will be streamed live on [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) this year. The Commander's Call at the 50th Annual Washington Conference – expected to include speeches to Legionnaires from some of the nation's top elected officials – kicks off the schedule on March 2 from Washington. Also new this year will be live webcasts from American Legion Boys Nation and gavel-to-gavel coverage of the 92nd National Convention from Milwaukee.

"Last year's experience putting The American Legion World Series up live on the Web was a major success," American Legion National Commander Clarence Hill said. "People really enjoyed watching the games as they were being played, and I am sure they will again this year. Additional events – like the Washington Conference, Boys Nation and the National Convention – will be just as exciting. The Legion is moving fast to the forefront of Web-based communications. It's not the only way – but it is an important way – for members and prospective members to see what we do as we are doing it, in a dynamic format."

Last year's first-ever American Legion World Series webcast drew nearly 19,000 unique visitors to the Legion Web site. The audience viewed a total of 2.4 million minutes of play in four days, exceeding expectations for the first year.

The 2010 schedule also includes live streaming of video from American Legion Boys Nation debates and election July 27, along with the final Boys Nation Senate session July 30, followed by graduation and farewell ceremonies. Also new to the calendar are live Web presentations of the Color Guard Contest, the Band Contest, the Patriotic Religious Service, the National Convention Parade and coverage of the National Convention from Milwaukee.

All of the live Web presentations can be viewed free of charge by visitors of [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org).

**Here is the schedule:****The 50th American Legion Washington Conference Commander's Call**

Grand Ballroom Washington Renaissance Hotel  
March 2, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. (EST)

National Commander Hill and some of the nation's top elected officials are scheduled to address Legionnaires during the Commander's Call portion of the conference.

**The American Legion National Oratorical Championship**

University Place Conference Center,  
IUPUI Campus, Indianapolis

April 11, 10 a.m. (EST)

The final round will be streamed live for the second straight year. To see videos of winning orations from 2008 and 2009, visit [www.legion.org/legiontv](http://www.legion.org/legiontv) and click on "Oratorical Contest."

**American Legion Boys Nation**

Marymount University, Arlington, Va.

July 27, 3 p.m.-5 p.m.; 6:30 p.m.-9 p.m. (EDT)

Candidate debates in the afternoon will be live streamed, followed by the election and post-election results.

July 30, 8 a.m.-11 a.m.; 7 p.m.-9:30 p.m. (EDT)

The final Senate session of Boys Nation will be streamed live, followed by the evening assembly and farewell ceremony in the evening.

**American Legion National Junior Shooting Sports Championships**

Olympic Training Facility, Colorado Springs, Colo.

Aug. 7, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. (MDT)

The final round of Precision and Sporter competition will be streamed live, with commentary, from Colorado Springs.

**American Legion Baseball World Series**

Avista Stadium, Spokane, Wash.

All 14 games of The American Legion World Series will be streamed live, with play-by-play announcing by longtime American Legion Baseball supporter Jim Darby and former Major League stars in the booth. To view games from last year, visit [www.legion.org/legiontv](http://www.legion.org/legiontv) and click on "Baseball."

**92nd American Legion National Convention**

Milwaukee, Wis.

Aug. 28, 8 a.m.-11 a.m.; 1 p.m.-5 p.m. (CDT)

The National Convention Color Guard Contest will be streamed live for the first time ever, followed by the National Band Contest.

Aug. 29, 11 a.m. (CDT)

The National Convention's Patriotic Religious Service is scheduled to be streamed live.

Aug. 29, 4 p.m. (CDT)

The American Legion National Convention Parade will be presented live on the Legion Web site.

Aug. 31 - Sept. 2, 8 a.m. (CDT)

Opening ceremonies of the 92nd American Legion National Convention, followed by gavel-to-gavel coverage

Aug. 30 - Sept. 1 – Watch for the first-ever "convention cam." Conventioneers can visit the camera and let their presence be known back home. The cam will be positioned at various locations through the week.

 <http://www.legion.org/legiontv>

LEGION RACING

# Johnson to race 10 ARCA events this season

By James V. Carroll

Jerick Johnson and The American Legion/David Law Firm 76 Freedom Car will compete in 10 Automobile Racing Club of America (ARCA) races during the 2010 season.

Johnson is coming off a successful season that saw him win the 2009 American Speed Association Late Model Challenge Series Rookie of the Year trophy. He also finished ninth in total championship points for the 2009 season.

“We are very satisfied with our 2009 racing program,” Johnson said following the season-ending ASA race Nov. 7 at Memphis Motorsports Park. “Our goal was to bring home the Rookie of the Year title, and we did. I won’t say it was easy, but it sure was fun.”

Team Johnson Motorsports will enter The American Legion/David Law Firm 76 Freedom Car in all eight scheduled ARCA superspeedway races, plus two other ARCA races at Iowa Speedway in Des Moines and Rockingham Speedway in North Carolina.

This won’t be the first experience that Johnson and Team Johnson Motorsports have had with the steel-bodied, 3,400-pound ARCA race cars. Johnson drove two ARCA races in 2002 and five NASCAR Busch (now Nationwide) Series races in 2007. The ARCA series is considered by most in the racing business as the NASCAR “farm system.” Those teams that achieve success in ARCA often move up to Nationwide or Sprint Cup competition.

“We are very excited to take American Legion/David Law Firm racing to a higher level,” Johnson said at the 76 Freedom Car garage in Mooresville, N.C. “We are confident that we can be very competitive on the superspeedways. We’ve learned a lot during ARCA and Busch races that we have run in the past. And more recently, we are very satisfied with tests we ran in our ARCA car at Daytona late last year.”

Johnson makes his 2010 ARCA series debut Feb. 6 on a very busy day at Daytona International Speedway. The 80-lap Lucas Oil Slick Mist 200 ARCA race is sandwiched between Daytona 500 qualifying and the Budweiser Shootout. The ARCA race is scheduled to start at 4:30 p.m. and will be broadcast on the SPEED television network.



American Legion/David Law Firm 76 Freedom Car driver Jerick Johnson and his ARCA series car outside the Team Johnson Motorsports garage in Mooresville, N.C. The car does not have its racing colors yet. *James V. Carroll*

The American Legion/David Law Firm 76 Freedom Car race team is a program of The American Legion. Its purpose is to raise awareness of the programs conducted by The American Legion across the country in support of our military veterans, active-duty troops and their families. The racing program also aims to attract the next generation of American Legion members.

The 76 Freedom Car is an excellent sponsorship fit for The David Law Firm of The Woodlands, Texas. The firm has helped countless military veterans receive just compensation for mesothelioma and other lung cancers related to asbestos. The firm also provides related educational information in response to inquiries from all 50 states.

**For information on hosting an American Legion racing event, contact Team Johnson Motorsports:**

☎ (704) 877-0151

✉ [info@teamjohnsonmotorsports.com](mailto:info@teamjohnsonmotorsports.com)

## NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUND 2010 NATIONAL COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE PROGRAM

DEPARTMENT	2010 NEF goal	Contributions since 2009 convention	Percent of goal
<b>Category I (100,000+)</b>			
California	\$24,739	\$12,000.00	<b>48.51%</b>
Florida	\$27,911	\$15.00	<b>0.05%</b>
Illinois	\$24,316	\$1,110.00	<b>4.56%</b>
Indiana	\$21,568	\$9,303.00	<b>43.13%</b>
Minnesota	\$21,145	\$452.00	<b>2.14%</b>
New York	\$30,681	\$108.00	<b>0.35%</b>
Ohio	\$26,114	\$1,000.00	<b>3.83%</b>
Pennsylvania	\$42,924	\$22.00	<b>0.05%</b>
<b>Category II (65,000+)</b>			
Maryland	\$14,082	\$1,053.00	<b>7.48%</b>
Michigan	\$16,916	\$800.00	<b>4.73%</b>
Texas	\$16,493	\$115.00	<b>0.70%</b>
Wisconsin	\$14,378	\$1,174.00	<b>8.17%</b>
<b>Category III (40,000+)</b>			
Arizona	\$9,515	\$500.00	<b>5.25%</b>
Georgia	\$9,938	\$9,525.00	<b>95.84%</b>
Iowa	\$12,792	\$236.00	<b>1.84%</b>
Massachusetts	\$10,519	\$622.00	<b>5.91%</b>
Missouri	\$10,833	\$2,267.00	<b>20.93%</b>
Nebraska	\$9,033	\$200.00	<b>2.21%</b>
New Jersey	\$12,898	\$211.00	<b>1.64%</b>
North Carolina	\$9,515	\$1,022.00	<b>10.74%</b>
Virginia	\$11,418	\$700.00	<b>6.13%</b>
<b>Category IV (25,000+)</b>			
Connecticut	\$5,286	\$463.00	<b>8.76%</b>
Kansas	\$8,420	\$40.00	<b>0.48%</b>
Kentucky	\$6,343	\$530.00	<b>8.36%</b>
Louisiana	\$6,343	\$7,065.00	<b>111.38%</b>
Oklahoma	\$5,286	\$200.00	<b>3.78%</b>
South Carolina	\$6,090	\$100.00	<b>1.64%</b>
Tennessee	\$6,026	\$785.00	<b>13.03%</b>
Washington	\$7,083	\$350.00	<b>4.94%</b>
<b>Category V (10,000+)</b>			
Alabama	\$4,546	\$134.00	<b>2.95%</b>
Arkansas	\$3,806	\$50.00	<b>1.31%</b>
Colorado	\$4,863	\$0.00	<b>0.00%</b>
Delaware	\$2,492	\$465.00	<b>18.66%</b>
Idaho	\$2,284	\$844.00	<b>36.95%</b>
Maine	\$5,077	\$0.00	<b>0.00%</b>
Mississippi	\$3,975	\$2,000.00	<b>50.31%</b>
Montana	\$2,643	\$0.00	<b>0.00%</b>
New Hampshire	\$4,652	\$80.00	<b>1.72%</b>
New Mexico	\$2,749	\$734.00	<b>26.70%</b>
North Dakota	\$3,954	\$0.00	<b>0.00%</b>
Oregon	\$5,075	\$868.00	<b>17.10%</b>
South Dakota	\$5,075	\$535.00	<b>10.54%</b>
Vermont	\$3,278	\$20.00	<b>0.61%</b>
West Virginia	\$4,826	\$2.00	<b>0.04%</b>
<b>Category VI (10,000)</b>			
Alaska	\$1,522	\$0.00	<b>0.00%</b>
District of Columbia	\$582	\$0.00	<b>0.00%</b>
Hawaii	\$605	\$0.00	<b>0.00%</b>
Nevada	\$1,861	\$100.00	<b>5.37%</b>
Puerto Rico	\$1,480	\$10.00	<b>0.68%</b>
Rhode Island	\$1,438	\$1,310.00	<b>91.10%</b>
Utah	\$1,903	\$0.00	<b>0.00%</b>
Wyoming	\$1,544	\$7,500.00	<b>485.75%</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$66,620.00</b>	<b>13.32%</b>

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

# Online registration showing strong numbers

Online registration for the 2010 American Legion Baseball season opened Jan. 1, and since then more than 339 teams have successfully completed the application process within minutes and without a hitch. Coaches are embracing the new system, as it allows them to focus more on starting the season and less on mailing in paperwork.

The user-friendly online registration means coaches no longer have to collect, complete and mail in registration forms, insurance forms and payments to various locations for processing. Instead, coaches who have access to the Internet can perform all these responsibilities online by using a credit or debit card.

Fans and players also benefit from the service, thanks to coaches being able to electronically add game schedules and player profiles, which are viewable and searchable on the official American Legion Baseball Web site. And for those trying to reduce their carbon footprint, online registration omits the use of paper, as coaches no longer need to make copies of their rosters for mailing – every roster will be securely available online for each county, district and state chairman.

“We are pleased to offer this new feature for our fans and program participants,” American Legion Baseball Program Coordinator Jim Quinlan said. “The new online registration process is a result of our commitment to continue our tradition as one of the most successful amateur leagues, and we look forward to an exciting season.”

One Legionnaire, who has been a coach for more than 25 years and laughingly recalls the days when he used a typewriter to fill out the application, found the new system to be a one-stop shop.

“Filling out the application online was quick and easy, the information requested was basic, and I heard back within a day that my application was accepted,” said John Hayes, member of, and coach for, Wayne Newton Post 346 in Terre Haute, Ind. “Plus, the convenience of paying all fees online saved me the hassle of mailing multiple checks. Overall, everything I needed to register my team was available (on the American Legion Baseball Web site).”

Likewise, feedback from numerous other coaches regarding online registration has been positive, as many notice the value of the new system, which creates a smoother application process and a stronger communication line between players and fans.

If you are experiencing any difficulties registering your team online, please e-mail [baseball@legion.org](mailto:baseball@legion.org).

The 2010 season marks the 85th anniversary of the program, which recently launched a brand-new Web site that highlights its reputation among young athletes. The Web site and digital registration process will coincide with the online broadcast of the World Series being played in Spokane, Wash., beginning Aug. 13.

🌐 <http://www.legion.org/baseball/application>

## DATELINE CAPITOL HILL

# Legion Day designation among 2009 highlights

On July 24, Rep. Deborah Halvorson, D-Ill., introduced **House Resolution 679**. The resolution proposed designating Sept. 16 – the anniversary of The American Legion receiving its federal charter in 1919 – “The American Legion Day.” The designation creates a national day of observance of The American Legion’s goals and ideals in which the country may celebrate, with appropriate programs and activities, the long history of The American Legion and its steadfast and patriotic service to the community, state and nation. The resolution passed the House by voice vote Sept. 15. Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, introduced a companion measure, **Senate Resolution 260**, on Sept. 10. It passed the Senate by unanimous consent the same day. Since the Senate resolution addresses only 2009, The American Legion will continue efforts to secure another resolution in 2010. These bills are considered “simple resolutions” that express the opinions of the chamber and do not go to the White House.

On July 27, President Barack Obama signed **P.L. 111-41**, the Korean War Veterans Recognition Act. The law amends Title 4 of the U.S. Code, adding National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, July 27, to the list of days on which the U.S. flag should be displayed. For years, The American Legion has lobbied Congress to recognize the service and sacrifices of veterans from the Korean War.

## NATIONAL SECURITY

On Feb. 17, the president signed into law **P.L. 111-5**, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. In addition to providing funding to address the economy, the measure also contained fiscal 2009 supplemental funding for various federal agencies, including DoD, Homeland Security, and VA.

No funding was included in the final version for the Base Realignment and Closure account.

On June 24, the president signed **P.L. 111-32**, the fiscal 2009 supplemental spending bill. Nearly a week before, the House voted 226-202 to pass the conference report to the measure, and the Senate followed suit two days later, approving the measure by a 91-5 tally. Funding in the law totals

\$106 billion, an increase of \$23 billion over the president’s original request. It includes \$79.9 billion to fund DoD and intelligence programs related to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Although the wars have typically been funded through such “emergency” supplemental requests since 2001, the president has pledged to move the war costs into the regular DoD budget in the future.

On July 30, the House by a vote of 400-30 approved **H.R. 3326**, the fiscal 2010 appropriations bill for the Department of Defense. The bill totals \$636.6 billion, an increase of \$4.4 billion over current-year funding and \$3.8 billion below the president’s request. On Oct. 6, the Senate, by a vote of 93-7, approved its version of the DoD funding measure. The Senate bill would fund DoD programs at \$636.3 billion.

The measure contains no funding for closing the Guantanamo Bay detention facility for terrorists captured in the war on terrorism. Appropriators stated that once a plan was in place to close the facility, funding would then be requested.

On Oct. 28, the president signed **P.L. 111-83**, the fiscal 2010 appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security. The House of Representatives passed the measure’s conference report by a vote of 307-114 on Oct. 15; the Senate followed suit by a 79-19 tally Oct. 20. The measure provides \$42.8 billion in discretionary spending for DHS programs, an increase of \$2.6 billion above fiscal 2009 funding.

On Oct. 28, the president signed into law **P.L. 111-84**, the fiscal 2010 Department of Defense authorization bill. The House, by a vote of 281-146, passed the conference report Oct. 8, while the Senate agreed to the report by a vote of 68-29 on Oct. 22. Each year, Congress passes legislation authorizing spending levels for DoD programs and usually includes a number of policy statements. However, there were some provisions supported by The American Legion that were not contained in the final law. One such provision would have ended a reduction in Survivor Benefit Plan payments to 54,000 widows who also draw Depen-

gency and Indemnity Compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs. This offset is commonly referred to as the widows’ death tax.

The conference report also dropped a previously approved Senate provision that expressed the sense of Congress that military retirement and health benefits are the primary offset to the extraordinary demands and sacrifices inherent in a military career, that career members deserve a health benefit commensurate with their sacrifices, and that DoD needs to look at other ways to reduce health-care spending than shifting more costs to military beneficiaries. This provision was specifically aimed at stopping possible increases in fees for beneficiaries of TRICARE.

Finally, the conference report eliminated a House provision that would authorize for one year the implementation of concurrent receipt for Chapter 61 military retirees, who were medically retired from the military before completing 20 years of service.

However, when the Obama administration submitted its budget request, it did not include budgetary offsets to allow this provision to be funded.

In response to Congress’ actions, American Legion National Commander Clarence Hill sent a series of letters to the chairmen of the House and Senate Armed Services committees and the leadership of both congressional chambers. In these letters, he requested that hearings be conducted concerning the key provisions dropped from **P.L. 111-84**, with the possibility that stand-alone legislation could be introduced to address The American Legion’s concerns.

The American Legion will continue to lobby to see that the disabled veterans tax is fully repealed and that all military retirees will receive both their military retired pay and VA disability compensation without offsets.

On June 24, the House voted 404-0 to pass **H.R. 2990**, a bill that will further address the problem of the disabled veterans tax. The bill, called the Disabled Military Retiree Relief Act, will allow Chapter 61 retirees – persons who received military disability retirement with less than 20 years of service – to receive their full military retired pay plus VA disability compensation, without a dollar-for-dollar offset of the retired pay by

any amount received in disability compensation.

The offset would be phased out over several years, beginning with full payments of retired and disability pay Jan. 1 for those whose disabilities are rated at 90 percent or greater, including those whose 100-percent disability is based upon a determination that their medical conditions make them unemployable. Full concurrent receipt for all Chapter 61 retirees would take effect Jan. 1, 2014.

However, as the bill currently reads, these increased payments would terminate Sept. 30, at the end of fiscal 2010. For these payments to continue, they would have to be reauthorized.

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton, who introduced the bill, said the legislation does not go as far as he had hoped, but it “moves us closer to fulfilling the president’s pledge to give disabled veterans full access to the benefits they deserve.” Funding for the bill’s provisions would come from tapping into a development fund for deepwater oil and natural gas resources.

Because the money source was not available when the House Armed Services Committee approved **H.R. 2647**, the 2010 DoD authorization bill, language relating to the disabled veterans tax was not included in that bill. It is likely that the language of H.R. 2990 will be amended to the DoD authorization measure during conference committee deliberations. The American Legion will continue to push for full repeal of the disabled veterans tax.

Service System funding for fiscal 2010 is contained in the conference report to **H.R. 3288**, the consolidated omnibus appropriations measure. Selective Service System will receive \$24.3 million for the agency’s operations.

Since 1973, the armed forces have relied on volunteers to fill military manpower requirements. However, the Selective Service System remains the primary vehicle by which personnel will be brought into the military if Congress and the president should authorize a return to the draft. The American Legion continues to support funding for the Selective Service System in case of national emergency.

The conference report for **H.R. 3288** also contains fiscal 2010 appropriations to fund military construction programs. A total of \$23.3 billion was

allocated for a variety of military construction projects.

## VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

As part of **P.L. 111-5**, \$1.4 billion in supplemental funding for VA programs in fiscal 2009 was included. Major provisions included:

- \$1 billion for the VA medical facilities account for non-recurring maintenance;
- \$150 million for construction grants for state veterans homes, with the amount to be available through the end of fiscal 2010; and;
- \$150 million for the General Operating Expenses account for expenses relating to the hiring and training of temporary claims processors.

No funds were appropriated for major or minor construction, or for the medical support and compliance account.

Final funding for VA for fiscal 2010 was included in **H.R. 3288**, the consolidated omnibus funding measure. In addition to fiscal 2010 appropriations, advance appropriations for fiscal 2011 for medical care accounts were also included, totaling nearly \$48.2 billion. These fiscal 2011 accounts include \$37.1 billion for medical services, \$5.3 billion for medical support and compliance, and \$5.7 billion for medical facilities.

The chart on the following page presents the major discretionary funding categories of VA’s budget, showing funding for the current year, the president’s fiscal 2010 budget request, the funding requests in the conference report to **H.R. 3288** passed by the House and the Senate, and The American Legion’s fiscal 2010 budget proposal as presented by Past National Commander David K. Rehbein in September 2008.

Funding for related agencies in this bill that are monitored by The American Legion include \$63 million for the American Battle Monuments Commission and \$27 million for the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

On June 30, the president signed **P.L. 111-37**, a measure to provide a cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) to increase the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities. The measure passed the House on June 23 by a vote of 403-0 after being approved by the Senate on June 10 by unanimous consent. The new law will also increase the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for



**James E. Koutz**  
Chairman, National  
Legislative Commission

**DATELINE CAPITOL HILL**

survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans.

The cost-of-living adjustment for the above-mentioned benefits would match the annual increase provided to Social Security recipients, which is based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index (CPI). The COLA is designed to offset inflation and other factors that alter the cost-of-living over time.

On Oct. 15, the Social Security Administration announced that there would be no COLA for 2010. In the event of a decrease in the CPI, veteran and survivor compensation will remain at last year's rate.

On Oct. 22, the president enacted **P.L. 111-81**, legislation to address a funding mechanism for the VA medical care accounts that is sufficient, timely and predictable. The measure is titled the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009. The original House bill was introduced by House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner, D-Calif.; the Senate version was introduced by Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Daniel K. Akaka, D-Hawaii.

The law requires – beginning with fiscal 2011 – a two-fiscal-year discretionary new budget authority for the following VA accounts: Medical Services, Medical Support and Compliance and Medical Facilities. These accounts would be the only VA discretionary appropriations accounts affected by the legislation, and the entire VA budget would still be subject to congressional scrutiny.

Previously, the problem for America's veterans is that appropriated discretionary funds are not always available to VA by the start of the

fiscal year because of political conflicts. This delay in the timely provision of medical care funds means VA health-care system administrators cannot hire medical personnel, procure new equipment, supplies and services, or construct and maintain VA medical facilities until those funds are authorized and appropriated.

The main problem in adequately funding veterans medical care is the inherent political nature of the appropriations process, a process still very much mired in 19th-century thinking. The VA budget is not created based upon the health-care needs of veterans and their dependents. It is, instead, based upon the political agendas of Congress and the president, both of which see the VA budget as a political document, not as a medical care document.

In 2001, The American Legion joined with eight other veterans service organizations to create the Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform. The original intent of the partnership was to support a mandatory funding mechanism to the VA appropriations process. This approach arose from a recommendation taken from the final report of the President's Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation's Veterans.

Mandatory funding for the VA health-care accounts meant that veterans health-care funding would be on par with Medicare or Medicaid funding, both of which do not have to go through the annual appropriations process. However, even with all nine VSOs strongly lobbying for this change for the past eight years, Congress opposed all efforts to change the failed funding system. Finally,

the partnership proposed Congress appropriate funds for VA medical care accounts one year ahead of the current fiscal year, also known as "advance appropriations."

Advance appropriations is a technique used for the past several decades by Congress to secure funding authority one year in advance for certain government programs. In this instance, VA would have its health-care accounts funded one year ahead of most other government programs, but Congress maintains its discretionary authority to approve and oversee the use of these funds.

By having discretionary funding decided one year in advance, VA medical care accounts would be removed from current fiscal year competition, and VA would have its medical care funds available on Oct. 1 of each new fiscal year. There would have to be a one-time, two year appropriation process to get this cycle started.

Also, with advance appropriations, VA administrators will know one year in advance what their fiscal year appropriations will be and can thus plan accordingly for delivering quality medical care services to all enrolled veterans who need it.

On June 10, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee passed **H.R. 1016** by a vote of 23-0. During consideration, House Veterans' Affairs Committee Ranking Member Steve Buyer, R-Ind., offered an amendment that would include the information technology and medical/prosthetic research accounts in the advance appropriations process. The amendment was adopted by a 17-8 vote.

The measure was then passed by the full House on June 23 by a recorded vote of 409-1.

On Aug. 6, the Senate by a voice vote approved **H.R. 1016**. Prior to final approval, the Senate amended the bill by substituting the language of **S. 423** for the House-passed text.

On Oct. 7, Rep. Filner introduced an amendment in the form of substitute language to his original bill. This new language essentially mirrored the Senate version of the bill. The measure passed the House by a vote of 419-1 and passed the Senate on Oct. 13 by unanimous consent. In an Oct. 22 White House signing ceremony attended by several representatives of The American Legion, President Obama signed the measure into law as **P.L. 111-81**.

On Nov. 19, the Senate on Nov. 19 passed **S. 1963**, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2009, by a vote of 98-0. The bill would authorize about \$3.7 billion in spending for programs aimed at caregivers for veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, providing those caregivers with health care, counseling, support and a stipend.

**S. 1963** would also expand services in rural areas and ensure that veterans who are catastrophically disabled or who need emergency care in the community are not charged for those services.

In addition, the measure seeks to expand and improve VA health care for female veterans. The measure is currently in conference committee.

*Americanism, Children & Youth, Economics and Foreign Relations were covered in the December Dispatch.*

**TAPS**

**Bryant B. Barron**  
*Harrisville, Miss.*

Bryant B. Barron of Post 26 (Department of Arizona) passed away Dec. 22 at age 94. He was a World War II, Korean and Vietnam War veteran.

Mr. Barron served in several department positions, including department adjutant from 1968 to 1982. He also was a member of the National Americanism Council from 1967 to 1968, the National Membership & Post Activities Committee Advisory Board from 1977 to 1982, the National Homeland & Civil Preparedness Committee from 1983 to 1986, the National Internal Affairs Commission from 1986 to 1994 and the National Legislative Council from 1987 to 1990.

**Graham E. Horton**  
*Chester, Ill.*

Graham E. Horton of Post 487 (Department of Illinois) passed away Nov. 14 at age 79. He was a Korean War Air Force veteran.

Mr. Horton was a member of the National American Legion Insurance Committee from 1993 to 2008.

**William R. Neitz**  
*Sunbury, Pa.*

William R. Neitz of Post 201 (Department of Pennsylvania) passed away Dec. 14 at age 75. He was a Korean War Navy veteran.

Mr. Neitz served in several department positions, including department commander from 1998 to 1999. He also served as National & Homeland Security Council vice chairman from 1996 to 1998.

He was a member of the National Legislative Council from 1999 to 2000 and 2001 to 2003, and the National VA&R Executive Section from 1998 to 2001.

**Sebastian T. Roll**  
*Mott, N.D.*

Sebastian T. Roll of Post 71 (Department of North Dakota) passed away Jan. 1 at age 73. He was a Vietnam War Army veteran.

Mr. Roll served in several department positions, including department commander from 2002 to 2003. He also served as national vice commander from 2005 to 2006, National Americanism Council vice chairman from 2003 to 2005, and National & Homeland Security Council vice chairman from 2002 to 2003.

He was a member of the National Legislative Council from 2002 to 2009 and the National Security Commission from 2006 to 2010.

DISCRETIONARY PROGRAM	P.L. 110-329, FISCAL 2009 FINAL VA APPROPRIATIONS	PRESIDENT'S REQUEST, FISCAL 2010	H.R. 3288, FISCAL 2010 VA APPROPRIATIONS	LEGION REQUEST, FISCAL 2010
Medical Services	\$30.9 billion	\$34.7 billion	\$34.7 billion	\$42.8 billion (includes medical and prosthetic research)
Medical Support & Compliance	\$4.4 billion	\$5.1 billion	\$4.9 billion	
Medical Facilities	\$6.0 billion*	\$4.7 billion	\$4.9 billion	
Medical Care Total	\$41.3 billion	\$44.5 billion	\$44.5 billion	
Medical Care Collections Fund	(\$2.5 billion)	(\$2.9 billion)	(\$2.9 billion)	**
Medical & Prosthetic Research	\$510 million	\$580 million	\$581 million	
Information Technology	\$2.5 billion*	\$3.3 billion	\$3.3 billion	\$2.7 billion
General Operating Expenses	\$2.0 billion*	\$2.2 billion	\$2.1 billion	\$2.8 billion
National Cemetery Administration	\$280 million*	\$242 million	\$250 million	\$249 million
Major Construction	\$923 million	\$1.2 billion	\$1.2 billion	\$1.8 billion
Minor Construction	\$742 million	\$600 million	\$703 million	\$1.5 billion
State Veterans Homes Construction Grants	\$325 million*	\$85 million	\$100 million	\$275 million
State Veterans Cemetery Construction Grants	\$42 million	\$42 million	\$46 million	\$49 million

\* Includes supplemental funding from P.L. 111-5.

\*\* The American Legion supports using Medical Care Collections Funds as *supplements*, not *offsets*, to discretionary VA funding.

## MEMBERSHIP

## Post start-up/revitalization success stories

**Post 248, Groveland, Mass.:** Groveland Post 248 has had a charter since 1920. It thrived in the community before losing its post home. After that, the post couldn't regain its momentum, and members either let their membership lapse or transferred to neighboring posts. As a result, the post hadn't conducted a meeting since 1986.

To revitalize the post, a meeting convened at the Groveland Town Hall. Approximately 50 letters were sent to delinquent and headquarters post members. In addition, district and department Legionnaires, along with national staff, made house visits to around 40 prospective or former members. Nearly everyone was receptive to being a part of this post, and 90 percent of those contacted either transferred or reactivated their membership in Post 248. District Commander Bruce Heisey's name was used as point of contact.

Two new members expressed the desire to be active in the post. Department Service Officer George Cameron also was available to answer questions on the final day of the revitalization effort.

Seven members came into the post as a result of the revitalization effort.

**Post 59, Milford, Mass.:** Despite a membership of 80, Post 59 hadn't met since last May and requested to cancel its charter. National, department and district Legionnaires, along with national staff, worked the revitalization effort. More than 200 letters were sent out to delinquent and headquarters post members. Attempts were made to contact, either in person or over the phone, 70 potential members. Through the effort, the post gained 16 new members, many of whom were not aware that Milford had an American Legion post. Several expressed the desire to be active members and look forward to the first meeting and planning local events in which they can participate.

The main "sparkplug" for this newly revitalized post is Dave Cutler, who became a new member via DMS in 2009 and asked department headquarters to transfer to Post 59. A Navy veteran who served two tours in Iraq, Cutler is very energetic and says he has a desire to see this post grow.

## MEMBERSHIP

## Post Excellence Award continues

### Purpose

National Commander Clarence Hill has continued the Post Excellence Award program, which honors posts that show excellence in membership participation, youth activities, community service, and support to veterans and U.S. troops.

This award promotes membership growth, demonstrates Legion values to youth, and increases the Legion family's visibility through community service projects. Many posts may already qualify for a Post Excellence Award because of their programs and activities.

### Criteria

Standards to be achieved in each area include:

- **Membership** – Post membership must be at least one member greater than the previous year. Post officer must attend district meetings.
- **Youth Activities** – The post must sponsor and actively participate in at least one primary youth program: Boys State, Legion Baseball, Oratorical Contest, Boy Scouts of America or Junior Shooting Sports.
- **Community Service** – The post must organize a community-service project that involves Legion family members. Potential projects abound; for example, a post could focus on a Children & Youth service or fulfill a strictly local need. A monetary donation may be part of the project, but it does not constitute an entire project.
- **Service to Troops or Veterans** – The post must organize a project supporting troops or veterans, involving Legion family members outside the post. Projects could include Legion programs such as the Family Support

[www.legion.org/members/officers/nationalcommander](http://www.legion.org/members/officers/nationalcommander)

Network or Heroes to Hometowns. Or they could simply help a local veteran with needed improvements to a home. A monetary donation may be part of the project, but it does not constitute an entire project.

### Certification

District commanders must certify posts as having fulfilled the four specified criteria. District commanders will submit a list of posts meeting the criteria to department headquarters. The list should include the post name, post number, address and commander's name. Ideally, the last two criteria are accompanied with copies of press releases submitted to local media that raise awareness for the projects. This ensures the projects were not only accomplished but that an attempt was made to enhance The American Legion's image. The copy submitted should include a date-time stamp showing receipt by the media outlet. The department adjutant will transmit information as posts qualify.

Each qualifying post receives a certificate of recognition, mailed to the department and awarded to the post. District commanders whose districts have 50 percent or more posts reaching certification receive framed certificates recognizing their achievement. District commanders whose districts achieve the highest percentage of recognized posts will receive additional awards. In the event of a tie within a department, all district commanders with the same percentage will receive recognition.

## MEMBERSHIP

## Incentives remain for district commanders

National Commander Clarence Hill has continued a program that honors district commanders and district vice commanders who make regular visits to their posts.

Personal contact at this level sets an example for post membership workers to make the personal contacts necessary for a successful membership program.

In order to qualify for the award, district commanders and/or vice commanders must visit each post in their districts during the year.

For districts with more than 30 posts, district vice commanders can assist in making post visits, but the district commander must visit at least 30.

A list of posts in a district can be obtained with the assistance of department headquarters. The list is mailed in spreadsheet format to each district commander.

At the completion of the 100-percent visit requirement, district commanders will send the completed spreadsheet to the department, and it will be forwarded to National Headquarters by Aug. 1.

[www.legion.org/members/officers/nationalcommander](http://www.legion.org/members/officers/nationalcommander)

### Awards

District commanders who achieve the 100-percent visit requirement receive a certificate recognizing their achievements. Additionally, qualifying districts will be split into five categories and given special prizes, based on drawings. Categories will separate districts by number of posts.

The district commander drawn from each category will receive a gift certificate from National Emblem Sales. The certificate amount will reflect the increased difficulty for larger districts.

**Category 1** (up to 20 posts) – \$100  
**Category 2** (21-35 posts) – \$200  
**Category 3** (36-50 posts) – \$300  
**Category 4** (51-65 posts) – \$400  
**Category 5** (over 65 posts) – \$500

Additionally, department commanders whose departments have all districts achieving the 100-percent requirement will receive special recognition at the 92nd National Convention.

## MEMBERSHIP

## Hill awarding 'challenge' pin

National Commander Clarence Hill will award his "I Met T.H.E. Job Challenge" pin to any Legion family member who signs up at least five new members. A new member is defined as any eligible person joining for the 2010 membership year who was not a member during the 2009 membership year.

Hill's goal is to recognize those in the Legion family who actively recruit new members. To maintain the integrity of the national commander's pin incentive program, only one challenge pin will be

[www.legion.org/members/officers/nationalcommander](http://www.legion.org/members/officers/nationalcommander)

awarded per individual.

The certification form may be submitted immediately. Upon receipt, national membership staff will confirm the names and mail the pin directly to the Legionnaire. Hill's "I met T.H.E. Job Challenge" pin incentive will end June 30, or when pin supplies are exhausted.

### "I MET T.H.E. JOB CHALLENGE" PIN CERTIFICATION FORM

Send to *The American Legion, National Membership Division, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206*, or fax to (317) 630-1413

Name _____	Date _____
Department _____	Post _____
Street address _____	
City/state/ZIP _____	
Phone number _____	

FIVE NEW MEMBERS (include full name, post and membership number)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_