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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE AMERICAN LEGION ANNOUNCES THE OAK RIDGE BOYS AS NATIONAL SPOKESPEOPLE

The Oak Ridge Boys join The American Legion's commitment to address the needs of veterans.

INDIANAPOLIS (Sept. 29, 2014) – The American Legion and the Grammy Award-winning Oak Ridge Boys are uniting to raise awareness and support for needs of U.S. military veterans, including better detection and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), help with the VA benefits process, as well as education and career opportunities for those who served our nation in uniform.

The American Legion is the country's largest veterans service organization, with 2.4 million members who work every day on behalf of the men and women who have served our nation in uniform. The Oak Ridge Boys will participate in a national fundraising and awareness campaign to support the detection and treatment of mental health issues among veterans, 22 of whom are lost each day to suicide.

As one of country music's longest-running groups, The Oak Ridge Boys' legacy extends back to the end of World War II. The current group – which consists of lead singer Duane Allen, bass singer Richard Sterban, tenor Joe Bonsall and baritone William Lee Golden – recently celebrated more than 40 years performing together. In that time, The Oak Ridge Boys have produced more than 30 top 10 hit songs, 12 gold records, three platinum records, one double-platinum album and a double-platinum single, with combined sales totaling 41 million records sold. They maintain a vigorous touring schedule and released a live album in April, "Boys Night Out."

Bonsall, a member of The Oak Ridge Boys since 1973, penned an inspirational biography about his veteran parents titled *G.I. Joe and Lillie: Remembering a Life of Love and Loyalty*. Joe's father spent much of his life living with the wounds of war, both seen and unseen, as told in the book. A song by the same name was included in the Oaks' album, *Colors*. "I know firsthand the ongoing care of our nation's veterans is critical and how it impacts the entire family unit," Bonsall said. "Uniting with The American Legion to raise awareness of those who are suffering, as my father did, is work we are proud to champion."

The American Legion has been helping veterans cope with the invisible wounds of war since its formation in 1919, including extensive focus in the last four years to help veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan who have suffered what are known as the "signature wounds" of today's war era: PTSD and traumatic brain injury (TBI). VA estimates that upwards of 20 percent of veterans from the recent wars are confronting PTSD. The American Legion has met with top national authorities in mental health care, the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs and research institutions, as well as veterans and caregivers, to find solutions and treatments for those who suffer with TBI and PTSD.

"The American Legion welcomes the support of The Oak Ridge Boys in our efforts to help veterans and their families deal with the mental scars of battle," American Legion National Commander Mike Helm said. "With the generous support of the Oaks, their fans and patriotic Americans, The American Legion will be able to help more veterans get the support and assistance they need."

About The American Legion

The nation's largest wartime veteran organization, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veteran care and rehabilitation, Americanism and youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through nearly 14,000 posts across the nation.
www.Legion.org

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