PROCEEDINGS

of the

National Executive Committee

of

THE AMERICAN LEGION

National Headquarters
Indianapolis, Indiana

May 10-11, 2017
DISTRIBUTION
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Past National Commanders
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Departments
PROCEEDINGS

of the

National Executive Committee

of

THE AMERICAN LEGION

National Headquarters
Indianapolis, Indiana

May 10 – 11, 2017
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PROCEEDINGS
of the
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, May 10, 2017

...At 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, May 10, 2017, the National Executive Committee was called to order by National Commander Charles E. Schmidt.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: The colors of our country in place. Hand salute by the numbers: One, two. I now call on National Chaplain Harvey Klee, from the Department of Texas, for our invocation.

Invocation
Harvey H. Klee, Texas, National Chaplain

Dearly beloved, merciful and loving God in whose precious name we pray. We give thanks for the bounty that we have received during this term, and for a very successful Washington Conference. May all our efforts reach fruition in the near days ahead. Lord, we come before you today from many walks of life, spread across this great land of ours, and united in a common cause of serving God and country. May we never fail in our mission.

We ask Your benediction upon this meeting about to begin. May we sense anew a responsibility serving the needs of fellow veterans and their families. We praise You for this good land of ours and for the heritage which has come to us through the efforts of those to whom freedom, justice, and righteousness mean more than life itself. Give us inspiration to meet the needs of the future as we carry the legacy forward. Give us wisdom to make the right decisions, persistence to support them, and radiance that will win others to work with us towards those ends.

We continue to pray for those members of our armed forces who are in harm's way. We pray for peace in our troubled world. We thank You for Your presence with us today and for the bonds of friendship which will be strengthened during our discourse. Amen.

POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony
Harvey H. Klee, Texas, National Chaplain

Resolution 288 adopted at the 67th Annual National Convention requires the designation of all POW/MIA chair at all official meetings of The American Legion. This is the symbol of the thousands of American POWs and MIAs still unaccounted for, from all wars and conflicts involving our nation. With the POW/MIA flag positioned to my left, let it serve as a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners, the repatriation of the remains of those who have been killed in action, and a full accounting of those who are still missing. Let us rededicate ourselves to this vital endeavor.

Pledge of Allegiance and
Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion
Kevin J. Owens, Oregon, National Sergeant-at-Arms

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: I now call on National Sergeant-At-Arms, Kevin Owens of Oregon, to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.
...The National Executive Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: I now call on National Adjutant Daniel Wheeler of Virginia, for roll call.

Roll Call
National Officers

National Commander
Charles E. Schmidt, Oregon

National Adjutant
Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia

National Vice Commanders
Paul Martel, Florida
Fae Casper, Georgia
Douglas L. Boldt, Nebraska
Paul L. Espinoza, New Mexico
Vincent James Troiola, New York

Past National Commanders
Keith A. Kreul, Wisconsin (Excused)
Clarence M. Bacon, Maryland (Excused)
John P. 'Jake' Comer, Massachusetts
Miles S. Epling, West Virginia
Robert S. Turner, Georgia
Dominic D. DeFrancesco, Pennsylvania (Excused)
Bruce Thiesen, California (Excused)
William M. Detweiler, Louisiana
Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota
Joseph J. Frank, Missouri (Excused)
Anthony G. Jordan, Maine
Butch L. Miller, Virginia
Hon. Alan G. Lance, Sr., Idaho (Excused)
Richard J. Santos, Maryland

Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania
Hon. John A. Brieden, III, Texas
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado
Paul A. Morin, Massachusetts
Martin F. Conatser, Illinois
Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan (Excused)
David K. Rehbein, Iowa
Clarence E. Hill, Florida
Jimmie L. Foster, Alaska
Fang A. Wong, New York (Excused)
James E. Koutz, Indiana
Daniel M. Dellinger, Virginia
Michael D. Helm, Nebraska
Harold D. Barnett, Georgia

National Executive Committeemen

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NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: That completes the roll call, Mr. Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you, Mr. Adjutant.
RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Commander, in regard to the minutes, I move that since the minutes have been printed in digest form and distributed and mailed, they be approved without being read. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You’ve heard the first and the second motions. Do I have any discussion? If not, all in favor say aye. Opposed? The ayes have it.

Announcements from National Adjutant

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: I now call on the national adjutant, Daniel Wheeler, for announcements.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: In November, you voted on amending Resolution No. 14 to change the effective date to June 15, 2017. The result of that vote was 55 in favor, zero opposed, and five did not vote.

Resolution No. 1 (Mail): Amendment to National Executive Committee Resolution No. 14, Adopted October 12 -13, 2016
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission
Submitted By: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 14, October 12-13, 2016, was adopted including a provision that it become effective January 31, 2017; and
WHEREAS, A number of issues have arisen that make it advisable to review and or change the provisions of said Resolution No. 14; and
WHEREAS, The easiest way to further review and possibly change the resolution is to do it at the May Meeting of the Internal Affairs Commission and National Executive Committee in May 2017; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee by “mail vote” in accordance with Rule 12 of the Rules of the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, That Resolution No. 14, October 12-13, 2016, be amended to change the effective date in subject resolution from January 31, 2017, to June 15, 2017, to allow for necessary review and possible amendment by the National Executive Committee at its May 2017 Meeting; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the vote may be by mail, e-mail or telephone to the National Adjutant and the 30 day voting period beginning October 31, 2016 shall close on November 29, 2016.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: The National Commander's dinner honoring the NEC is tonight at the Sheraton City Center in Indianapolis. The reception and dinner will be 30 minutes earlier than usual because of a special presentation. The reception will be held at 5:30 in the Circle Suites. Dinner will be served in the Meridian Ballroom at 6:30 p.m. NECmen who have not yet submitted names of attendees will find a bright yellow form on their desk. This needs to be completed and returned to Kevin Long, who is in the back of the room. The cutoff for seating requests is 10 a.m. this morning. So if you have a yellow form, please complete it and turn it in immediately. Tickets will be available for pickup after lunch. That completes the announcements, sir.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you, comrade adjutant. At this time, I call on Bobby Bryant, the NECman from Oklahoma, from the purpose of presentation.
Good morning. Mr. Commander, past national commanders, honorable members of the NEC, Legionnaires, staff and guests, at this time I'd like to introduce to you our department commander of Oklahoma, Don Kuntze, and our department adjutant, Carl Kuykendall. To say we're proud to be here this morning is an understatement. We are very proud to be here.

We're able to repay our loan to national. As you all know, we ran into some real difficulties a few years back, and if it weren't for you and national as a whole, we wouldn't be here today and we certainly wouldn't be serving veterans. And that's what we want to do, and that's what we like to do. The NEC adopted Resolution No. 5 on May 6 and 7, 2015, and the bottom line of that resolution says that if we could pay $400,000 back within 60 months, the note would be clear. We've worked very hard, very hard. Not just the three of us; the entire department and staff has worked very hard.

In 2015, we paid 100,000 of that. Last year we paid 100,000. And this morning, our department commander is going to present our commander with a check for $200,000. (Applause)

Thank you all very much. At this time, though, I would like to thank a couple of folks out here that really helped us. Past National Commander Michael Helm. Mike, we really appreciated your input to this and assisting us through this. Also Past National Commander Jimmie Foster. He was our interim commander during the process, and he helped us try to navigate through the mess, because it was definitely a tangled mess to work through. And also, I'd like to thank Adjutant Wheeler for assisting us, too.

And of course, all of it wouldn't be possible without you, the NEC. We thank you for supporting us and believing in us, to help serve our fellow veterans, our communities, and national. We would be lost without The American Legion in Oklahoma, and we are truly, truly thankful to you all. At this time, I would like to turn this over to our department commander so that he might pass on a little check. (Applause)

...National Vice Commander Martel assumed the chair.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER KUNTZE: The new Department of Oklahoma is truly thankful for national's aid in our time of need, and it is my privilege and honor to present this check for $200,000 as final payment of our loan. (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Well, Oklahoma, it's my honor on behalf of not only the NEC but the organization of our American Legion to accept, and this is not a small check. You know, we believed in you all the time, you just needed a little help. That's what we do in this organization, we help one another out. It wasn't easy, as you said, but we all stuck together and we believed we'd done what was right, what was necessary. I've got to tell you, I was in the Department of Oklahoma not very long ago, and I was impressed of the leadership team that's in place going forward. They've got a lot of plans on the table, they're growing in membership, and I think our efforts are going to pay off more than just this check. So commander, on behalf of the national organization, I'd like to release the promissory note as paid in full. So thank you all. (Applause)

As I said, there was a lot of effort that went into this, and those particularly who were really kind of in the eye of the storm, as you say, the Oklahoma Reorganization Committee. As I call their name, I would like for them to stand up and certainly be recognized and remain standing. Our chairman, Past National Commander William Detweiler of Louisiana. The vice chair from Kansas, David Warnken, NECman; also on the committee was Past National Commander Paul Morin; and then Finance Commission chairman, Ken Danilson of Iowa; and yours truly. If anybody else that contributed in any effort, and
particularly Tom Davis, the interim administrator, who stuck down in Oklahoma and worked things out. If anybody else participated in this, please stand so we can recognize you all for a job well done. Thank you, all. (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT resumed the chair.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thanks again, and go forward, Oklahoma. I think next we have a video.

...A video was presented to the National Executive Committee.
...National Vice Commander Espinoza assumed the chair.

Opening Remarks
Charles E. Schmidt, Oregon, National Commander

Good morning, national officers, past national commanders, members of the NEC, and all of our guests. Welcome again.

Who is going to fill their shoes? Who is going to advocate for veterans? Just as the doughboys returning from World War I did when they formed an organization that pledged to leave no American servicemember behind, and to ensure that their widows and orphans would receive compassion and assistance of a grateful nation.

Who is going to instill the values of great citizenship to young people by conducting programs like American Legion Baseball, Boys State and Nation, Oratorical, Shooting Sports, Scouting, and so many other activities? Who? Who is going to educate the public about flag etiquette and champion a constitutional amendment to protect Old Glory from those who desecrate it? Who is going to lobby Congress, encourage the White House, and convince the media that freedom is not free, and America must maintain a strong national defense in order to protect our way of life?

For the past 98 years, it has been The American Legion that has been doing these things, and I pray to God that we will continue to be the leader on these vital pillars for the next century and beyond. I am talking about the collective leadership of The American Legion. From the community to the national level, but what about the great leaders who wore the Legion cap?

Who is going to fill the shoes of Teddy Roosevelt, Jr., who not only fathered The American Legion, but distinguished himself on the battlefield by receiving the nation's highest award, the Medal of Honor, before dying at Normandy? Who is going to fill the shoes of Harry Colmery, who drafted the original GI Bill, widely considered America's greatest piece of social legislation? Who? Who is going to fill the shoes of John Geiger, who earned the nickname "Fifth Pillar of The American Legion" because of his lifetime of service and dedication to our organization? Who is going to fill the shoes of Paul Morin, who raised $300,000 in just a few weeks for Operation Landstuhl? And for Jim Koutz, who made sure that every American Legion post was aware of the great work of Operation Comfort Warriors, a program which he has raised millions for. Who?

Who is going to fill the shoes of Dan Dellinger, who was the first veteran service organization leader to call for the resignation of a VA secretary who was not properly serving veterans? Who is going to fill the shoes of Dan Ludwig, who led the fight for a GI Bill of Health which, if fully enacted, would have helped VA avoid some of its future funding problems? Who is going to fill the shoes of Jake Comer, who once escorted The American Legion Band to Red Square where they performed "God Bless America" in the old Soviet Union?

Who is going to fill all of your shoes, the people in this room, leaders in our your communities, departments, and some who are my predecessors and mentors, past national commanders of The American Legion? Only time prevents me from citing all of your
individual accomplishments, but The American Legion is better because of what you have put into it.

In October, I kicked off these meetings with a report on membership and the direction that our organization was heading. The numbers were alarming. Since then, I'm sad to report, the numbers have gotten worse.

I was cautiously optimistic back in February when we had 45 of our 55 departments meet their 85 percent membership target. The caution was because of the tendency of many to run out of gas early. Sure enough, only South Carolina and Mexico were at 95 percent by April 20. That means that 53 of our 55 departments weren't. As of today, only Mexico has met its 100 percent goal. I'm hoping by even today and certainly tomorrow, two more departments will meet theirs.

I understand that people are joining Post Everlasting, I think we all get that. But look at all of the guard and reserve units that have been activated since August 2, 1990. Look at the fact that the current membership window has been open for 27 years and by far, the longest window in the history of The American Legion. Instead of focusing on those deceased or ineligible veterans who cannot join The American Legion, let's put our efforts toward the more than 18 million who can. A 15 percent penetration of this population would give us 2.7 million members.

If, over the last 25 years, we had replaced all of our deceased members with new ones and renewed those who let their membership lapse, we would have another $22 million in our national budget every year. I am certain that your departments and posts can benefit from the millions in additional revenues that you would also have if we had just been able to maintain the numbers that we had in the early 1990s.

Membership determines our ability to implement and execute our Four Pillars programs. It also determines our ability to effectively advocate, since numbers do matter to Congress, the White House, governors and state legislatures. The numbers in our communities can also make the difference between mayors and city councils supporting American Legion programs or ignoring us.

Everywhere I go, I tell Legionnaires that if each of them would recruit just one new member, we would double our membership. Unfortunately, our latest membership report shows only 56,883 new traditional members for 2017. Keep in mind, that doesn't mean we have anywhere close to 56,883 different recruiters. Some of those recruiters, especially our 26 Gold and our nine Silver Brigadiers are carrying the weight for the rest of us, and they are doing more than their share.

When someone recruits three new members, I call or email them. One recruiter from Post 29 in the Department of Washington emailed me back. "I am honored to have served this great nation," she wrote. "I look forward to reinvesting my efforts to garner younger veterans into volunteerism. If I could rejoin the military and serve again, I would. I feel my experience to serve and mentor younger staff could be an asset to our country. Thank you for the encouragement, and I appreciate that you took the time to have an email sent to me. Kindly regards, Monica J. Trujillo."

I'm glad that there are Legionnaires like Monica, working to get new members and mentoring younger ones to someday fill our shoes. But what about the rest of us? Are we doing all that we can to reach out to active duty, reserve, guard members, and say, "Join us. We're The American Legion, and we are your friends"? Are we bringing membership applications and brochures to American Legion Baseball games and recruiting eligible parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles and friends into our organization?

Are we fighting every day to prevent The American Legion from dipping below the highly significant 2 million mark? If we are going to do that, we need to keep recruiting and renewing over the next month until our departments achieve 105 percent or even better, 110 percent of their goal.
The reason Congress pays attention to us is because we are large, we are principled, and we are altruistic. While I see no diminishment of our principles and our good works, our voice will get proportionally smaller as our numbers go down, and so will our ability to run the programs that benefit so many people and their communities. Don't believe for a second that other revenue sources can save us. A smaller magazine circulation lessens our ability to attract advertising. Fewer Legionnaires mean fewer customers at Emblem Sales. It's a vicious cycle, I know.

Would you like to be on a national committee to decide which of our outstanding programs to cut? Do you want to attend a national convention where there are fewer youth champions to recognize? Would you want fewer accredited service officers to assist veterans with their claims and appeals? Would you like to consider a dues increase? Because that will often result in fewer members because of the dues increase. Since my election as your national commander, I have asked Legionnaires to carry the legacy forward. But who is going to fill our shoes in order to do that?

In 2016, $830,010 in Temporary Financial Assistance grants were awarded, an increase of $5,923 over the previous year. That means meeting the need in 2016 required the full national per capita dues of 320 more Legionnaires than the year before. We cannot continue to lose membership and at the same time do more each year for those who seek our help. So the need for American Legion programs is growing, even though revenue has been shrinking.

I'm raising money for Temporary Financial Assistance and the training of our service officers, but it has not been nearly enough, and I certainly would appreciate assistance and support from your departments and posts toward the national commander's goal. But membership will always be the lifeblood of The American Legion.

Also concerning is the amount of posts that have lost their charter over the last several years. I can remember when National Commander Dan Dellinger used to say there were more than American Legion posts than Starbucks. Sadly, that is no longer the case.

About 800 posts have had charters canceled since 2014. One of the principles of our five-year membership plan was to have a presence in all communities where there are veterans. Each post cancellation represents one fewer community that is not benefiting from The American Legion.

Everyone in this room should be familiar with myLegion.org, but when is the last time you have had the opportunity to check out its capabilities? I implore everyone in here to contact myLegion@legion.org. Call the 800 number, strongly suggest that your department adjutants, commanders, district commanders, DEC members, membership chairs, and post commanders do the same. MyLegion can provide a county-by-county list of those who have not renewed their membership in The American Legion. Unless a Legioneer has joined Post Everlasting, be sure that every one of those former members within your department receives a personal contact, not just a form letter, but from someone who cares.

Now, to make it even easier, you all are being given a list at these meetings of every post member of your post who has not renewed. It includes their contact information. If the phone number is not included, Google the information that you do have or call directory assistance for a phone number. But a personal visit works even better. Find out why they left the fold and find a way to fix it. If people feel wanted and appreciated, they will renew.

I would like an update on your progress, NEC members, over the next ten days. Let your national vice commander know once all your contacts have been made, and then the vice commander will inform me. Also included in the material are the lists of posts in your department and the number of Legionnaires in each post who have not renewed.

We all believe in leadership by example, and this is your opportunity to do so in your department. Since you are reaching out to post members of your post, expect the other leaders in your department to reach out to their posts as well. Every post has a commander.
Expect no less from them. The military has an ethos, "Leave no man or woman behind." We shall do the same and make sure that our post members are not left behind and not forgotten.

Now, two members of this body here this morning did not receive lists of their non-renewals from their posts. The reason is simple: National Executive Committee member Joe Jackson of Connecticut and also Virginia's NEC, Michael Mitrione, have no expired members in their post from either 2015 or 2016. Congratulations gentlemen on a great job well done. *(Applause)*

You will all have a resolution before you during this meeting that will make myLegion.org even better. It will include the contact information of all newly acquired DMS members effective on July 1. We can provide the information, but it is up to you, your departments, your posts, and membership chairs, to provide the tender loving care to these members so that they feel a part of our American Legion Family.

There are many issues that we are going to discuss during these meetings, but when considering every program, every position, and every resolution, I want you to think about all of the Legionnaires that are no longer part of this organization, and ask yourself one question: Who's going to fill their shoes? Thank you. *(Standing applause)*

...National Commander Schmidt resumed the chair.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Past National Commander Jake Comer is recognized. Commander, could you come up to the microphone, sir?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COMER: Comrade Commander, I have sat here, as we all have this morning, and I'm only speaking for myself, but I'm embarrassed, because we have a national commander that has gone above and beyond what anyone would expect him to do. And as I said, I'm embarrassed to think that we have done such a poor job this year. I'm not going to embarrass anyone sitting here as to ask who has signed up that one member, because I'm sure there will be those that would be sitting down on their butt.

I look to the time when we had better than 3 million members, and you know, we had the same number of national call-ins at that time, and now we're going to go below 2 million, and you're all going to expect the same number of call-ins that you had when it was over 3 million. We have not made that decision, but I for one am thinking about it. If you receive lists in the future for future meetings and you see the lists have been eliminated, don't blame me. Don't blame our team. Because when you take those million members at $18, the numbers speak for themselves.

There are some that are doing above and beyond. Maybe by mentioning a few of those items, it would help some of us. I think this year is the first time that we've authorized the national vice commanders to attend foreign departments. That's never happened before. We've always got a lot of the complaints, "They're the same as any other department. Why don't we see a national vice commander?"

Well, we did, we sent them there with great success, you can see one of them, Mexico, being 100 percent. I think of Paul Martel from Florida, when he returned from Europe, found out, he went around and that was his job to do. They signed up over 50 new members to the military assigned to those Europe stations.

We had a new post that was formed in Massachusetts. We have a real firecracker there in that district. He went down to the local town hall. In some states you can't do this, but he did it, and he received a complete list of that town, it was a good-size city, of those voting, those that are eligible to vote in that city. And attached to that voting list was the word next to some individuals, the word "veteran." He picked up the phone and he called them and he went to visit some of them, and within two weeks he came back with 50 new members from a list of veterans that were eligible to vote. So they're out there.
I know I went to my post last week at a post meeting and, again, embarrassed. I found out we had nine members that have not renewed. It's going to be a little job, but my adjutant said, "Jake, do you want 100 percent?" I said, "You're damn right I do."

So he sent down a check for the nine members, "We're now 100 percent," but he'll go after those nine members in his own way. We've got to do the job, my friends. We're not doing it yet. And as I've said, I'm embarrassed.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you, Commander Comer. The chair recognizes Past National Commander Dan Dellinger.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DELLINGER: Mr. Commander, members of the NEC, past national commanders, fellow Legionnaires. Three years ago I stood at this podium and I called for the resignation of Secretary Shinseki, but that's history. What we're looking at is the future. The commander so eloquently stated our position and the consequences of our failure. You've heard Past National Commander Comer. Do you really think if I would stand up here in ten years and do exactly what I did three years ago, we would have the same result? No. What matters is our influence, and our influence is our membership.

After I finished my tour, I went back to my post. I'm currently the membership chairman, and I'm embarrassed, just like Jake was embarrassed. This year we've had 37 deaths, 37 deaths in my post, but we've only recruited 23 new members. But as I told the commander over the weekend, I did turn in four memberships this week before I came to Indianapolis: two new members and two renewals.

Mr. Commander, I want to promise you we will not stop. We can't stop. My motto, my year was "building for tomorrow today." Well, ladies and gentlemen, tomorrow is today. It's got to stop. And as Harry Truman said in that little plaque on his desk, "The buck stops here." It's all of us.

I know I'm going to go back and I'm going to hit those lists again, because we need to. It isn't about us, it isn't about our post. I know demographics have changed in this country. The veterans aren't in some communities like they were, but they're in others. Everywhere you look, there's a veteran. On the tenth floor of the Sheraton, there was a gentleman up there working. Two Legionnaires were very proud Saturday morning, said, "We just signed him up." They're everywhere.

But it isn't for us, but who is it for? It's for our fellow veterans, but more importantly, ladies and gentlemen, it's for our country. Thank you, Mr. Commander. (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you, Commander Dellinger, thank you. I'd like to recognize Past National Commander Dan Ludwig of Minnesota.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER LUDWIG: Mr. Commander, members of the NEC, good morning. It's always good to come here and gather and to do the work of the Legion and to share the friendships that we've valued so much over all the years. But we have work to do.

My year for membership when I was national commander was 1996; that's 20 years ago. We finished that year at 2,879,545 members. 2016, last year, 20 years later, 2,043,888. That is a decrease of 835,657 members in 20 years. You multiply that times the national dues, that's like fifteen-and-a-half-million dollars in this year alone in loss of revenue, and that's important.

But what really is important is, along with that decrease in membership, we have also canceled, in those 20 years, 2,600 posts. I see on the list here today, we have 77 more posts on the list for consideration for cancellation at this meeting. That's almost 2,700 communities where there isn't a local Legion presence to be a steady force in those communities, to be promoting our youth programs.

World War II veterans are in their 90s. Korean veterans are in their 80s. I'm the average age of all the Vietnam veterans, I'm going to be 71 years old next month. Ten years
from now, if we don't change and do the right thing, we'll be lucky if we're half a million members.

So we need to sign up this new generation of young veterans. The last thing any of us need to buy into is, "They don't want to join." Well, yeah, they don't want to join some of our posts. I have posts in Minnesota where young veterans aren't welcome. I have a lot of posts in my department where they're indifferent. Some of them, they'll try to get a young veteran in there, but then they'll tell them that, "You need to do it the same way we've been doing it since 1955," and that ain't going to work.

They're patriots, they have done amazing things in the military. They have everything in their heart we do, but they don't dial their phone with a rotary dial, they don't write checks. We need to partner with them, embrace them, make them sit down, and we need to listen to their point of view. They've got great ideas. They're not the same as ours, but they're good. If we do that, I'm confident that they'll join.

I also have posts in Minnesota where there's a great respect and partnership between the old and the experienced and the youth and their enthusiasm, and those posts, they are going great guns. So it works, but it requires us to embrace those young folks and their new ideas. So who is going to fill our shoes? The choice is ours. We can embrace those young new veterans, or maybe our shoes will be empty. The choice is ours. Thank you, God bless.

(Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you, Commander Ludwig. Sergeant-at-arms, would you please escort forward the president of the nation's largest patriotic women's organization in the world, the American Legion Auxiliary.

Greetings: Mary E. Davis, Washington
National President, American Legion Auxiliary

National Commander, officers of The American Legion, past national commanders, National Executive Committee members, Legion Family members and guests, I've been traveling for nine months now, and in that time I've been able to observe programs in action, commitment to the mission, and relationship between family in leadership positions. I've got to tell you that, as I've gone throughout our country and overseas, I have seen Sons of The American Legion step up to the plate and do an awesome job for this organization. I've seen Legion Riders step up to the plate. I've been in events to honor me when there were almost more Legionnaires there than Auxiliary members.

I am so proud to be a part of The American Legion Family and to be able to represent The American Legion Auxiliary this year as I go on my visits to your departments. And thank you, each and every one of you who have come to the events that are scheduled in your department when I am there.

As we traveled around, there were a couple of gentlemen, one just this last week, both in the military, the first one a three-star general. Well, not having been actually in the military and knowing when to keep your mouth shut, one time when he asked a question, I decided I would answer. And sometimes when you answer without thinking, you get surprised, especially when it's a three-star general. So he asked, "Who is the youngest person in a leadership position in your organization?"

Well, I had just appointed a Children and Youth chairman that I thought was 35. I've since found out I was wrong on her age, but I thought 35, and I thought: Well, at my age, that's pretty good. So I said, "35," in all my innocence. And he said, "Too old. Your organization is going to die if you don't get younger members in your organization."

And how true that is. And isn't that what I've been hearing all morning from your national commander, from your past national commanders? We do need some help. So I listened a little more to what he said.
It was refreshing. He said we needed to engage our troops. From the moment he spoke, I've been contemplating his words, because they kind of have haunted me. I know we've been talking about how we need to talk in younger language, how we need to engage the troops that we have now. How are we going to do that?

I can tell you that when we were active duty, no American Legion person, member came to us when we were overseas. I even went to an American Legion post that I knew was in Frankfort, we were in Frankfort. I took my mother, who was a post commander at the time, I was very proud to be able to say, "This is my mother, she was a female veteran, and she's a post commander for The American Legion, and you're an American Legion post. You have great schnitzel." But nobody asked us to come back and nobody asked us to take part in what they did.

That's what I'm saying, they're all around us and we are not engaging them. So I merely ask that you contemplate the thoughts and words that these two military that I've come in contact that I'm going to bring up, have talked to me about.

The general in Hawaii said, "Give them something no one else has." I truly believe we, as The American Legion, give these young military people something no one else has in the Four Pillars and the programs across the board for The American Legion Family. I truly believe we do give that. And he said, "Get younger members." Well, we know that, and how are we going to do it?

So this past weekend when I was in Vermont, I ran into a lieutenant colonel. There was a whole cadre of military at the hotel we were at. He came over to get a cup of coffee, turned around and saw the American Legion Auxiliary sitting at breakfast, and he engaged us. Well, of course, the first thing we did was thank him for his service, which we do. But he engaged us more than just the niceties of when you meet somebody for the first time.

The irony of it is that he called over another, a captain, and both of them were from my home state. So it's like, oh, okay, these are ones we haven't engaged yet. Well, I am definitely going to listen to him. He said, "Listen to what the active duty, reservists, and guardsmen need from our organization." When we talk to them, and first of all, we need to engage them more than thanking them for their service. We need to engage them. "What are things that you're interested in if you were to join an organization such as ours?"

Think about it. Instead of always being on "transmit," we need to listen and take to heart what they say. That's how we're going to make a difference. We need to hear from them, we need to act on what they tell us. You need to find what interests them so that they will walk through the doors and keep coming back.

He had recently visited a post in Vermont when they needed to go to a luncheon, and he said that it was such an inviting atmosphere and he was so inspired, and that's what caused him to come over and talk to us about it. He wanted to thank us and tell us what a great post home it was, and that next time that they had drill here in Vermont, that he definitely was going to make a reservation with that post to have all of his folks come in for their meeting luncheon, because it was a place he felt he could bring them.

So as we listened, I think part of what I know and what I felt when he talked to me is, every commander cares about their troops. They want to know, if they join an organization, that it's one that is caring and will take care of their troops as well. That's what he was telling us. He said that that post home was so light and not dark and dingy, that it was inviting, and he would be more than happy to bring his troops to that post.

So my assessment: We need to be on "receive," not just "transmit," and not just give lip service, but leap into measured action to find those members that are there. They really are in every single community. Not only will they benefit from the pillars of this organization, they will benefit from the networking when they get out of service.

For the last 20 years, I was honored to be an American Legion service officer. And in that role, I truly did learn the importance of a veteran, the heart of a veteran, and the needs
of our veterans. It is an important aspect of this organization that, as they say, if things need
to be cut, service officers may not be in every single community like they need to be, and
that would be a disservice to our active duty military.

What I've seen in the departments, for the most part, is working together for the
betterment of all facets of our organization. But that's not what I've always heard at the post
and unit level. Does leadership in all of your posts involve spouses? Does it involve
Auxiliaries? As you go home, please take a look at that and see if you can't add more
Auxiliaries. We would really love to have your help. On the whole, I think we're healthy.
On the whole, the reality is we're shrinking. Please ponder these military commanders,
what they have observed, and go forward and see if we can't build our organization.

I want to thank you all also for giving me such a wonderful national commander this
year. We've had a wonderful time. We've enjoyed meeting each and every one of the
Legion Family members that we've been honored to meet. Thank you for inviting us into
your departments, thank you for being there, and please do what you can to make us bigger.
Thank you. (Standing applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you, President Mary, for stopping
by and your comments. Later this month, I have the pleasure and opportunity to go into the
Department of France with President Mary and Sons of The American Legion National
Commander Jeff Frain or our annual visit to the Department of France and Normandy and
so forth. But while we're there, we're going to have town hall meetings with and for the
American military communities, to spread the word about our great American Legion
family. Hopefully, we're going to have a great audience. Hopefully, if this works out, we're
going to carry it to the other side of the United States, out in the Pacific, because there, too,
are military families, military communities, veterans, that someday will need a service
officer. We've got programs that youth have an opportunity to participate in. We just need
to make those opportunities, but we're going to spread the word far and wide. Next I call
on Chairman David O. Warnken of Kansas, Resolutions Subcommittee, for a report.

Oral Report: Subcommittee on Resolutions
David O. Warnken, Kansas, Chairman

Thank you, Commander. Mr. Commander, your Subcommittee on Resolutions has
been in session for the last two days, reviewing the resolutions to be presented to the
National Executive Committee. We have 29 resolutions that will be presented, coming
from the commissions and the committees who will make reports. Any resolutions dealing
with that commission will follow that report. All other resolutions have been disposed of
by other action or held for further study and will be reported out as an addendum. Mr.
Commander, I ask that you prepare the National Executive Committee for memorializing
resolutions. Please uncover.

Memorial Resolutions
James T. Akers, Kansas

WHEREAS, It has pleased Almighty God, the Great Commander, to summon to His
immortal legions our beloved comrade, James T. Akers, National Chaplain, 2004 to 2005; and

WHEREAS, We humbly bow to the will of Divine Providence, while ever cherishing
in our hearts the memory of his distinguished service to our country and his outstanding
contributions to The American Legion comradeship; now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, That the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, in regular meeting assembled on this 10th day of May in the year of our Lord 2017, does mourn the passing of our distinguished Legionnaire, James T. Akers, that we commend to all men his works and to God his spirit; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That in token of our common grief, a copy of this resolution be presented to his family.

Reverend Jerome D. Fortenberry, Missouri

WHEREAS, It has pleased Almighty God, the Great Commander, to summon to His immortal legions our beloved comrade, Reverend Jerome D. Fortenberry, National Chaplain, 1973 to 1974; and

WHEREAS, We humbly bow to the will of Divine Providence, while ever cherishing in our hearts the memory of his distinguished service to our country and his outstanding contributions to The American Legion comradeship; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, in regular meeting assembled on this 10th day of May in the year of our Lord 2017, does mourn the passing of our distinguished Legionnaire, Reverend Jerome D. Fortenberry, that we commend to all men his works and to God his spirit; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That in token of our common grief, a copy of this resolution be presented to his family.

James H. Hall, New Jersey

WHEREAS, It has pleased Almighty God, the Great Commander, to summon to His immortal legions our beloved comrade, James H. Hall, Department Vice Commander, 1971 to 1972; Department Commander, 1974 to 1975; National Executive Committee Alternate Member, 1979 to 1985; National Executive Committee Member, 1985 to 1989; National Vice Commander, 2005 to 2006; National Media & Communications Commission Member 2013 to 2017; and

WHEREAS, We humbly bow to the will of Divine Providence, while ever cherishing in our hearts the memory of his distinguished service to our country and his outstanding contributions to The American Legion comradeship; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, in regular meeting assembled on this 10th day of May in the year of our Lord 2017, does mourn the passing of our distinguished Legionnaire, James H. Hall, that we commend to all men his works and to God his spirit; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That in token of our common grief, a copy of this resolution be presented to his family.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Similar resolutions will be presented to the families of the following: John. M Tyson, Alabama; James H. Malone, Alaska; Donald J. Whalen, Arizona; Theo Mainaris, California; John J. Bettencourt, California; Steven G. Dillman, Colorado; Elton Oltjenbruns, Colorado; Larry J. Besson, Illinois; Arthur E. Rawers, Illinois; Leland O. Baxter, Indiana; Robert R. Rich, Jr., Maine; Phillip J. Surprenant, Maryland; Alfred G. Canale, Massachusetts; John E. Bey, Minnesota; Harold Berg, Minnesota; James S. Whitfield, Missouri; Sam Yancey, Missouri; Donald J. Buffington, Montana; Jim Sidel, Nebraska; Marshall E. 'Ted' Behr, Jr., New Jersey; David L. Jackson, Ohio; Jeff Kaufman; Ohio; Eugene C. Eichelberger, Pennsylvania; Richard E. Verrier, Sr., Rhode Island; Louis J. Cosentino, Rhode Island; Charles J. Zawacki, Rhode Island; Darrell A. Loveland, Utah; Dana A. Meier, Utah; Don
V. Tibbs, Utah; Lanny Myers, Washington; Robert W. Westphal, Washington; Carl S. Wipperman, Washington.

The Abiding Love

It singeth low in every heart;
We hear it each and all—
A song of those who answer not,
However we may call.
They throng the silence of the breast,
We see them as of yore—
The kind, the true, the brave, the sweet,
Who walk with us no more.

’Tis hard to take the burden up,
When these have laid it down;
They brighten all the joys of life,
They soften every frown.
But oh, ’tis good to think of them
When we are troubled sore;
Thanks be to God that such have been,
Although they are no more!

—John W. Chadwick

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you, David. As we begin our reports, I would just ask, if there’s any side conversations that you need to hold, please step to the back of the room or somewhere so we can continue to hear all the reports and all the speakers, please. I now call on Chairman Michael E. Walton of Illinois, for the Convention Commission report.

Oral Report: Convention Commission
Michael E. Walton, Illinois, Chairman

Good morning, Commander Schmidt, members of the NEC. Although my written report is in your packet, I would like to touch on some of the highlights of our meetings.

Jim Morris, president of the American Legion National Convention Corporation of Ohio, gave a final report regarding our 98th National Convention in Cincinnati, which we believe was a success. President Jim will be presenting a check to the NEC this morning.

John Warden, the president of The American Legion National Convention Corporation in Nevada, Incorporated, gave an update on the progress for our up and coming 99th Annual National Convention in Reno, Nevada which, as you know, is August 18 through the 24 this year. The Department of Nevada and the City of Reno are ready for us.

We conducted four site visits to cities seeking to host the 104th National Convention in 2022. Those cities were Birmingham, Alabama; Detroit, Michigan; Houston, Texas; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. All four of these cities presented to the Convention Commission on Monday, May 8. It is the recommendation of the Convention Commission that the 2022 104th National Convention of The American Legion be awarded to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for the dates of August 26 through September 1, 2022.

Two resolutions were received: one from the Department of Florida supporting the City of Tampa, Florida, and one from the Department of North Carolina, supporting the
City of Charlotte, North Carolina, to host the 2023 105th National Convention of The American Legion. The commission voted to receive and record those resolutions.

Thus far, the commission has received three resolutions regarding hosting the 2023 national convention. Those departments are Department of Louisiana for New Orleans, Department of Florida for Tampa, and the Department of North Carolina for Charlotte. Departments have until May 31 to submit a resolution of support to national if they desire to bid on the 2023 national convention.

Our national conventions are now set through 2021 as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Convention Year</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reno, NV</td>
<td>99th</td>
<td>August 18 – 24, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minneapolis, MN</td>
<td>100th</td>
<td>August 24 – 30, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indianapolis, IN</td>
<td>101st</td>
<td>August 23 – 29, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louisville, KY</td>
<td>102nd</td>
<td>August 28 – September 3, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phoenix, AZ</td>
<td>103rd</td>
<td>August 27 – September 2, 2021</td>
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The American Legion received a request from the Sheraton City Centre hotel to change the fall 2020 meeting dates from October 5 through the 8 to October 12 through the 15 of 2020. By making this change, The American Legion will be able to obtain a $113 room rate for three consecutive fall years. That will provide a savings of approximately $4,000. Our new dates would fall within the 45 days, as the national convention has required. In the spirit of cooperation between the Sheraton City Centre and the Indianapolis Convention and Visitors Bureau, this change was unanimously approved by the Convention Commission, and we request that the NEC also approve this change.

Mr. Commander and members of the NEC, that concludes my report. Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Report: Convention Commission  
May 8, 2017  
Michael E. Walton, Illinois, Chairman

Chairman Michael E. Walton, Illinois, called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M., May 8, 2017. Roll call was taken and all members were present.

Items Requiring NEC Action:

- Resolution No. 2742 – submitted by the Department of Florida supporting a bid for the 2023 National Convention from the city of Tampa, Florida. Received and Recorded
- Resolution No. 2744 – submitted by the Department of North Carolina supporting a bid for the 2023 National Convention from the city of Charlotte, North Carolina. Received and Recorded

The following cities provided presentations requesting they be awarded the 2022 National Convention of The American Legion: Birmingham, Alabama; Detroit, Michigan; Houston, Texas; Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is recommended to receive the tentative award of the 2022 National Convention for the dates of August 26 – September 1, 2022.

Planning for the 99th National Convention of The American Legion is on schedule. President of The American Legion National Convention Corporation of Nevada, Inc., John Warden, gave an update on the progress. The Reno-Sparks Convention Center will be the site of the general sessions, the exhibit hall, color guard contests, potential band contests, the National Commander’s Banquet and the Auxiliary States Dinner. The National Staff Offices for The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, Distinguished Guest Registration and Badges & Packets will also be in the Reno-Sparks Convention Center. The Color Guard contests will take place on Friday, August 18,
2017, starting at 5:00PM. Tentatively scheduled are the Competitive Concert Band Contest and Exhibition Contest to be held Saturday, August 19 at 1:00PM in the Reno-Sparks Convention Center. At this time, no band applications have been received. Sunday evening, August 20 will be the annual parade in downtown Reno starting at 4:00PM. This year a Post Parade Party will be hosted by the Department of Nevada. The National Commander’s Banquet, on August 22, 2017, will feature Neal McCoy.

James Morris, President of The American Legion National Convention Corporation of Ohio, Inc. gave the final report to the Convention Commission for the 98th National Convention of The American Legion. Mr. Morris reported the 2016 Convention Corporation generated a net profit of $58,929.78. He will present a check to the National Executive Committee for $29,464.89.

Our National Convention Request for Proposal (RFP) has been updated to reflect our current numbers and to ensure what we provide to bidding cities is properly reflected within the RFP. The RFP will be updated each year as necessary.

Chairman Walton assigned each member of the commission specific assignments to observe at the 2017 National Convention. Each commission member will report their findings to the full commission during the 2017 Fall Meetings in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Chairman Walton communicated to the commission due to circumstances beyond its control, the Sheraton City Centre Hotel is making a request of The American Legion to change the Fall 2020 Meetings dates from October 5-8, 2020 to October 12-15, 2020. By making this change, The American Legion will be able to obtain a $113.00 room rate for three consecutive fall years, providing a savings of approximately $4,000.00. The new dates fall within 45 days of the National Convention as required. In the spirit of cooperation with the Sheraton City Centre and the Indianapolis Convention & Visitors Authority, Chairman Walton kindly requests from the National Executive Committee for its favorable consideration. The change was unanimously approved by the commission.

We have three Departments of The American Legion currently that has submitted the proper resolution expressing their interest in bidding on the 2023 National Convention. The cities being supported by the appropriate resolution are Charlotte, North Carolina; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Tampa, Florida.

Dates for future National Conventions are:
Reno, NV August 18 – 24, 2017
Minneapolis, MN August 24 – 30, 2018
Indianapolis, IN August 23 – 29, 2019
Louisville, KY August 28 – September 3, 2020
Phoenix, AZ August 27 – September 2, 2021

Addendum A

Received & Recorded

Register Resolution No. 2742 (FL) (DEC) City of Tampa Offers to Host the 2023 National Convention
Register Resolution No. 2744 (NC) (DEC) City of Charlotte Offers to Host the 2023 National Convention

Addendum B

The Convention Commission recommends the following dates for the events/meetings from our report, which was presented to the body for disposition.
RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Commander, a motion to receive and file the report of the Convention Commission with the exception of Addendum A and Addendum B. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You've heard the motion, you've heard the second. Are there any discussions? Hearing none, all in favor aye. Opposed? Motion passed.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Commander, attached to the report of the Convention Commission is Addendum A and Addendum B. I move that the actions of the Convention Commission become the actions of the National Executive Committee. ...Second...


Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your great work. I now call on Past National Vice Commander James Morris of Ohio, president of the Cincinnati Convention Corporation, for the purpose of a report.

...National Vice Commander Casper assumed the chair.

Final Report of the 2016 National Convention
James Morris, Ohio
Cincinnati Convention Corporation President

Mr. Commander and members of the NEC, it's a privilege for me to be here this morning to give you my final report on our convention in Cincinnati. I hope everybody had a great time in Cincinnati. It was a great city. Everything went real well and went really great.

But I want to thank a special thank you to Bridget and her staff out here at national. When you do one of these national conventions, without their help it would be very difficult. They stepped forward and helped us at any time we needed help or needed anything done, they were right there for us.

I also want to thank the Department of Ohio for all their volunteers. We had over 200 volunteers that volunteered to help us with the convention. We put them all to work doing something. Some of them were standing on the street corner waving, but at least they were doing something.

I had great committee chairmen this year. Last year they did a great job. We tried some new things, and one of the new things we tried was at the parade. Instead of having just one chairman, we had a chairman of the parade committee, and then we had five division chairmen. They got the divisions lined up. When it was time for the division to move out, they were ready to go. They did a great job. I know in my department, we were the last ones off. We were supposed to be off at 5:15, we actually walked off at 5:12, and that's unusual. I think with the little changes we made, I think it made it easier for everybody to get off on time and did a great job.

A little bit about the finances. We received a total of $124,955.20. We had expenses of $66,025.42, which left us a balance of $58,929.78. And Mr. Commander, I've got a check for you I'd like to present to the national in the amount of $29,464.89, for their share of the profit. Here's your check, and we appreciate you coming to Cincinnati.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Well, thank you. Thank you, all. I don't know about you, but I had a great time in Cincinnati. (Applause and laughter)
But it really was a great convention and a beautiful city. Hopefully, someday this organization will return for another convention in Cincinnati. But thank you to the Department of Ohio for all the great hospitality that you extended to all of us. Thank you. (Applause) National Commander Schmidt resumed the chair.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Commander, a motion to receive and file the report of the 2016 National Convention. Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard a motion and second. Are there any discussions? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? The ayes have it.

I now call on Chairman Ken Danilson of Iowa for a Marketing Commission report.

Oral Report: Marketing Commission
Kenneth D. Danilson, Iowa, Chairman

Mr. Commander, members of the NEC and guests, this is The American Legion Marketing Commission oral report. You have the written report so I'm just going to hit some highlights.

The first thing I'd like to do is introduce a gentleman who was selected a few months ago as the marketing director on the staff. So James Baca, would you please stand? James is a longtime Legionnaire from the Department of New Mexico. (Applause)

Since the Marketing Commission's last report of the NEC, a big development that has been bringing significant amount of work to it is supporting the Resolution No. 4 on the National Poppy Week. Working in concert with the Legislative Division and American Legion Auxiliary, we have secured a commitment from Boeing of $100,000, and we have a big media push underway to bring greater significance to the poppy as a symbol of the sacrifice our veterans make for freedom.

The marketing team continues its collaboration with the Legislative Division to introduce a bill to authorize the U.S. Mint to strike and circulate an American Legion Centennial coin in 2019. This would be a limited-edition coin honoring The American Legion's 100th Anniversary. Previous institutions and historical figures who have the Mint make coins for them, have generated millions of dollars in net revenues plus massive promotional value. Hopefully, the same thing The American Legion can accomplish. A resolution was passed by the Marketing Commission authorizing and supporting these efforts, titled, "100th Anniversary Coin." You'll see that, I think, after the finance report.

As The American Legion Centennial draws near, the corporate alliances group and all other arms of the Marketing Division, as well as the Media & Communications Division, will begin driving the 100th Anniversary message to the majority of The American Legion promotions and media channels, and will be deeply involved in event planning to include two centennial Legacy Runs and major centennial national conventions of 2018 and 2019.

An effort is currently underway to reengage the media and build off the success of "I am The American Legion" PSA series. Distribution of new PSAs will begin in mid-May.

There are several other events and initiatives in various stages of planning that are being planned in 2017 that will generate membership, raise funds, develop corporate alliances, and improve brand awareness. Some of these events you will find in my written report.

Regarding membership, the Direct Mail Solicitation (DMS) for membership is approaching 95,000 new members this year. It is off last year's pace by about 9,000 members. One of the reasons for this shortfall can be attributed to the unpredictable response rates due to increasing the first year's dues from $25 to $30. Initial tests showed that this would be a minimal decline in response by going to $30. Unfortunately, that was not the case. So next year it's going back to the $25 rate.
On a positive note, online renewals are at the highest level they have been since the inception of the program. To date, we are about 16.5 percent ahead of the same period last year. Online joins are also performing very well because of our digital efforts. 2017 has shown more than 30,000 new online starts to date, which is outpacing last year by about 19 percent.

Regarding fundraising, the national fundraising program nonmember to date, gross revenue is in line with budget expectations. As of April 28, gross revenue was about $3.7 million. Unsolicited donations through American Legion charities is just over $2 million for the period of September 1 to April 28. The department fundraising program currently has 24 full participants in the co-op program and 15 ad hoc participants. This is up slightly from 2016.

The vehicle donation program continues to grow in its third year of existence. Year-to-date, the program has received proceeds from 61 vehicles for a total of $25,280.

The American Legion Marketing and Media & Communications Division has now divided into two separate divisions at national headquarters: The Marketing Division and the Media & Communication Division. As I said before, James Baca has assumed the duties of marketing director on March 9.

Jeff Stoffer, who has served as director of Marketing, Media and Communications since June 2015 has resumed his previous role as Media and Communications director. I would be remiss if I did not recognize Jeff for his work on growing the Marketing Division from its early infancy to where it is today. I want to thank Jeff.

And finally, Mark Ochsenbein, the executive director of Soldier's Wish, gave us an update on Soldier's Wish, which is doing some tremendous things for our veterans and military people across the country.

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the national Marketing Commission, I thank the NEC for its support as we continue to work hard to raise awareness and revenue for The American Legion. This concludes my report. Thank you.

Advance Report: Marketing Commission
February 27, 2017
Kenneth D. Danilson, Iowa, Chairman

The American Legion Marketing Commission was called to order at 8:30 am by Chairman, Ken Danilson, Iowa.

National Commander, Charles Schmidt, provided greetings and a message of thanks to the commission members for the work that they have done, and continue to do for the Legion. Commander Schmidt is looking to expand the Walk 4 Veterans Program to include additional American Legion services.

Deputy Director of Marketing Chuck Krupa, gave an update on Fundraising/Planned Giving, DMS/Membership. Mr. Krupa presented the DMS budget for 2017/18 and the DMS Fundraising review. The plan includes digital campaign growth and a goal to acquire 120,000 new members.

The American Legion typically receives bequests totaling about $3 million. Tactics include online and relationship building, personal contact, direct mail, email, and electronic newsletters. An update was given on Fundraising for National (Non Member), Department Fundraising, Planned Giving/Dedicated Funds, NEF, OCW, TFA, and American Legion Charities.

PNC David Rehbein, Iowa provided an update on the 100th Anniversary Observance Committee. The committee will be helping to develop a legacy vision. The committee does not want the anniversary to just be about the past. This will provide an opportunity to tell the story about what The American Legion has done and can do in the future.
The American Legion Marketing staff along with the Legion Legislative Division and the American 100th Anniversary Observance Committee are working together on a limited edition American Legion Centennial coin for 2019. The U.S. Mint produces just two commemorative coins per year. There is also work in progress, on a postage stamp for the 100th Anniversary.

We overhauled the member discounts program, opening a new revenue stream of more than $250,000. We developed and executed corporate relationships with USAA, AbbVie, Walgreens, Vermont Teddy Bear, Mutual of Omaha and others. Other business relationships are in negotiation. Boeing has made a commitment of $100,000 in support of National Poppy Week/Day.

The Salute to Heroes Inaugural Ball table sponsorship raised $750,000 of which Drew Carey was the master of ceremony. Several members of congress, Vice President Pence as well as 34 Medal of Honor recipients who were being honored attended. Salute to Heroes received significant media exposure on local media and FOX news.

Director of Emblem Sales, Richard Keith, presented the Emblem Sales report. The Flag program continues to grow and benefit US flag sales each year. 1,546 posts have registered for the program and 14,000 businesses, schools, churches, and individuals have signed up to sponsor a local post. Sponsored flag sales sold over $2.1 million in U.S. flags in 2016. On our Facebook page (American Legion Flags), 127 new posts were created resulting in 600,000 views, and 10,300 users now like our Facebook page.

Deputy Director of Media and Communications, Henry Howard, gave an overview of metrics, print and Digital strategy, membership products. We launched a new website for mobile users. Social media increased 33% (Facebook and Twitter).

Chairman Danilson gave closing remarks.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm.

Report: Marketing Commission
May 10, 2017
Kenneth D. Danilson, Iowa, Chairman

The American Legion Marketing Commission continues to make progress, after one full year providing oversight to strategize, integrate, prioritize and execute the organization’s efforts to generate membership, raise funds, develop corporate alliances, improve brand awareness and promote merchandise sales. The commission continues to develop a strategic marketing plan that can be indexed according to the following categories:

− Membership
− Fundraising
− Corporate relationships
− Merchandising
− Integration of divisional marketing initiatives
− Awareness building
− Special events
− Centennial

As the Marketing Commission works through this process with staff, multiple marketing responsibilities are being fulfilled along the way, most of which affect the organization’s overall financial performance. Following is an update of activities and measurable performance since the commission last met in February.
Staff:
As the marketing initiatives grow, so has the need to hire a full time Marketing Director. James Baca, a long time paid up for life member and former member of this body serving as the Alternate NEC from the Department of New Mexico, has been selected for this position. I would be remised if I did not thank Jeff Stoffer, Director of Media and Communications for his extraordinary efforts of taking the Marketing Division from infancy a year ago to where it is today.

Membership:
The Direct Mail Solicitation (DMS) program for membership is approaching 95,000 new members, year to date. It is short of last year’s pace by nearly 9,000 members and is expected to finish short of the budgeted number of 122,000. The primary reason for this shortfall can be attributed to unpredictable response rates due to increasing the first year’s dues from $25 to $30. Initial tests showed that we would see very minimal decline in response by going to $30. Unfortunately, that wasn’t the case. Plans for the 2018 campaign are returning the introductory rate back to $25. Some of this shortage will be made up from a late cycle mailing to a power-of-attorney list of veterans that The American Legion has helped over the past 10 years with their VA claims. The mailing consisted of approximately 140,000 known veterans with a known prior contact with a National Legion Service Officer. The Marketing Commission approved a resolution supporting the Membership and Post Activities Committee and Internal Affairs Commission Titled: Make Contact Information for Newly Acquired DMS Members Available Immediately.

Plans are well underway for the first direct mail campaign of the 2018 cycle, which is scheduled to begin mailing in mid-July. The 2018 plan is to focus additional resources toward acquisition of new, never-before members who initially cost more to acquire but tend to renew at a much higher rate than expired members. The first campaign will consist of approximately 2,200,000 pieces mailed to prospects and 750,000 pieces mailed to 2010-2015 expired members.

Other key membership results to date are:
Online renewals are at the highest level they have been since the inception of the program. To date, online renewals have exceeded 240,000 members, which is more that 13% of all renewals. We can attribute our extensive digital marketing efforts to this gain. To date, we are about 16.5% ahead of the same period last year. Online joins are also performing very well as a result of our digital efforts. 2017 has shown more than 30,000 new online starts to date, which is out pacing last year by about 19%.

Calendar year-to-date, the PUFL program has converted about 2,200 members to paid-up-for-life members. The average age of these new PUFL members is about 68 years old. We are currently processing responses to a direct mail campaign that mailed in late April. Expected returns from this campaign along with other digital efforts should meet our budgeted goal of 8,000 conversions for 2017.

Fundraising:
The National Fundraising Program started slowly in 2017 due to an already noted decline in active donors, which is a result of reduced donor acquisition in 2016. The 2017 plan is to increase 1st quarter acquisition activities to begin moving active donors back toward previous levels. To date, gross revenues are in line with budgeted expectations. As of April 28th, gross revenue was about $3,740,000.

American Legion Charities year-to-date (Sept 1 – April 28) activities for online and items processed at the GOC Operations Center Remittance Processing Group stand at
$2,084,000. This activity start date is roughly based on the election cycle of the National Commander.

The Department Fundraising Program currently has 24 full participants in the co-op program and 15 ad hoc participants (those who use some but not all National services). This is up slightly from 2016. The majority of the spring label and card mailings have been completed and results are being collected and analyzed. The summer is a very slow period for this program; however, it picks up again in August, and finishes strong through the end of the year.

The Vehicle Donation Program continues to grow in its third year of existence. Year-to-date, the program has received proceeds for 61 vehicles for a total of $25,280. This is an increase in receipts of $13,490 over the same period last year. Marketing efforts have increased both online on Legion.org, through digital channels such as the Online Update and through the Magazine.

**Corporate Relationships, Special Events and More:**

USAA remains The American Legion’s biggest corporate alliance in terms of revenue. In 2016, the relationship accounted for more than $5 million, which included $1,100,000 given back to the Legion Departments in revenue sharing and fees.

Multiple corporate relationships and discount provider arrangements are now in the pipeline, including one extremely promising collaboration with the U.S. Mint. With support from The American Legion Legislative Division and the American 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, a limited-edition American Legion Centennial coin is proposed to be struck and circulated in 2019.

Congressional legislation is required to make the coin a reality, and National staff members are now working on the introduction of such a bill and generating supporters to co-sponsor it. Other such commemorative coins have proven extremely marketable. Many have netted millions of dollars for other organizations and interests. The U.S. Mint produces just two commemorative coins of this nature per year. A resolution authorizing and supporting these efforts is also being presented to the National Executive Committee for their consideration.

Last fall, a resolution was passed in support of declaring the Friday before Memorial Day as National Poppy Day. The American Legion has worked with the American Legion Auxiliary in support of the Poppy Program for many years. With the creation of National Poppy Day, this support can grow. In an effort to bring greater attention to the symbolism of the poppy, and the support of veterans, active-duty military and their families, we are working on a national effort to increase awareness and encourage community participation on May 26, 2017 – National Poppy Day.

The Marketing Division has created a National Poppy Day toolkit to assist the entire American Legion family with media outreach and community engagement. This ensures that everyone is communicating with a consistent voice and brand. The National Poppy Day toolkit can be found on the newly created National Poppy Day website, www.Legion.org/PoppyDay.

The Marketing Division is also working closely with The American Legion Legislative Division to help plan and execute a National Poppy Day Legislative Reception in the Russell Senate Office Building on May 23rd.

As The American Legion centennial draws near, the corporate alliances group and all other arms of the Marketing Division, as well as the Media & Communications Division, will begin driving the 100th anniversary message through the majority of American Legion promotions and media channels. Promotion will include a heavy amount of event planning for two centennial Legacy Runs and major centennial National Conventions in 2018 and 2019.
To re-engage the media and build off the success of the “I am The American Legion” PSA series, The American Legion (TAL) will launch a new wave of PSA distributions, to include:

- A new-to-market PSA, “The Climb,” which features young veterans turning to TAL for a sense of community and continued purpose.
- Two most-aired “I am TAL” series PSAs (“Veterans Benefits” and “Wounded Veterans”) will be available as PSAs.
- A 15-second version of each PSA will also be available.

Additionally, a PSA hub will be created to house the PSAs on Legion.org so media markets learn to turn to TAL for their veteran’s awareness material. These three PSAs will be distributed nationwide with targeted outreach to TV and radio stations within the top 10 states for Legion memberships and the top 32 media markets for veterans.

Distribution will begin in mid-May. This will have peak airing leading into Memorial Day, running through July 4th and Labor Day. The goal is to produce at least 75 million impressions and capping out at around 100 million impressions at a budget of $42,700.

There are several other events and initiatives in various stages of planning that are being planned in 2017 that will generate membership, raise funds, develop corporate alliances and improve brand awareness. Some of these events include:

- The American Legion Samsung Scholarship Recognition Breakfast
- Big “6” Summit of VSOs
- GI Bill Event Forum/Display
- 2017 American Legion Legacy Run
- Woman Veteran Outreach Campaign
- Tournament of Rose Bowl Parade (Resolution was approved by Marketing Commission.)

**Report: Emblem Committee**
**Alvan T. Fuller, Massachusetts, Chairman**
*(Submitted through the Marketing Commission)*

As of the March 2017 profit and loss statement, The American Legion Emblem Sales Division had year-to-date revenue of $3,023 million vs. $2,902 million in 2016. Net year-to-date profit was $412,493 vs. $395,687 in 2016.

At the end of April 2017, flag sales continued to be strong. Emblem Sales has sold $1,097,000 in flags which is a +10% increase over last year. Currently, 1,641 posts are registered in the “Flag Rewards” program and 14,800 schools, businesses, churches and individuals have signed up to sponsor a post. This represents an increase of 96 American Legion posts participating this year as well as 2,800 new sponsors since Spring Meetings of 2016.

Flag sales have also been positively impacted by a cover-wrap advertisement in the April issue of The American Legion Magazine. One million magazines with the cover-wrap were mailed to members. As of the end of April, an estimated sales total of $131,000, as well as a net profit of $17,900, has been generated from the cover-wrap. In addition, over 80% of cover-wrap orders have come from new customers.

Emblem Sales continues to market items strategically to members and patriotic Americans, both electronically and in print. In 2017, 352,000 marketing emails have been sent at a cost of only $1,050. These marketing emails have resulted in $57,800 in revenue.
RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Commander, a motion to receive and file the report of the Marketing Commission. We have no resolutions, no addendum. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second. Are there any discussions on the report? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? The ayes have it. I now call on Chairman Gaither M. Keener, Jr. of North Carolina for a report from the Finance Commission.

**Oral Report: Finance Commission**

**Gaither M. Keener, Jr., North Carolina, Chairman**

Mr. Commander, past national commanders, members of the NEC, fellow Legionnaires, and honored guests. Your Finance Commission met on Monday and Tuesday, May 8 and 9. All commission members were present. George Lussier of Virginia attended by telephonic measures. George's wife had surgery Monday at 8:00. He called in at 9:00, stayed with us until 5:30, then came back the next morning while his wife was in the hospital. That is a true Legionnaire, dedicated not only to his family, but his commission and the Legion.

Also present were National Adjutant Daniel S. Wheeler; National Treasurer George Buskirk; Executive Directors Verna Jones and Jeff Brown; Finance Director Shawn Long; and Finance NEC Liaison Committee Chairman David Warnken; and members Kenneth J. Goth, Bob Krause, and Tom Saunders of Virginia. Several guests joined us throughout the meeting.

Reports were received from the national adjutant, the national treasurer, the national judge advocate, the national headquarters' executive directors, the finance director, the Convention Corporation of Cincinnati, the Endowment Fund Corporation, Internal Affairs Commission, Membership & Post Activities Committee, Marketing Commission, Media & Communications Commission, Americanism Commission, our auditors, S.A. Van Dyk Insurance, and national's Information Technology Division, which we'll go into further in the report.

The net operating deficit for 2016 was $288,487. The NEC approved the 2017 budget based on revenues of $88,517,762 and expenditures of $84,876,181, for a net operating surplus of $3,641,581. The budget is based on total 2017 membership of 2 million members. The actual membership as of March 31, 2017, was 1,843,836.

At the Finance Commission's February 27 meeting in Washington, we approved the upcoming year's membership effort and budget at a cost of $7,355,000. It also approved $39,974.02 in write-offs and $25,560 in emergency purchases and budget overruns since the fall meetings.

James Morris, the Ohio Convention Corporation president, reported on the 2017 convention, which he just presented the check.

The Finance Commission approved the 2016 audit as presented by Crowe Horwath. The commission also reviewed and approved for filing the IRS 990 tax returns for The American Legion Headquarters, The American Legion Legacy Fund, the National Emergency Fund, the Endowment Fund, and the Child Welfare Foundation. It is incumbent upon your national Finance Commission to review every page, every note, every expenditure, and to make sure it's all correct before it is signed. I will tell you, they have been completely done correct. Several of my members found some small missed numbers and the spelling of words. We have some very good commission members who read everything.

The commission received an update from S.A. Van Dyk Insurance on our current insurance coverage, claims, and costs.
There are currently 294 authorized positions at national headquarters, due to the addition of a reproduction machine operator.

The Finance Commission approved $66,026 in emergency purchases and budget overruns made since its Washington Conference meeting.

The National Headquarters’ Membership Management Information System is 26 years old and written in a computer language that no one learns anymore or knows how to use. Even though it’s been enhanced year-by-year by our staff, the antiquated technology is not adequate for The American Legion membership or marketing efforts today. Therefore, the Information Technology Division is exploring the possibility of new software and hardware to be approved by the NEC and installed within the next two years, with a primary goal of integrating all programs with the member database. At current prices, this will probably cost near $5 million.

The commission recommends your approval on resolutions which will make immediately available to departments, through myLegion.org, the contact information of newly acquired DMS members effective July 1 of 2017. This is a change, and this change will help retention if American Legion departments take advantage of the early receipt of the contact information for these new DMS members. Posts receiving these transfers will receive dues when renewing the DMS members.

The resolution is before you, and it’s a totally different game. The purpose of the change is to increase the retention and percentage of retention by giving these new DMS members the opportunity to transfer to a local post and become active in their first year.

A list of resolutions is attached. Respectfully submitted, Mr. Commander. That’s my report.

Report: Finance Commission
May 8-9, 2017
Gaither M. Kenner, Jr., North Carolina, Chairman

The Finance Commission met on Monday and Tuesday, May 8-9. All commission members were present; George Lussier of Virginia attended telephonically. Also present were National Adjutant Daniel S. Wheeler; National Treasurer George Buskirk; Executive Directors Verna Jones and Jeff Brown; Finance Director Shawn Long; and Finance NEC Liaison Committee Chairman Dave Warnken and members Kenneth J. Goth, Bob Krause and Tom Saunders. Several guests joined us throughout the meeting.

Reports were received from
- National adjutant
- National treasurer
- National judge advocate
- National headquarters’ executive directors
- Finance director
- Convention Corporation of Cincinnati
- Endowment Fund Corporation
- Internal Affairs Commission
- Membership & Post Activities Committee
- Marketing Commission
- Media & Communications Commission
- Americanism Commission
- Crowe Horwath LLP
- S. A. Van Dyk Insurance
• National’s Information Technology Division

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The NEC approved the 2017 budget based on revenues of $88,517,762 and expenditures of $84,876,181 for a net operating surplus of $3,641,581. The budget is based on a total 2017 membership of 2,000,000. The actual membership as of March 31, 2017, was 1,843,836.

At the Finance Commission’s February 27 meeting in Washington, it approved the upcoming year’s membership efforts and budget at a cost of $7,355,000. It also approved $39,974.02 in write-offs and $25,560 in emergency purchases and budget overruns since the fall meetings.

James Morris, Ohio Convention Corporation President, reported that the 2017 convention corporation will present to national headquarters a check for $29,464.89 which represents 50 percent of the convention’s net profit.

The Finance Commission approved the 2016 audit as presented by Crowe Horwath LLP. The commission also reviewed and approved for filing IRS 990 tax returns for The American Legion Headquarters, The American Legion Legacy Fund, the National Emergency Fund, the Endowment Fund, and the Child Welfare Foundation.

The commission received an update from S. A. Van Dyk Insurance on our current insurance coverage, claims and cost.

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The commission recommends your approval of a resolution which will make immediately available to departments through myLegion.org the contact information on newly acquired Direct Mail Solicitation (DMS) members effective July 1, 2017. This change will help retention if American Legion departments take advantage of the early receipt of contact information for new DMS members. Posts receiving these transfers will receive dues when renewing the DMS members. The purpose of the change is to increase the retention percentage by giving new DMS members the opportunity to transfer to a local post in their first year.

A list of resolutions recommended for approval is attached.

**Resolutions**

The Finance Commission recommends the NEC approve and adopt the resolutions listed below. Copies of the resolutions accompany this report.

• **Resolution #1: Make Contact Information for Newly Acquired DMS Members Available Immediately.** The American Legion will make immediately available to departments the contact information on newly acquired Direct Mail Solicitation members effective July 1, 2017 through myLegion.org.
Proceedings of Wednesday, May 10, 2017

- Resolution #2: American Legion Centennial Tournament of Roses Parade Float. The American Legion national adjutant is authorized and directed to invest up to $300,000 to plan, design, construct and enter an American Legion centennial-themed float in the January 1, 2019, Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California.

- Resolution #3: 100th Anniversary Commemorative American Legion Coin. Recommends The American Legion request the U.S. Congress to enact legislation to mint 100th Anniversary American Legion commemorative coins by the United States Mint, in both gold and silver, with the surcharge payment earmarked to benefit the four pillars of The American Legion.

- Resolution #4: Support of the United States World War One Centennial Commission. The American Legion shall assist the United States World War One Centennial Commission in carrying out its purposes by granting a donation of $50,000 to the World War One Centennial Commission’s 501(c)3 foundation, the United States Foundation for the Commemoration of the World Wars, with the stipulation that the donation be used solely for educational purposes and not for administrative, social or travel costs.

- Resolution #5: Commission Painting to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of The American Legion. A painting will be commissioned commemorating the 100th anniversary of The American Legion and its hundred years of history. Funds for completion of the project shall not exceed $10,000. The centennial painting may be reproduced as an art print for sale through American Legion Emblem Sales at an affordable price for post, member and public purchase.

- Resolution #6: Rescinding of National Finance Non-Legislative Policy Resolutions. Recommends rescission of resolutions due to accomplishment of purpose, having become obsolete, or having been superseded by later resolution.

- Resolution #7: Department of Veterans Affairs Health-Care Provider of the Year Award: Creates the “VA Health-care Provider of the Year Award,” to recognize one outstanding health-care provider in the Department of Veterans Affairs health-care system. This will be awarded during the Commander’s Call at the Washington Conference

- Resolution #8: Department of Veterans Affairs Physician of the Year Award: Creates the “VA Physician of the Year Award,” to recognize one outstanding health-care provider in the Department of Veterans Affairs health-care system. This will be awarded during the Commander’s Call at the Washington Conference

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Commander, a motion to approve the Finance Commission's report with the exception of eight resolutions. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second on the report. Are there any discussions? If not, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? The report is adopted.

Resolution No. 1: Make Contact Information for Newly Acquired DMS Members Available Immediately
Origin: Membership & Post Activities Committee
Submitted By: Finance Commission

WHEREAS, Retention of members is the greatest challenge facing The American Legion in the membership arena; and
WHEREAS, The most at-risk for not renewing are those who have been a member for less than one year or thereabouts; and
WHEREAS, The Direct Mail Solicitation (DMS) program recruits in excess of 110,000 members per year; and
WHEREAS, For the most part, departments do not have contact information for the first year DMS members in their area; and
WHEREAS, MyLegion.org is a free website designed to connect members of The American Legion to their post and department leadership and can be utilized to access the contact information of these newly acquired DMS members; and
WHEREAS, Retention of new DMS members could possibly increase if they could be contacted and asked to transfer into a local post rather than sitting in a headquarters post and not available to be contacted; and
WHEREAS, The Membership & Post Activities Committee and the Internal Affairs Commission, after consultation with the Finance Division, have determined that this change may extend the break-even period by up to one year, and that is an acceptable trade-off if the retention rate is improved; and
WHEREAS, This resolution has the approval of the Membership & Post Activities Committee, the Internal Affairs Commission, the Marketing Commission and the Finance Commission; now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion make immediately available to departments the contact information on newly acquired Direct Mail Solicitation (DMS) members effective July 1, 2017 through myLegion.org.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER RONNING: Mr. Commander, this resolution has the approval of the Membership & Post Activities Committee, the Internal Affairs Commission, the Marketing Commission, the Finance Commission, and your Resolutions Subcommittee, and I recommend its adoption. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and second regarding Resolution No. 1. All in favor, say aye. All opposed? I guess nobody had any discussions. Resolution 1 is passed.

Resolution No. 2: American Legion Centennial Tournament of Roses Parade Float
Origin: Marketing Commission
Submitted By: Finance Commission
WHEREAS, The American Legion celebrates its 100th anniversary between August 2018 and November 2019; and
WHEREAS, The American Legion Marketing Commission and The American Legion 100th Anniversary Observance Committee are strategizing and executing initiatives to increase awareness of the organization’s brand, services, programs, legacy and vision particularly during the centennial window, at a time of heightened media attention; and
WHEREAS, The annual Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, Calif., is an internationally recognized opportunity to showcase The American Legion’s brand and celebrate the centennial before millions of television viewers as well as a crowd of attendees that ranges between 500,000 and one million; and
WHEREAS, The cost of constructing and decorating a Tournament of Roses Parade float is estimated to range between $200,000 and $250,000; and
WHEREAS, Additional costs of entering an American Legion centennial float in the Tournament of Roses Parade, including pre-parade promotions, can be estimated not to exceed $50,000; and
WHEREAS, Promotions of an American Legion Centennial Tournament of Roses Parade float can be tailored to maximize membership and fundraising opportunities based on increased awareness of presence in the parade; and

WHEREAS, An American Legion Centennial Tournament of Roses Parade float also presents opportunities for corporate sponsorships to help offset costs; and

WHEREAS, The Marketing Commission and the Finance Commission have reviewed and recommend approval; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion national adjutant is authorized and directed to invest up to $300,000 to plan, design, construct and enter an American Legion centennial-themed float in the Jan. 1, 2019, Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER RONNING: Mr. Commander, this resolution has the approval of the Marketing Commission, the Finance Commission, and your Subcommittee on Resolutions, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second. Are there any discussions? The chair recognizes the NEC from New Hampshire.

NEC MEMBER ROY (NH): Commander, in light of this 300,000, you'll be spending $5 million on upgrading our computer systems and everything, I don't know if this is really worthwhile for the small exposure that we get in that one day of the Rose Bowl Parade. That's my concern.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you. Any other discussion? All in favor, say aye. Opposed? The ayes have it.

Resolution No. 3: 100th Anniversary Commemorative American Legion Coin
Origin: Marketing Commission
Submitted By: Finance Commission

WHEREAS, The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic war-time veterans service organization; and

WHEREAS, The cardinal principles of The American Legion include the care of the dependents of those who have answered the final call, those who are suffering from wounds, disease and want, the education of the children of our country, and devoted service to the community, state, and nation; and

WHEREAS, Based on its tremendous success in carrying out these cardinal principles, The American Legion is recognized as the preeminent United States veterans service organization promoting citizenship and veterans affairs; and

WHEREAS, The 100th Anniversary of The American Legion will occur in 2019; and

WHEREAS, The celebration of the 100th Anniversary is not only an appropriate time to mark the achievements of The American Legion, but also affords an opportunity to further its cardinal principles; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, Commemorative Coin Programs have been successfully conducted for other worthy causes related to veterans and the military; and

WHEREAS, The United States Mint, in compliance with the Commemorative Coin Reform Act of 1996 (“CCRA of 1996”), Public Law 104-208, conducts commemorative coin programs to honor a person, place, or event; and

WHEREAS, The 100th Anniversary of The American Legion is an event that qualifies for such high recognition; and

WHEREAS, In the past, The American Legion has researched opportunities with the United States Mint and a Commemorative Coin Program; and
WHEREAS, Consistent with the CCRA of 1996, The American Legion has demonstrated the ability to raise funds from private sources, “in an amount that is equal to or greater than the total amount of the proceeds of such surcharge derived from the sale of such numismatic item.”; and

WHEREAS, The proceeds from the sale of this 100th Anniversary Commemorative American Legion Coin will benefit The American Legion’s Four Pillars including Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth as specified by the enabling legislation; and

WHEREAS, One quarter of the sales will benefit The American Legion’s Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation pillar, for costs related to aid its mission of promoting the importance of and caring for those who have served in uniform, ensuring they receive proper health care and disability benefits earned through military service; and

WHEREAS, These programs include providing free assistance for veterans and families applying for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits, advocacy for a strong VA health-care system, free representation for veterans appealing claims decisions, hosting or otherwise supporting and promoting more than 1,000 job fairs and career events a year, and support and assistance for homeless veterans; and

WHEREAS, One quarter of the sales will benefit The American Legion’s National Security pillar, for costs related to aid its mission of promoting the importance of, and caring for, those who are still serving in the U.S. Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, These programs include cash grants for military families who have temporary financial needs, comfort items for hospitalized military personnel, advocacy for fair military retirement benefits, a robust family support network of volunteers to assist military families, representation in Washington, D.C. to support proper Department of Defense funding, and assistance with cases appearing before military discharge review boards; and

WHEREAS, One quarter of the sales will benefit The American Legion’s Americanism pillar, for costs related to aid its mission of promoting the importance of maintaining our country’s patriotic values, morals, culture and citizenship; and

WHEREAS, This pillar embodies The American Legion’s devotion to law and order, the raising of wholesome youth, the importance of education and good citizenship, and respectful observance of patriotic holidays and remembrances; and

WHEREAS, These programs include leadership in U.S. flag protection, respect and compliance with U.S. Flag Code, services to help legal immigrants become U.S. citizens, support for public expression of the Pledge of Allegiance and the national anthem; and

WHEREAS, One quarter of the sales will benefit The American Legion’s Children and Youth pillar, for costs related to aid its mission of promoting the importance of maintaining strong families, assistance for at-risk children, and activities that promote their healthy and wholesome development; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion offers a multitude of programs that address these needs, such as Boys Nation and Boys State, Youth Cadet Law Enforcement, Junior Shooting Sports, Oratorical competition, American Legion Baseball, the Family Support Network, Child Welfare Foundation and Temporary Financial Assistance; and

WHEREAS, The Commemorative Coin Program provides for surcharge payments to be made from proceeds received from the sale of commemorative coins; and

WHEREAS, Consistent with the CCRA of 1996, The American Legion must submit an audited financial statement and submit the results of annual audits to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Secretary of the Treasury, that it has qualified for surcharge proceeds and is properly expending them; and

WHEREAS, The Marketing Commission and the Finance Commission have reviewed and recommend approval; now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion request the U.S. Congress to enact legislation to mint 100th Anniversary American Legion Commemorative Coins by The United States Mint, in compliance with the Commemorative Coin Reform Act of 1996 (“CCRA of 1996”), Public Law 104-208, in both gold and silver, with the surcharge payment earmarked to benefitting the Four Pillars of The American Legion.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER RONNING: Mr. Commander, this resolution has the approval of the Marketing Commission, the Finance Commission, and your Resolutions Subcommittee, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second. Are there any discussions on the resolution?

FINANCE COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KEENER: Mr. Commander, may I speak?

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You may, Mr. Chairman.

FINANCE COMMISSION CHAIRMAN KEENER: This coin, if we have it approved and you have your congressmen to support it, you see them on TV, will make between $6 to $10 million. I think that may answer some of your questions. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Are there any other discussions? Hearing none, all in favor of the resolution, say aye. Opposed? The ayes have it.

Resolution No. 4: Support of the United States World War One Centennial Commission
Origin: 100th Anniversary Observance Committee
Submitted By: Finance Commission
WHEREAS, The Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion, wherein the mission and guiding principles of The American Legion are articulated, states, in part, “to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars”; and
WHEREAS, The combat experiences of the Founders of The American Legion during World War One shaped their attitudes, values and sensibilities and were paramount in their thinking about what The American Legion should be and what it might become; and
WHEREAS, The United States World War One Centennial Commission is responsible for planning, developing, and executing programs, projects, and activities to commemorate the centennial of World War One; encouraging private organizations and state and local governments to organize activities commemorating the centennial of World War One; facilitating and coordinating activities throughout the United States relating to the centennial of World War One; serving as a clearinghouse for information about events and plans for the centennial of World War One; and developing recommendations for Congress and the president for commemorating the centennial of World War One; and
WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee of The American Legion has previously expressed its support of the commission in Resolution 15 of the National Executive Committee of October, 2010, and in Resolution 13 of the National Executive Committee of October, 2015, and
WHEREAS, The American Legion is a Commemorative Sponsor of the World War One Centennial Commission, and appoints one member of the commission; and
WHEREAS, The educational mission of the commission is of importance and is the function most relevant to The American Legion, as an awareness and understanding of Legionnaires and the public-at-large of the service and sacrifice of the “Doughboys” is essential to an understanding of the motivations and aspirations of the founders of The American Legion; and
WHEREAS, The educational program of the World War One Centennial Commission is of critical importance in setting the stage for the commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of The American Legion, as the war and the "Doughboy Spirit" shaped The American Legion and informed its enduring values, and will accrue to the benefit of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, The United States World War One Centennial Commission has received no appropriation of federal funds for Fiscal Year 2017 and is, therefore, reliant solely on public and institutional support of its programs through charitable donations, and has made a request to The American Legion for financial support to assist in carrying out its congressionally mandated mission in the amount of $50,000; and

WHEREAS, This resolution has been recommended for approval by the 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, the Internal Affairs Commission, the Finance Commission, and the NEC Subcommittee on Resolutions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion shall assist the United States World War One Centennial Commission in carrying out its purposes by granting a donation of $50,000 to the World War One Centennial Commission’s 501(c)3 foundation, the United States Foundation for the Commemoration of the World Wars, with the stipulation that the donation be used solely for educational purposes and not for administrative, social or travel costs.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER RONNING: Mr. Commander, this resolution has the approval of the 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, the Internal Affairs Commission, the Finance Commission, and your Resolutions Subcommittee, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second. Are there any discussions on the resolution? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? The motion passed.

Resolution No. 5: Commission Painting to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of The American Legion
Origin: 100th Anniversary Observance Committee
Submitted By: Finance Commission

WHEREAS, The American Legion has commemorated the wars through which its members earned their membership eligibility by means of works of art, which are currently on display in the National Executive Committee Room in the National Headquarters; and

WHEREAS, The 100th Anniversary of The American Legion is 2019, and it would be appropriate to have a painting commemorating 100 years of American Legion influence for display in either the National Executive Room or in the Emil Blackmore Museum at National Headquarters; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion 100th Anniversary Observance Committee has made a priority of a centennial artwork that could be reproduced and sold for display at local American Legion posts, member homes and elsewhere to honor the organization’s centennial; and

WHEREAS, A centennial painting for National Headquarters could be reproduced into art prints for sale at an affordable price to help offset costs of 100th anniversary commemoration activities and initiatives; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That the national adjutant is authorized and directed to commission a painting
commemorating the 100th Anniversary of The American Legion depicting its hundred years of history; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That this painting be dedicated no later than the May 2019 meeting of the National Executive Committee; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That funds be allocated for the completion of the project not to exceed $10,000; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the centennial painting may be reproduced as an art print for sale through American Legion Emblem Sales at an affordable price for post, member and public purchase; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That any contract or agreement required to finalize the commission of this painting be reviewed by the national judge advocate for legal sufficiency and the national commander be and is hereby authorized and directed to execute said contract or agreement, and that the national adjutant be and is hereby authorized and directed to attest same.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER RONNING: Mr. Commander, this resolution has the approval of the 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, the Internal Affairs Commission, the Finance Commission, and your Resolutions Subcommittee, and I move for its adoption. …Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second. Are there any discussions regarding Resolution No. 5? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Resolution 5 has passed.

Resolution No. 6: Rescinding of National Finance Non-Legislative Policy Resolutions
Origin: Finance Commission
Submitted By: Finance Commission

WHEREAS, The National Finance Commission has concluded an extensive review of National Executive Committee and National Convention resolutions relating to the finances of The American Legion from years 1919 to 2017; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That the following resolutions be, and they are rescinded by reason of: being obsolete; accomplishment of purpose; being superseded by later resolutions; being in conflict with later resolutions; being duplicated by later resolutions, having no value because of later changes in program; and for other reasons.

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No. 2 1920 Spec The American Legion Weekly in its Present Form be Discontinued After the Issue of Feb 13, 1920 a New Form of Publication Adopted Present Board of Directors of The Publication be Relieved From Further Duty in this Connection and Temporary Editor and Manager Be Relieved The National Commander Authorized To Appoint New Board Of Directors Of Nine

No. 36 1921 Conv Budget Recommendation Included In Any Convention Reports Be Considered As Recommendations To The National Executive Committee As Maximum Limits

No. 215 1921 Conv National Executive Committee Shall Be Authorized To Appropriate Operating Expenses Of All Divisions Which Cover Activities Of National Headquarters During The Ensuring Year A Sum Which Shall Not Exceed The Entire Year From Membership Dues, Income From Trust Fund, And Profits Earned By Emblem Division

No. 216 1921 Conv Rigid Program Of Economy And A Material Reduction In The General Expenses Incident To The Conduct Of Affairs In Any Way Connected With The American Legion

No. 218 1921 Conv National Adjutant Place Before The Finance Committee A Copy Of The Report Of The Finance Committee Submitted To The Previous National Convention

No. 5 1921 Spring Funds Raised By The United War Work Campaign
No. 8 1921 Winter Use Of Trust Fund As Collateral For Loans
No. 1 1922 Conv Activities Of Legion-Relative Importance
No. 1 1922 Winter Trust Agreement
No. 9 1923 Conv Organization And Membership
No. 138 1923 Conv Distribution Of Leaflet On Flag Etiquette
No. 368 1923 Conv Financial Policy
No. 2 1923 Pre Leviathan Naval Post Trust Fund
No. 1 1923 Winter Membership Cards Drawn In Excess Of The Actual Membership As Shown On The Books Of The National Treasurer On Dec 31, 1923

No. 441 1924 Conv Endowment Fund For Rehabilitation Work
No. 527 1924 Conv Limiting Expenditures At National Headquarters
No. 547 1924 Conv Yearly Meeting Of State Adjutants
No. 1 1924 Winter Interpretation Of Resolution 184 Of San Francisco Convention (Profits Derived From The Operation Of The American Legion Weekly)

No. 6 1924 Winter Support From The American Red Cross
No. 519 1925 Conv Appropriation For Special Rehabilitation Representative For Federal Dept In Washington DC
No. 339 1926 Conv National Finance Committee To Authorize All American Legion Financial Transactions

No. 357 1926 Conv Endowment And Finances Put In Monthly
No. 360 1926 Conv Stars & Stripes Fund
No. 363 1926 Conv Convention Resolutions Involving Finance
No. 5 1926 Spring Account Of Expenditures Of Child Welfare Division
No. 525 1927 Conv Endowment Quota Relief
No. 121 1928 Conv Investigation Of Endowment Fund Income
No. 505 1928  Conv  Blanket Surety Bond
No. 506 1928  Conv  Audit Of Accounts
No. 507 1928  Conv  Trust Fund
No. 509 1928  Conv  France Travel Affairs
No. 510 1928  Conv  Tax On Foreign Members
No. 511 1928  Conv  Financial Statement
No. 2 1928  Spring  Legion Monthly Publish Annually A Financial Statement Of The National Organization And Its Treasurer
No. 93 1929  Conv  Financial Audits And Reports Forwarded To All Departments
No. 300 1930  Conv  National Rehabilitation Commission Should Not Solicit Funds From Auxiliary
No. 485 1930  Conv  National Finance Committee Approve All Expenditures Etc.
No. 513 1930  Conv  Printing Of Official Source Records
No. 343 1932  Conv  National Headquarters Shall Issue Detailed Financial Reports Concerning Salaries, Etc.
No. 141 1933  Conv  Printing Reports Of Child Welfare Conference Should Be Continued
No. 508 1933  Conv  Securing, Receiving, And Expending Funds And Accounting For Same
No. 539 1933  Conv  Study Of Revenues
No. 176 1934  Conv  Retirement Of National Appointive Employees Of The American Legion When Disabled From Injury Or Age
No. 603 1934  Conv  National Headquarters Operate Within Its Income And Maintenance Funds
No. 1 1934  Post  Transfer Funds
No. 2 1935  Spring  Overseas Graves Decoration Trust
No. 138 1937  Conv  Financial Statement In Special Form Be Printed In National Legionnaire
No. 227 1937  Conv  Re-Allocation Of Funds Derived From Dues
No. 1 1937  Pre  Dues Of The Sons Of The American Legion
No. 634 1939  Conv  Recommend National Executive Committee Resolution Not Be Approved
No. 28 1941  Spring  Expense Of Representative Of Insular And Foreign Departments In Attendance At National Meetings
No. 38 1943  Fall  Records For Our Fighting Men
No. 55 1943  Spring  Amendment To Overseas Graves Decoration Trust Agreement
No. 13 1944  Fall  Authorize Agents Of The American Legion
No. 92 1945  Spring  Amendment To Retirement Plan
No. 93 1945  Spring  Amendment To Retirement Plan
No. 94 1945  Spring  Amendment To Retirement Plan
No. 95 1945  Spring  Amendment To Retirement Plan
No. 116 1945  Spring  Funds For Washington D.C. Office Building
No. 853 1947  Conv  National Treasurer’s Report To The Annual National Convention
No. 61 1947  Fall  Publications Of Who’s Who In The American Legion
No. 19 1947  Spring  External Audit To Be As Of July 1 To June 30
No. 20 1947  Spring  1947 External Audit Of The American Legion
No. 3 1948  Pre  Funds Of The American Legion
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No. 15 1948 Spring Withdrawal Of $801,807.70 From Restricted Fund
No. 47 1948 Spring Retirement Of Employees Attached To Payroll After 55th Birthday
No. 48 1948 Spring Age 60 Requirement Eliminated For Optional 25 Year Retirement
No. 56 1948 Spring Transportation Of Representatives Of Insular And Territorial Possessions Outside The United States
No. 60 1949 Spring Minimum Specifications For Merchandise Purchased By The National Emblem Sales Division
No. 65 1949 Spring Texas Donations Be Returned To Dallas Legion Development Committee
No. 80 1950 Spring Reallocation Of Funds
No. 1 1951 Post Withdrawal Of Funds
No. 83 1951 Spring Authorized Officers Of The American Legion Be Authorized To Borrow From Any Bank, Trust Company Or Other Source
No. 27 1953 Fall Authorization To Borrow Money To Provide Money To Provide Increased Benefits Under Retirement Plan
No. 1 1953 Pre Addendum To Original Contract With Victor Lasky
No. 86 1954 Spring Investment Of National Retirement Fund
No. 87 1954 Spring Approval Of Schedule Of Fees For Services Rendered Under Trust Agreement Of Retirement Plan
No. 89 1954 Spring Transfer Of Mineral Rights To The American Legion By Dr. Garland Murphy
No. 19 1955 Spring Termination Of Contract With American Legion Auxiliary To Solicit Advertising For The Auxiliary News
No. 19 1957 Spring Purchase Life Membership In The Chapel Of The Four Chaplains
No. 40 1957 Spring Approve A Contract For A Film Portraying The Aims And Purposes Of The American Legion
No. 5 1958 Pre Term Life Insurance And The Occidental Life Insurance Company Of California And The United States Life Insurance Company Of New York
No. 60 1958 Spring Purchase Life Membership In The Chapel Of The Four Chaplains
No. 31 1959 Fall Group Insurance For American Legion National Headquarters Employees
No. 20 1960 Fall Agreement For Distribution Of American Legion “We Who Serve”
No. 22 1960 Fall To Accept Unsolicited Donation From The New York Community Trust, 230 Park Avenue, New York 17, New York, For Re-Emphasizing Patriotic Observance Of Independence Day
No. 61 1960 Spring Distribution Agreement For “We Who Serve” Film
No. 6 1962 Spring New York Community Trust Donation For Reemphasizing Patriotic Observance Of Independence Day
No. 619 1964 Conv Urging Hospitalization And Sick Benefits Plan For The American Legion Members
No. 1 1964 Fall Authorize American Legion Financial Support For The
RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER RONNING: Mr. Commander, the approval is from the Finance Commission, your Subcommittee on Resolutions, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second. Are there any discussions about this resolution? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Resolution adopted.

Resolution No. 7: Department of Veterans Affairs Health-Care Provider of the Year Award

Origin: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

Submitted By: Finance Commission

WHEREAS, As noted in The American Legion Outline of Authorization, the purpose of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission is to formulate and recommend to the National Executive Committee of The American Legion policies, plans and programs on direct assistance, outreach and support for veterans and their families with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claims and benefits, health care, memorial affairs and women veterans programs to ensure that they receive the highest quality of care from the VA for their injuries and illnesses incurred from their military service; and

WHEREAS, Health-care providers in the VA health-care system have a primary duty to apply President Lincoln’s charge “to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan…”; and

WHEREAS, Health-care providers in the VA health-care system also have the privilege of serving the best patients in the world, America’s veterans and service members; and

WHEREAS, A high number of health-care providers suffer from physical and/or mental burnout, a medical condition defined by symptoms of emotional exhaustion, lack of accomplishment and cynicism; and

WHEREAS, The burnout syndrome affects workers in many fields, particularly those whose work involves intense interaction with people; and

WHEREAS, The burnout syndrome also affects other health-care providers besides physicians, including nurses, nurse practitioners and physicians assistants; and

WHEREAS, Other reasons for high levels of burnout include: excessive workload, clerical burden and inefficiency in the practice environment, a loss of control over work, problems with work-life integration, and erosion of meaning in work; and
WHEREAS, Burnout results in a poorer veteran patient experience and satisfaction, an increase in medical errors and higher turnover which affects access, particularly in the known critical shortage disciplines of mental health and primary care; and

WHEREAS, Based on a 2016 VA Survey, sixty-five percent of VA medical facilities do not have a veterans service organization/veteran programs to recognize any clinical health-care provider; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion create and establish an award to be known as the “VA Health-care Provider of the Year Award,” to recognize one outstanding health-care provider in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health-care system; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the award have the following specifications:
1. The award shall be in the form of an 11” X 14” walnut shadow box plaque with metal etched inscribed plate not exceeding the cost of $300, adjusted as needed for inflation; and
2. It shall be awarded by the national commander with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee annually at the Commander’s Call during Washington Conference; and
3. Nominations for such awards may be made by any member of The American Legion in good standing filed with the Internal Affairs Commission under such procedures established by the commission as are necessary and consistent with the effective administration of such an award; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion will provide the award recipient with one roundtrip coach airfare or vehicle mileage in accordance with its employee mileage reimbursement rates, staff per diem for up to three days, and lodging for up to two nights in accordance with travel and housing policies of The American Legion for the individual recipient to receive the award at the Washington Conference, to exclude any incidental expenses or any expenses incurred by guests accompanying the award recipient; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion will provide notification and feedback to the VA under secretary for health, the winning health-care provider’s VA medical center director and chief of staff; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the award recipient will be invited to attend The American Legion annual Washington Conference to receive the award.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER RONNING: Mr. Commander, this resolution has the approval of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, the Internal Affairs Commission, Finance Commission, and your Resolutions Subcommittee, and I move for its adoption. Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second, the motions regarding Resolution No. 7. Is there any discussion? If not, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Resolution 7 is adopted.

Resolution No. 8: Department of Veterans Affairs Physician of the Year Award
Origin: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission
Submitted By: Finance Commission

WHEREAS, As noted in The American Legion Outline of Authorization, the purpose of the VA&R Commission is to formulate and recommend to the National Executive Committee of The American Legion policies, plans and programs on direct assistance, outreach and support for veterans and their families with the Department of Veterans
Affairs (VA) claims and benefits, health care, memorial affairs and women veterans programs to ensure that they receive the highest quality of care from the VA for their injuries and illnesses incurred from their military service; and

WHEREAS, Physicians in the VA health-care system have a primary duty to apply President Lincoln’s charge “to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan…”; and

WHEREAS, Physicians in the VA health-care system also have the privilege of serving the best patients in the world, America’s veterans and service members; and

WHEREAS, One out of every three VA physicians suffers from physical and/or mental burnout, a medical condition defined by symptoms of emotional exhaustion, lack of accomplishment and cynicism; and

WHEREAS, The burnout syndrome affects workers in many fields, particularly those whose work involves intense interaction with people, like physicians; and

WHEREAS, Other reasons for high levels of burnout include: excessive workload, clerical burden and inefficiency in the practice environment, a loss of control over work, problems with work-life integration, and erosion of meaning in work; and

WHEREAS, Burnout results in a poorer veteran patient experience and satisfaction, an increase in medical errors and higher physician turnover which affects access, particularly in the known critical shortage disciplines of mental health and primary care; and

WHEREAS, Based on a 2016 VA Survey, sixty-five percent of VA medical facilities do not have a veterans service organization/veteran programs to recognize any clinical care provider; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion create and establish an award to be known as the “VA Physician of the Year Award,” to recognize one outstanding physician in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health-care system; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the award have the following specifications:

- The award shall be in the form of an 11” X 14” walnut shadow box plaque with metal etched inscribed plate not exceeding the cost of $300, adjusted as needed for inflation; and
- It shall be awarded by the national commander with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee annually at the Commander’s Call during Washington Conference; and
- Nominations for such awards may be made by any member of The American Legion in good standing filed with the Internal Affairs Commission under such procedures established by the commission as are necessary and consistent with the effective administration of such an award; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion will provide the award recipient with one roundtrip coach airfare or vehicle mileage in accordance with its employee mileage reimbursement rates, staff per diem for up to three days, and lodging for up to two nights in accordance with travel and housing policies of The American Legion for the individual recipient to receive the award at the Washington Conference, to exclude any incidental expenses or any expenses incurred by guests accompanying the award recipient; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion will provide notification and feedback to the VA under secretary for health, the winning physician’s VA medical center director and chief of staff; and, be it finally
RESOLVED, That the award recipient will be invited to attend The American Legion annual Washington Conference to receive the award.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER RONNING: Mr. Commander, this resolution has the approval of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, the Internal Affairs Commission, the Finance Commission, and your Subcommittee on Resolutions, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You've heard the first and second motions regarding Resolution No. 8. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Resolution 8 is adopted.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your hard work, you and your commission. Next I call on Chairman Ralph Bozella of Colorado, Rehabilitation Commission report.

Oral Report: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission
Ralph P. Bozella, Colorado, Chairman

Thank you, commander. Good morning, commander, NEC, and guests. Your VA&R Commission has been quite busy since the October 2016 National Executive Committee meetings. The commission, its Veterans Benefit Committee, its Veterans Health Administration Committee, and its National Cemetery Committee met twice since then. We met in Washington, D.C. at the annual legislative conference and we met by telephone and Zoom software the last week in April so that we could prepare for this meeting. We are prepared to put before you ten resolutions, two of which you have already disposed through the Finance Commission, and we thank you for that. Later this afternoon, you'll hear from our TBI/PTSD as Chairman Past National Commander Detweiler will provide you with a report.

Since the October meetings, we have conducted six System Worth Saving events, and we have six more planned in the near future. And at those events, as you know, we conduct town hall meetings, we conduct site visits at the VA large medical centers, at the CBOCs, at the vet centers, and also at the homeless veteran program and shelters.

Additionally, we have conducted three Regional Office Action Review teams. Our ROAR teams go into the regional offices and we check the claims where the power of attorney is assigned to The American Legion, we check them for errors so that we can help rejuvenate that process to ensure that our claims are being processed correctly at the regional offices. We have six more of those to come up in the coming months.

We have our two DSO schools, our department service officers schools, and we have represented our veterans' claims. Since the Washington Conference, we have 1,895 claims that have been sent to appeals with just under 80 percent of those being overturned in favor of the veteran. That's pretty remarkable. This whole '17 fiscal year, we've had 4,170 claims that have been processed with that 80 percent favorable to the veteran appeal process in our favor.

On April 19, President Trump signed into law the Veterans Choice Act and what that was, was to extend the Choice dollars that are out there to provide the Choice Program, Care in the Community dollars that would have run out in August of 2017. This is going to provide time for Congress to work with VA to decide what to do with the Choice dollars and the Care in the Community dollars before the next legislation that comes out on that. We are working hard to provide testimony with this. In fact, that's where our staff director Lou Celli is today. He's providing oral and written testimony for The American Legion on that.

The VA is considering alternate forms of funding for veterans affairs. We're concerned about that. We believe they should be doing that, but we're concerned on how
they're going to do it. We have a very strong position that The American Legion will not accept charging service-connected disabled veterans for any sort of health care. We want to be sure that one is not making any level of consideration.

The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee and the House Veterans Affairs Committee are both considering the appeals modernization legislation. That is very important to us because we are finally going to have a process that will enable veteran appeals to be done in a more efficient, less redundant manner.

There's going to be three levels, three lanes of how veterans can put their appeal through a process. There's a local-level review at a higher level with the existing evidence of that claim; there's new evidence added to the claim at the local-level higher review; and there's also the board review.

Now, in order for you to understand how all this works, you have to read your report. It's in our report. And the same with the System Worth Saving and the action review team schedule, so that you can see where we're going to be with things.

Key to the Appeals Modernization Act is protections that the veteran will not go to the back of the line if they go through an appeal process or go to the court. And the most important protection we have is that the veterans will keep their original claims date. That's something that was difficult to attain, and that's one of the key provisions of this legislation.

Commander, our first president, General George Washington, is credited with stating, "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by our nation."

And to that end, your VA&R Commission never rests. Commander, your comments about membership this morning is critical to keeping The American Legion strong and the organization that fights the hardest and has, I believe, the most clout there is when it comes to protecting veterans and our benefits.

Our division staff and our volunteers are uncompromising in their work to protect the veterans and the families of our nation. We work to identify what VA does well, both in claims and in health care, and also with the cemetery and memorial benefits. We're able to help identify the challenges and the strengths of the VA and work shoulder-to-shoulder with VA to ensure that these VA systems remain strong and supportive for veterans.

I want to thank our staff in Washington, D.C. for this uncompromising work that they worked so hard; they work like volunteers is probably the best way I can say what our people do. You know what that means as a volunteer? You don't take time off, and you're available 24/7.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve veterans in this capacity, commander. I can think of no other higher calling to do. Thank you, sir, that's my report. (Applause)

Advance Report: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission
February 22-24, 2017
Ralph P. Bozella, Colorado, Chairman

I. 2017 DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICERS SCHOOL

The first session of the 2017 Department Service Officers School was held at the Washington DC and Capital Hilton from February 22-24. Over 130 Department, State, and County Veteran Service Officers from around the country and Puerto Rico were in attendance.

The event began with the following speakers representing the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA):
Heather Osborne, VBA-VSO Liaison  
Mike Carr, Assistant Director, Benefits Assistance Service  
Pam Miller, Contract Examinations Director

Following the featured speakers, the training curriculum broke out into two tracks depending on the level of experience of the attendee: Track 1 for beginners and Track 2 for intermediate and advanced students. National VA&R staff provided the curriculum and facilitated training for the Track 1 Service Officer session, and staff from the National Veterans Legal Services Program facilitated Track 2.

Track 1 covered basic information that targeted the development of compensation and pension claims, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) forms, claim development, fully developed claims (FDC), medical opinion, code of procedure, using the 38 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.), appeals basics, 646 preparation, Medical Evaluation Board (MEB), Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) and eBenefits.

National Commander Charlies E. Schmidt provided remarks and appreciation for the accomplishments of American Legion accredited representatives for our nation’s veterans and their families. During an evening reception, VA&R Commission Chairman Ralph Bozella expressed similar appreciation and recognition for the efforts that occur to ensure American Legion represented veterans receive the highest level of advocacy.

The Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) requested to address DSO School on the final day. Past National Commander and current CAVC Judge Alan G. Lance introduced CAVC Chief Judge Robert Davis to discuss recent cases impacting veteran’s claims.

The next Department Service Officer School will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana from July 27-29, 2017.

II. NATIONAL VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION CONFERENCE

The 94th Annual Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) Conference was held at the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C. on Monday, February 27, 2017.

III. MEETING OF THE NATIONAL VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION COMMISSION

The Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) Commission met on February 27, 2017, in the Lincoln Room, Concourse Level, Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, DC. Previously, the Commission met in Indianapolis, IN, on October 10-11, 2016. Commission Chairman Ralph P. Bozella, (CO) presided. The Commission heard reports from VA&R Committees and updates from the Washington Headquarters staff.

Reports received, together with matters considered during this meeting, are as follows:

A.) Report of the Committee on Certificates of Appreciation

Your Committee on Certificates of Appreciation met on Monday, February 27, 2017 in the Washington Hilton, Lincoln, Concourse Level, and considered no new nominations for this award.

B). VAVS Volunteer of the Year Award

National Commander Charles Schmidt awarded Mr. Kent Lee Erickson, from the Department of Oregon, the VA Voluntary Services (VAVS) Volunteer of the year award.
Remarks:

Dr. Carolyn Clancy, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organizational Excellence, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs. Spoke to the commission for the Under Secretary for Health, due to Dr. Shulkin’s nomination for VA Secretary and waiting to be confirmed by the Senate. Dr. Clancy thanked The American Legion for its ongoing “System Worth Saving” program and efforts to improve VA health care. She highlighted a recent report by the Rand Corporation that ranks the quality of care in the VA as equal or superior to the private sector. According to the report VA leads the private sector in areas such as mortality rates, common process measures, patient safety, and pharmacy benefits. She also highlighted VHA’s top five priorities which include access, employee engagement, high performance network, best practices, and trust in VA care.

Thomas J. Murphy, Acting Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs. Provided the VA&R Commission with an overview of VBA structure and benefits provide during FY2016. For FY2016 VBA employed nearly 22 thousand employees with 55% being veterans. During FY2016, $99.6 billion in benefits was distributed, 1.3 million claims were processed with 5.76 million issues claimed, and the average days to complete a veteran’s claim was 119 days. In addition, 12.6 billion was paid to 1 million beneficiaries in education benefits, VA life insurance provided over $1.2 trillion in coverage, and 750 thousand home loans were provided which was in increase of 12% from FY2015. Mr. Murphy also discussed the VA appeals process, he stated that the current system is broken and leads to a frustrating veteran experience. VA’s current inventory of appeals is over 464,000 with an average wait of 3 years and 5 years for those appeals that reach the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA). Mr. Murphy provided the agencies future goals which are to push the appeals legislation, modernize the contact centers, reduce dependency claims inventory, and to update the VA schedule for rating disabilities.

Ron E. Walters, Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs addressed the VA&R Commission about the accomplishments of NCA during FY2016, and the goals for FY 2017. According to Interim Secretary Walters, NCA interred more than 131,000 veterans and family members, placed more than 365,000 headstones and markers and presented over 689,000 Presidential Memorial Certificates. Interim Walter also discussed NCA’s long range goals consisting of; increased access to burial benefits, increased utilization of burial and memorial benefits, enhance memorialization of veterans service and sacrifice, increased trust in NCA based on enhanced accountability and strengthen NCA’s internal capacity.

Matthew Shuman, Director, Legislative Division, The American Legion addressed the VA&R Commission in able to introduce himself since he was recently promoted to director. He also provided the commission with The American Legion’s legislative priorities for the new congress. Legislative priorities include the Choice Program, appeals modernization, caregivers, and female veterans’ specific needs.

Heather Strawn, Senior Director of Federal Government Affairs, AbbVie briefed the commission on the importance of encouraging veterans specially the baby boomer generation to get tested for Hepatitis “C”. Hepatitis “C” is an infection of the liver, it is estimated that 3.5 million Americans are infected and don’t know it. The people most at risk are those that were born between 1946 and 1965, had a blood transfusion prior to 1987 or organ transplant procedure prior to 1992. AbbVie has partnered with VHA on their campaign aimed to test every veteran for Hepatitis “C” at their local VHA facility for free.

Scott Blackburn, Interim Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs briefed the commission on the future of the MyVA program. Mr. Blackburn was appointed to his new position as Interim Deputy Secretary on February 26, 2017. During his remarks Mr.
Blackburn stated that the MyVA program is here to stay and would continue to focus on culture change, new strategies, and maintaining the focus on discipline and processes while building momentum from past accomplishments. Areas of concentration moving forward will include VA modernization, suicide prevention, rebuilding the leadership team, and updating the agenda to keep what is working, adjust the course for those goals they have not met and reprioritize the agencies goals. He mentioned that the department’s top priority was earning the trust of the veteran community and American public.

Christopher E. O’Connor, Acting Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs, Department of Veterans Affairs, gave an overview of the Congressional and Legislative Affairs section and his duties as Acting Assistant Secretary. Mr. O’Connor explained that his primary responsibility is to assist the Secretary of Veterans Affairs advance pro-veteran legislation in able to benefit veterans, their families, and survivors. He accomplishes this by coordinating with Members of Congress, committees and maintaining effective communication with Congress, state, county, municipalities and the Government Accountability Office. His office’s goals are to continue building on the current momentum and prioritize on legislation focusing on the appeals modernization and developing gender-specific health care for women veterans.

Tina Shah, M.D., White House Fellow, Department of Veterans Affairs addressed the commission on the issue of physician burnout at VA Medical Centers. Dr. Shah stated that physician burnout is a medical condition that needs to be taken seriously and has negative effects not only for the physicians but also their patients. According to Dr. Shah physician burnout leads to a higher rate of medical error, greater staff turnover and poor patient satisfaction. She attributed burnout due to physicians not having the ability to provide quality care, inefficient process, lack of input, and low appreciation. She asked for The American Legions support in recognizing great VA doctors. One possible solution would be for The America Legion to sponsor an annual award recognizing a VA doctor for their outstanding work. The commission is currently discussing the subject and developing guidelines for a resolution for consideration of establishing the award.

Perry Parks, CW4 US Army (R) addressed the commission to offer his personal testimony about the benefits of using cannabis to treat war injuries. For many years Chief Parks had been receiving treatment for a back and mental health condition which was eventually diagnosed as PTSD. Upon retirement and not being subjected to the Army’s zero tolerance for illegal drugs he began experimenting with cannabis. Being very skeptical at first he experimented with cannabis and was shocked to experience total relief from pain, something he had not experienced in several years. Ever since his personal experience he has been on a mission to educate and advocate on the medical use of cannabis to treat for pain and PTSD.

C). System Worth Saving Program (SWS) 2017

Past National Commander (PNC), Ronald Conley initiated the SWS Program in 2003. The American Legion resolved to support the SWS program through Resolution 206, which authorized visits to designated Veterans Administration Medical Centers. The American Legion passed Resolution 105, “Reiteration of the SWS Program” during its 2015 National Convention that established SWS as a permanent program managed by the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission (VA&R).

Site visits 2017

In 2017, scheduled visits include Los Angeles, CA, Murfreesboro, TN, Phoenix, AZ, Anchorage, AK, Iowa City, IA, Saginaw, MI, Milwaukee, WI, Columbus, OH, Billings, MT, and Manchester, New Hampshire. VA&R added a SWS visit in February 2017 – Gulfport/Biloxi. The VA&R team has completed four visits as of April 10, 2017. A
common theme throughout the 2017 SWS visits has been the “staffing” issue highlighted by the following vacancies:

- Los Angeles – 488 (includes 28 vacancies in the HR department)
- Murfreesboro, TN – 357
- Gulfport – 422
- Phoenix – 150

On March 22, 2017, The House Veterans’ Affairs Committee (HVAC) Subcommittee on Health conducted a hearing, titled, “Healthy Hiring: Enabling VA to Recruit and Retain Quality Providers. Louis J. Celli, Jr., Director of Veterans Affairs, and Rehabilitation (VA&R) provided oral and written remarks for the hearing. This hearing examined the ability of the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to recruit and retain high quality clinical and administrative employees.

Following is an excerpt from The American Legion’s testimony: “The American Legion understands that filling highly skilled vacancies at premiere VA hospitals around the country is challenging. We also expect VA to do whatever is legally permissible to ensure that veterans have access to the level of quality health care they have come to expect from VA. VA leadership needs to do more to work with community members and stakeholders. VA has a variety of creative solutions available to them without the need for additional legislative action. One such idea could involve the creation of a medical school, or aggressively seek public private partnerships with all local area hospitals. VA could expand both footprint market penetration by renting space in existing hospitals where they would also be able to leverage existing resources and foster comprehensive partnerships with the community. Finally, VA could research the feasibility of incentivizing recruitment at Level 3 hospitals by orchestrating a skills sharing program. This might entice physicians to work at level 3 facilities if they are eligible to engage in a program where they could train at a Level 1 facility for a year every 5 years while requiring Level 1 facility physicians to spend some time at level 3 facilities to share best practices. Currently, VA allows medical staff to fill temporary vacancies. This practice fails to incentivize the detailed professional to share best practices and teach, merely hold down the position until it can be filled by a permanent hire.”

**Veteran Town Hall Meetings:**

The American Legion conducts a veteran town hall meeting on the first day of a site visit at a local American Legion post. The town hall gives veterans and their families an opportunity to discuss their experiences at the local VA medical center with staff from The American Legion National Headquarters and a VA&R Commission member.

**Executive Leadership Meeting:**

During the medical facility site visits, VA&R Commission members, and National staff conduct interviews with VA staff from the following areas: Human Resources, Business Office, Enrollment, NON-VA Care, Choice Program, Outreach, all Clinical Services, Homeless Program, Patient Advocate, Construction, Budget, and the Women’s Program. For each of the programs listed, The American Legion seeks to understand what new innovations or progress that have been made, the current situation, goals, and a strategic plan that

**Challenges identified during 2017 SWS Site visits:**

As mentioned, executive leaders consistently rank staffing as their number one challenge. Many cite budget constraints and current hiring freeze by the new presidential administration as impediments to operational efficiency and patient care.
Conclusion:
Following the 2014 Wait Time scandal, the Veterans Health Administration began the long road to recovery. The Phoenix VAMC is leading the charge as it was at the epicenter of the scandal. The SWS visit to the Phoenix VAMC in mid-March 2017 suggests the new executive director is steering the medical center down the path toward full recovery. She has implemented changes that include devising a strategic plan, re-organizing the scheduling team, requiring additional training when appropriate, and creating new accountability in areas that were not previously provided oversight.

Moreover, White House Senior Advisor, Jake Leinenkugel, attended the Phoenix VA Health Care System Worth Saving site visit. As the Senior White House Advisor to President Trump, Mr. Leinenkugel is responsible for advising the President and VA Secretary on veterans’ issues. Mr. Leinenkugel’s attendance at the Phoenix System Worth Saving site visit was a good beginning. Over the day and half SWS site visit, Mr. Leinenkugel learned a lot about the challenges Arizona’s veterans face at the Phoenix VA Health Care System. Mr. Leinenkugel will inform the VA Secretary and the president about the challenges related to budget constraints, the effect of the hiring freeze, and other issues related to staffing. Mr. Leinenkugel was enthusiastic about the turnaround at Phoenix and added that upon hiring a Director of Public Affairs, the Phoenix VA Health Care System will be on a solid path toward full recovery both operationally and in terms of restoring the public’s image of a viable VA medical center.

D.) Report of The American Legion TBI/PTSD Committee
Cole T. Lyle recently assumed the role of Assistant Director of TBI/PTSD Programs. In conjunction with Director of VA&R Louis Celli and Deputy Director of VA&R Roscoe Butler, Cole outlined a Strategic Plan for 2017-2018. With the consultation and tentative approval of the Committee Chairman, PNC William Detweiler, the Strategic Plan focuses on suicide prevention, complementary/alternative methods of treatment, and getting back to a regular rhythm of committee meetings and events. The Strategic Plan includes hosting three TBI/PTSD Committee meetings, two in 2017, one in 2018, and a TBI/PTSD Symposium in 2018.

2018 Symposium (tentatively 9AM-5PM June 14th-15th in Washington D.C.)
End goals – The TBI/PTSD Symposium will comprise of information sharing between agencies, new ideas for policy and treatment synergy, and the identification of policy and treatment gaps to fill at the VA. Presentation of new TAL materials (i.e. updated survey, “The War Within”, etc.) will also occur.
Possible venues –
1. The White House/Executive Office Building
2. National Institute of Health in Bethesda
3. VA TBI/PTSD Center of Excellence
4. Universities (Georgetown, Johns Hopkins, George Washington, etc.)

Symposium Structure-
Both days will be broken up in morning and afternoon sessions with all separate issues.
Prior to blocks of time commencing, we will open with a panel of other VSO’s to present themselves and their efforts in this area.
Preliminary subjects include: Suicide, caregivers, research, & treatment. Each of the 4 blocks will be broken up into 6 ½ hour presentation or panels from subject matter experts or testimonials. At the end of the 2 days, we will include a wrap-up/takeaway block where major takeaways will be covered.
Possibly will host “debate panels” with 4-5 SME’s to discuss alternative points of view on things like alternative therapies and advocates of medication therapy.

**TBI/PTSD Committee Meetings, 2017-2018**

**2017-**
- July 10th & 11th in Phoenix, AZ or Washington, D.C.
- November 13th & 14th in Louisiana @ WWII Museum

**2018-**
- March 26th & 27th in Washington D.C. @ TAL

**Suicide Prevention Awareness Resolution**

Cole Lyle, the Assistant Director for TBI/PTSD Programs, drafted the Suicide Awareness Program Resolution. This resolution passed a teleconference vote of the VA&R Commission unanimously. The Resolution calls for analyzing trends in veteran suicide as they relate to PTSD/TBI/MST and other mental health issues. The Resolution also calls for the creation of an annual survey of Legion members who use VA facilities to assess their mental health care access and treatment, and provides language for updated System-Worth-Saving visits to include assessments on mental health care.

**E). Caregiver Support Program**

The Department of Veteran Affairs has recognized the growing need to support wounded and disabled veterans caregivers. The Caregiver Support Program encompassed the importance of a strong peer support group for caregiver mental stability and the beneficial aspects of networking and sharing resources information within the community. In addition, caregiver support for veterans increases engaged health care and decreases probability of suicide.

The Caregiver and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 currently provides a stipend to caregivers of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) veterans, but not to caregivers of veterans from previous eras. The 2016 budget for caregiver support program is $605 million and VA will request $705 million for 2017 due to the number of post OEF/OIF caregivers are in the program. However, the current VA caregiver support program does not assist pre 9/11 veterans, which The American Legion disagrees with based on the 2014 Resolution No. 160: Veterans Receive Same Level of Benefits. The American Legion has always advocated on the principle of equal benefits for equal service and continues to campaign that the pre/911 caregivers receive the same stipend and benefits.

On March 10, 2017, both the Senate and the House reintroduced the Military and Veteran Caregiver Services Improvement Act – bipartisan legislation to make expanded resources available to military and veteran caregivers of all eras. We thank Senators Patty Murray and Susan Collins and Representative Jim Langevin for their tireless work to support the 5.5 million military and veteran caregivers across America through this historic legislation.

On March 28, 2017, The Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission hosted a Video Tele-Conference call to discuss resolutions for the 2017 Spring National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting. There were ten resolutions up for discussion, to include a resolutions calling for The American Legion to create a Caregiver Program. The Caregiver Program primary mission is to address the needs of military and veteran caregivers by assisting with, but not limited to employment/vocational referral, federal and state education assistance, Post 9/11 caregiver benefit support, veteran directed care, Partner support with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation and various caregiver support organizations, assistance with death gratuity, and terminal illness.
The VA&R Commission unanimously approved the resolution for submission to the Spring NEC.

Report: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission
May 10-11, 2017
Ralph P. Bozella, Colorado, Chairman

Ten (10) resolutions were presented to the Resolutions Subcommittee by the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission. Zero (0) resolutions were received and recorded and zero (0) resolutions were disposed of administratively.

CLAIMS UPDATE

Department Service Officer School

The first session of the 2017 Department Service Officers School was held at the Washington D.C. and Capital Hilton from February 22-24. Over 130 Department, State, and County Veteran Service Officers from around the country and Puerto Rico were in attendance.

The event began with the following speakers representing the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA):

- Heather Osborne, VBA-VSO Liaison
- Mike Carr, Assistant Director, Benefits Assistance Service
- Pam Miller, Contract Examinations Director

Following the featured speakers, the training curriculum broke out into two tracks depending on the level of experience of the attendee: Track 1 for beginners and Track 2 for intermediate and advanced students. National VA&R staff provided the curriculum and facilitated training for the Track 1 Service Officer session, and staff from the National Veterans Legal Services Program facilitated Track 2.

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The Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) requested to address DSO School on the final day. Past National Commander and current CAVC Judge Alan G. Lance introduced CAVC Chief Judge Robert Davis to discuss recent cases impacting veteran’s claims.

The next Department Service Officer School will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana from July 27-29, 2017.

Board of Veterans’ Appeals

The Board of Veterans’ Appeals (BVA) reached dispositions on 4,170 American Legion represented appeals during fiscal year FY 2017. Of those dispositions, over 79.9% of the denials were overturned with outcomes favorable to the veteran. In 723 cases, The American Legion was able to point out errors in the development of the veteran’s claims.
which mandated corrective action under the law. Of the total number of dispositions, only 864 (20.1%) were outright denials.

966 claimants were represented by The American Legion’s BVA unit in FY17 through submission of informal hearing presentations or veteran’s hearings. These claims included originals, remands, as well as special cases (Advanced on Docket, Independent Medical Opinions, Court Remands, etc.). The BVA unit handled numerous telephone inquiries and provided consultation with veterans, VSO’s, and Congressional offices. The administrative team completed 1633 phone inquiries during this period. The appeal representatives provided assistance for 56 walk-in veterans for their respective VA Central Office hearings.

**Insurance, Pension and Debt Management**

The VA&R VA Insurance unit reviewed and processed 885 applications for new insurance coverage, of which 62 were for Supplemental insurance for totally disabled veterans in the Service-Disabled insurance program, along with 575 disability and settlement claims on other veteran’s VA policies. Further case development included 687 other insurance inquiries or transactions, 311 phone calls with veterans, family members and VSOs, and 653 veteran policyholders were contacted by mail on their policies, insurance options and action deadlines. There were also 342 direct contacts with VA personnel in regards to correcting or having additional actions taken on veteran’s accounts.

The VA&R Pension units at the Philadelphia, St. Paul and Milwaukee VA Pension Centers processed 2,001 new claims for Veterans or Death pensions, along with reviewing and preparing 3,342 case actions for support of on-going pension benefits. Casework also included processing 3,886 additional transactions and case inquiries to VA, performing 4,316 audits of Rating actions, and 1,281 phone contacts with claimants and VSOs. There were 479 personal interview contacts, and 68 waivers of overpayments processed with 43 appeals. Additionally, the VA&R unit at the St. Paul Center received some 103 original Debt Management claims.

**Appeals Modernization**

The VA Appeals Modernization Act of 2017 (H.R. 457) was introduced in the House of Representatives on January 11, 2017 and Senate (S. 712) on March 23, 2017. If passed, the legislation would give veterans clear options after receiving an initial decision by consolidating the current appeals process into three distinct tracks:

- **Local Higher Level Review:** This lane would provide the opportunity for a quick resolution of the claim by a higher-level adjudication at the VA Regional Office. This lane would be a good option for veterans who are confident they have all the evidence necessary to win their claim.
- **New Evidence:** This lane would be for submitting new evidence at the VA Regional Office. This lane would serve as a good option for veterans who believe that they can succeed on their claim by providing additional evidence.
- **Board Review:** In this lane, intermediate steps currently required by statute to receive Board review would be eliminated. Furthermore, hearing and non-hearing options at the Board would be handled on separate dockets so these distinctly different types of work can be better managed.

The purpose of the legislation is to fix the broken appeals process that has not been updated since 1933. Currently, more than 450,000 appeals are pending due to redundancies and inefficiencies in the current process, most veterans wait years for a decision on their appeals. The Appeals Modernization Act is a reintroduction from last Congress, which was
supported by The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, AMVETS, Military Officers Association of America, National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, and the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs. The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee has schedule a hearing on Wednesday, May 3, 2017, The American Legion will provide oral and written testimony.

Regional Office Action Review
The American Legion’s Regional Office Action Review visits. This year, The American Legion’s ROAR team is focusing on VA’s implementation of National Work Queue; a program designed to promote the efficiencies of VA’s electronic claims processing. In 2017, The ROAR teams have visited the following VA regional offices:

- San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Ft. Benjamin Harrison, Montana

Future planned visits, include the following locations:

- Denver, Colorado
- Chicago, Illinois
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- White River Junction, Vermont
- Louisville, Kentucky
- Detroit, Michigan
- Los Angeles, California

HEALTH CARE UPDATE
System Worth Saving

Site visits 2017
In 2017, scheduled visits include Los Angeles, CA, Murfreesboro, TN, Phoenix, AZ, Anchorage, AK, Iowa City, IA, Saginaw, MI, Milwaukee, WI, Columbus, OH, Billings, MT, and Manchester, New Hampshire. VA&R added a SWS visit in February 2017 – Gulfport/Biloxi. The VA&R team has completed four visits as of April 10, 2017. A common theme throughout the 2017 SWS visits has been the “staffing” issue highlighted by the following vacancies:

- Los Angeles – 488 (includes 28 vacancies in the HR department)
- Murfreesboro, TN – 357
- Gulfport – 422
- Phoenix – 150

On March 22, 2017, The House Veterans’ Affairs Committee (HVAC) Subcommittee on Health conducted a hearing, titled, “Healthy Hiring: Enabling VA to Recruit and Retain Quality Providers. Louis J. Celli, Jr., Director of Veterans Affairs, and Rehabilitation (VA&R) provided oral and written remarks for the hearing. This hearing examined the ability of the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to recruit and retain high quality clinical and administrative employees.

Following is an excerpt from The American Legion’s testimony: “The American Legion understands that filling highly skilled vacancies at premiere VA hospitals around the country is challenging. We also expect VA to do whatever is legally permissible to
ensure that veterans have access to the level of quality health care they have come to expect from VA. VA leadership needs to do more to work with community members and stakeholders. VA has a variety of creative solutions available to them without the need for additional legislative action. One such idea could involve the creation of a medical school, or aggressively seek public-private partnerships with all local area hospitals. VA could expand both footprint market penetration by renting space in existing hospitals where they would also be able to leverage existing resources and foster comprehensive partnerships with the community. Finally, VA could research the feasibility of incentivizing recruitment at Level 3 hospitals by orchestrating a skills-sharing program. This might entice physicians to work at level 3 facilities if they are eligible to engage in a program where they could train at a Level 1 facility for a year every 5 years while requiring Level 1 facility physicians to spend some time at level 3 facilities to share best practices. Currently, VA allows medical staff to fill temporary vacancies. This practice fails to incentivize the detailed professional to share best practices and teach, merely hold down the position until it can be filled by a permanent hire.”

VA Choice Program

On Wednesday, April 19, 2017, President Trump signed into law legislation to extend the Veterans Choice Act past the August deadline until the end of 2017. The bill also authorizes the VA to spend the remaining $950 million in funds appropriated for Choice to pay for care veterans receive in the community.

This sets the stage for Congress to finish working on VA-requested legislation to consolidate all of the current community care programs under one umbrella. Currently, veterans can receive medical care in the community under at least six different programs. Each one has a different set of eligibility criteria and payment rates for providers, making the entire system far too complex for veterans, providers, and even VA employees to fully utilize efficiently.

Choice 2.0

Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin recently announced that he hopes to present a replacement for the Choice Program to Congress by this fall. The Secretary admitted that this would create a tight timeline for Congress to act on the legislation before the current extension runs out but felt confident that the President and Congress are committed to doing what is needed to meet the deadline. Secretary Shulkin stated that VA is working with Congress to make sure that the New Choice Program is less complex and easier to navigate for both the Veteran and the non-VA care provider. Cost will be a major factor for consideration; the cost of the original program was $10 billion to cover three years’ of medical care and services. The American Legion will continue to monitor and provide input on how to improve the Choice program. The American Legion will not accept a scenario which calls for co-pays for service connected disabled veterans. The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee is scheduled to conduct a hearing on May 10, 2017, and The American Legion will be providing oral and written testimony.

Cemeteries Update

New Initiatives: Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility: In December 2016, the VA’s National Cemetery Administration (NCA) announced that it now provides eligibility determination for internment in VA national cemetery prior to the time of need. This new service is offered through the Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility Program. Upon request, individuals can learn if they are eligible for burial or memorialization in a VA national cemetery. Interested individuals may submit VA Form 40-10007, which is the
Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery, and supporting documentation, such as a DD 214. For further information individuals are asked to call the NCA’s Scheduling Office @ 1-855-840-8299 or email to Eligibility.PreNeed@va.gov

Veterans Legacy Program: The Veterans Legacy Program seeks to increase the profile of national cemeteries and to inform the public of NCA’s burial benefits to eligible veterans, their spouses, and dependents. NCA accomplishes this through engaging the academic community (K-12 schools, universities, etc.), community organizations (Veteran Service Organizations, Scouts, Civil Air Patrol, etc.), and state and local government organizations (state-level departments of education, offices of state/local history, public museums, etc.). By engaging these constituencies through our programming, we hope to give Americans a new understanding of their history through the diversity of the Veteran experience.

At present, the largest program is “Local Legacy, National Heritage,” a program that engages universities. University professors teach the research skills to their students, who then research biographies of veterans interred in national cemeteries, and those students, in turn, teach what they learned through research to even younger students from secondary, middle and high schools. Through this program, hundreds of young people have been in the cemeteries sharing the histories of ordinary veterans from the World Wars through current conflicts in southwest Asia. NCA then works with these university professionals to extend memorialization of these veterans through digital media (websites, online archives, etc.) so that their Legacy is publicly accessible.

New Cemeteries: Pikes Peak National Cemetery: In January of 2014, VA purchased the land, known as the Rolling Hill Ranch, located of Marksheffel Road, between Bradley and Drennan Roads for $4.49 million. In the spring of 2015, VA awarded AES Group, a service-disabled veteran-owned small business architecture design and engineering firm from Parker, Colorado, a contract to design the cemetery. The design is scheduled to take between 18 to 24 months to complete. Pending any unforeseen circumstances, NCA anticipates first burials to take place in 2018.

Western New York National Cemetery: In May 2014, VA purchased the land located at 1232 Indian Falls Road, Pembroke, NY, for $625,000. The initial phase of construction will develop approximately 70 acres and provide for approximately 10 years of interment capacity, accommodating both casketed and cremated remains. VA plans to award a construction contract by the summer of 2017 and the first burials are expected to begin approximately 12 to 18 months after the start of construction.

Omaha National Cemetery: In December 2012, VA purchased the land located along south 144th St. Highway 50, at 14250 Schram Road for $6 million. In August 2013, VA awarded an architect and engineering contract to Viero Planning & Design of Omaha, for the master plan design of the cemetery. The initial phase of construction developed approximately 60 acres of land, providing for approximately 5,000 gravesites and accommodating both casketed and cremated remains. The first burials began in September 2016 as construction continues with a completion date in 2018.

DOD Boards: The DoD Boards section has submitted 55 applications (DD Form 149) to the Board for Correction of Military/Navy Records, 43 applications (DD Form 293) to the Discharge Review Board (DRB), and represented eight (8) applicants during their personal hearing before the DRB. The DoD Boards section also partnered with Duane Morris, LLC, and the Washington DC Mayor’s Office of Veterans Affairs to conduct free legal clinics on how to file for a military discharge upgrade.
### Conference Call of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission

The Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) Commission held a conference call on Tuesday, March 28, 2017 for the purpose of discussing any new business pertinent to the upcoming Spring NEC Meeting. The conference call was also used to discuss and recommend action on new resolutions that will be presented at the Spring NEC Meeting. Ralph P. Bozella (CO), VA&R Commission Chairman presided over the conference meeting.

Resolutions considered during this meeting, are as follow:

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<td>Amend Title 38, United States Code, to Clarify the Treatment of a Veteran as Adjudicated Mentally Incompetent for Certain Periods</td>
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<td>CO DEC</td>
<td>Compliance with Public Law 114-31 Veterans Identification Card Act of 2015</td>
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<td>Department of Veterans Affairs Establish an Opioid Treatment Program to Include an Opioid Detox Unit at Every VA Medical Center</td>
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RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Commander, motion to receive and file the report of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, with the exception of eight resolutions. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and second on a report from VA&R Commission. Are there any discussions? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? The ayes have it.

Resolution No. 22: Public/Private Partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs to Expand Reach with Local Hospitals

**Origin: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission**

**Submitted By: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission**

WHEREAS, There are a high number of veterans returning from deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan who have serious health-care needs; and

WHEREAS, Due to the increased need for health care of these veterans, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is increasingly becoming overwhelmed by the physical and mental health issues these veterans have, such that quality and timeliness of care is being negatively affected; and

WHEREAS, Because of a constantly growing and aging general and veteran population, the demand for quality health-care providers has intensified and nearly every
specialty in the medical field is experiencing physician shortages that by the year 2030 are projected to exceed 25,000 providers; and

WHEREAS, The projections will occur in both primary and specialty care, which will pose significant risk to all patients, including veteran patients; and

WHEREAS, There are a significant number of patients, particularly veteran patients, who live in rural areas of the United States where the health-care practitioners are in shortest supply in terms of patient to physician ratios; and

WHEREAS, According to the Health Resources & Services Administration some of the nation’s most populous states have the highest numbers of health professional shortages (dental health care, mental health care and primary care providers), including California, Texas, Michigan, Florida, and Illinois; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other entities which provide health care must find ways to encourage health-care providers to pursue primary care and specialty fields and direct physicians to areas that are experiencing the most critical shortages geographically; and

WHEREAS, The VA can look at some of the best practices used by other hospital systems and medical facilities to recruit and retain more health-care providers, particularly physicians, interested in pursuing primary care careers; and

WHEREAS, The VHA can pursue many different avenues to get more health-care providers into their systems such as looking for service-based activities in applicants, recruiting non-traditional students and providers such as older students, and students with other training like physician assistants and registered nurses; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion encourage the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to develop relationships with local hospitals and other medical facilities, similar to the limited partnership VA enjoys with the Department of Defense (DoD) at select DoD medical facilities, in order to combat the physician shortage in the VA health-care system; ensuring that care in the community has the resources necessary to provide timely, quality care and medical records access by leasing sufficient space of existing community medical facilities, where prudent and reasonable, to expand VA’s footprint in areas where veterans are underserved and have limited access to VA health care; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That this partnership not be used to degrade existing capacity within the VA portfolio of care and services but to increase options for veterans, especially in rural areas.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN KILE: This motion has been approved by the VA&R Commission, your Subcommittee on Resolutions, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second regarding Resolution No. 22. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Resolution No. 22 is adopted.

Resolution No. 23: Department of Veterans Affairs Provide Mental Health Services for Veterans with Other than Honorable and General Discharges

Origin: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

Submitted By: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

WHEREAS, Since 2009, the Army has separated at least 22,000 combat veterans who had been diagnosed with mental health disabilities or traumatic brain injury for alleged
misconduct, despite reforms intended to halt the administrative separations of veterans suffering from service-related conditions; and

WHEREAS, According to a 2012 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) report, 22 veterans per day commit suicide and preliminary evidence collected by the VA suggests that there are decreased rates of suicide among veterans receiving VA health care as opposed to veterans who do not; and

WHEREAS, Depending on the circumstances, veterans with “bad paper” may not be eligible for a broad array of VA health care and benefits, including mental health-care services that may be critical in the case of veterans with a history of post-traumatic stress disorder or other mental illness; and

WHEREAS, A similar exception to standard VA access rules exists for military sexual trauma (MST) and in the case of MST, veterans are eligible for MST-related care with VA regardless of their discharge classification and VA health-care enrollment status; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion urge Congress to authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to treat any veterans requiring urgent mental health care who has an Other than Honorable or General Discharge as long as the discharge is not a bar to benefits under section 5303 of Title 38; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the mental health care authorized under this program be available to any veteran who was deployed in a theater of combat operations or an area at a time during which hostilities occurred in that area, participated in or experienced such combat operations or hostilities, including by controlling an unmanned aerial vehicle from a location other than such theater or area.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN KILE: This resolution has been approved by your Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, your Subcommittee on Resolutions, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second regarding Resolution No. 23. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Resolution No. 23 is adopted.

Resolution No. 24: Caregiver Program
Origin: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of wartime veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Due to advances in military medical field treatment, over 95 percent of severely injured military personnel are able to be saved and return home, but many will require in-home type care; and

WHEREAS, These wounded and disabled veterans often have horrific service and non-service connected medical conditions, including, but not limited to, multiple amputations, spinal cord injuries, complete loss of vision and/or hearing; and

WHEREAS, According to the RAND study there are 5.5 million caregivers throughout the United States and 1.1 million of those are caring for someone who served in the military after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, Family members often give up their own employment to be caregivers and in many households they are now the primary source of income; and

WHEREAS, Caregivers are reportedly having problems with health care, depression, access to services, employment and finding support in the community; and
WHEREAS, The burden for providing care places a disproportionate amount of the focus on the care recipient, which often distracts the caregiver from addressing their own needs (e.g. personal wellness, support, benefits assistance) and can have an impact on the caregiver's ability to provide sustained assistance to the wounded or disabled veteran; and

WHEREAS, Veterans sometimes require the aid and assistance of another person in order to perform personal functions required in everyday living, such as bathing, feeding, dressing, attending to the wants of nature, adjusting prosthetic devices, or protecting himself/herself from the hazards of his/her daily environment; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), under Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations § 3.352, provides a special monthly compensation benefit, known as an Aid and Attendance allowance, in addition to the monthly service-connected disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, The VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers is a clinical program administered by the Veterans Health Administration which focuses on the needs of both the eligible veteran/servicemember and primary and secondary caregiver; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion establish a Caregiver Program; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion’s Caregiver Program would fall under the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion’s Caregiver Program primary mission is to address the needs of military and veteran caregivers by assisting with, but not limited to, employment/vocational referral, federal and state education assistance, Post 9/11 caregiver benefit support, veteran directed care, partner support with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation and various caregiver support organizations, assistance with death gratuity (benefit), and terminal illness.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN KILE: This resolution has been approved by your Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, your Resolutions Subcommittee, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.


Resolution No. 25: Department of Veterans Affairs Maintained Medical and Dental School

Origin: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has the mission to fulfill President Lincoln’s promise, “To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan” by serving and honoring the men and women who are America’s veterans; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) provides care at more than 1,233 health-care facilities, including 168 VA medical centers and 1,053 VHA outpatient clinics; and

WHEREAS, The VHA serves more than 8.9 million veterans each year; and

WHEREAS, The VHA is the nation’s largest integrated health-care system; and

WHEREAS, Nationwide, health-care provider shortages are an increasing concern; and
WHEREAS, Medical students accepted into this program will receive a full tuition waiver including costs and materials; and

WHEREAS, Health-care systems must develop programs and strategies that encourage physicians and nurses to develop lasting professional and personal relationships that keep them in the system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion urge the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish a medical and dental school to train health-care providers who will initially serve veterans; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That all health-care providers who graduate from either of the VA's medical or dental school incur a minimum of five (5) years of service commitment to the VA, similar to the commitment to service required of graduates of a military service academy.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN KILE: This resolution has been approved by your Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, your Resolutions Subcommittee, and I move for its adoption….Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second regarding Resolution No. 25. Is there any discussion? The chair recognizes Arkansas.

NEC MEMBER ERDMAN (AR): I have a question about, it seems to me that the VA has their hands full just monitoring the hospitals, and now they talk about opening a medical and/or dental school. And secondly, if we want more physicians to treat in the VA hospitals, why not do what the military does: Pay for that education and then require that five-year commitment afterwards. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you. Mr. Chair, do you have any response to the comments?

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION COMMISSION CHAIRMAN BOZELLA: Thank you, Mary, for your comments. Your comment about using military doctors, providers and so on to help with VA is actually a very good idea. We would need a resolution on that to consider that.

In terms of whether or not VA can manage another program such as a school, we think they could; otherwise, we would not have done this resolution. Again, we would be working with them, if they were to ever do this.

I mean, do you think that Congress would do this? Once we adopt this, we would request that Congress would provide the funds for this. And it would create a bank of providers, particularly in areas like rural areas that we don't have anyone, and it's so difficult to get that kind of care. Which was the reason for one of the earlier resolutions about leasing space in these areas, like wings of hospitals that might be going unused right now. So what we're looking at is resources to provide the providers and the space to make the health care happen in areas where it's really difficult. So this is one idea to do that.

I would invite you to submit a resolution from your department on your really good idea of working with military doctors, too. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Any further discussion? Hearing none, all in favor of Resolution 25, say aye. Opposed? Resolution 25 is adopted.
Resolution No. 26: Compliance with Public Law 114-31 Veterans Identification Card Act of 2015
Origin: Register Resolution No. 2743 (CO) Department Executive Committee
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission
WHEREAS, Public Law 114-31, "The Veterans Identification Card Act of 2015," signed into law on 20 July 2015 by the president of the United States, requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to issue veteran identification cards beginning 60 days after the date the law was signed; and
WHEREAS, The secretary of Veterans Affairs is required to issue the veterans identification card to any veteran who, "(1) requests such a card; (2) presents a copy of Department of Defense form DD-214 or other official document from the official military personnel file of the veteran that describes the service of the veteran; and (3) pays the fee under subsection (c)(I)"; and
WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs has not published their proposed rule in the Federal Register providing notification of their intent to begin issuing the veterans identification card; and
WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs has not begun issuing the veterans identification cards required by PL 114-31, and therefore continues to be noncompliant with the law; and
WHEREAS, The American Legion, at both the national and departmental levels, continues to receive inquiries from veterans questioning when the VA will begin issuing the veterans identification cards; now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion urges the United States Congress to take immediate action to force the Department of Veterans Affairs to immediately comply with PL 114-31, Veterans Identification Card Act of 2015, which requires an appropriate and specific identification card be issued to any veteran that requests it; and, be it further
RESOLVED, That the United States Congress take immediate action to force the Department of Veterans Affairs to immediately publish its rules in the Federal Register specifying plans for issuing the veterans identification card; and, be it finally
RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs begin issuing the veterans identification card to eligible veterans no later than 30 September 2017.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER BOLAND: This has the approval of your Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, your Resolutions Subcommittee, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.

Resolution No. 27: Amend Title 38, United States Code, to Clarify the Treatment of a Veteran as Adjudicated Mentally Incompetent for Certain Purposes
Origin: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission
WHEREAS, There has been much debate, speculation, and rumors concerning restriction of gun ownership of persons with mental disabilities sparked by recent tragic shootings; and
WHEREAS, Concerns have been raised regarding veterans, determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) not to be competent to handle their own funds or...
otherwise diagnosed with a mental disorder, will be barred from owning or purchasing firearms; and

WHEREAS, There has long been concern and speculation that VA will be required to provide information about such veterans to the Department of Justice and other law enforcement agencies, which could result in these veterans being denied the right to purchase or own firearms; and

WHEREAS, VA, on September 29, 2009, issued Fast Letter 09-38 notifying VA field examiners, fiduciary activity managers, and other employees of new reporting requirements pertaining to VA beneficiaries believed to be in violation of the federal Gun Control Act of 1968, as amended; and

WHEREAS, There appears to be legal ambiguity in this area as well as the role of VA in such matters pertaining to veterans deemed to be incompetent for VA purposes or otherwise diagnosed with a mental disorder; and

WHEREAS, Disclosure of a veteran’s medical information is a direct violation of Federal privacy laws (HIPAA); and

WHEREAS, Gun ownership is a specific right protected under the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion shall support legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code, to clarify the treatment of a veteran as adjudicated by the Department of Veterans Affairs as mentally incompetent for certain purposes; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That such legislation mandate that, in any case arising out of the administration by the secretary of Veterans Affairs of laws and benefits under Title 38, United States Code, a person who is mentally incapacitated, deemed mentally incompetent, or experiencing an extended loss of consciousness, shall not be considered adjudicated as a mental defective under subsection (d) (4) or (g)(4) of section 922 of Title 18, United States Code without the order or finding of a judge, magistrate, or other judicial authority of competent jurisdiction that such person is a danger to himself/herself or others; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs is barred from transmitting in any form, findings about a veteran’s mental status or ability to handle his or her own funds, to other agencies without the order or finding of a judge, magistrate, or other judicial authority of competent jurisdiction.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER BOLAND: This has the approval of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission and your Resolutions Subcommittee, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.


Resolution No. 28: Suicide Prevention Program
Origin: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

WHEREAS, According to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) an average of 20 veterans died by suicide each day in 2014, and veterans accounted for 18 percent of all deaths by suicide among U.S. adults and constituted 8.5 percent of the U.S. adult population; and

WHEREAS, In March 2013, the Pentagon reported more soldiers were dying overseas by committing suicide than from combat wounds, about one a day; and
WHEREAS, In 2012, there was one suicide every 17 hours among all active duty, reserve and National Guard members, according to figures gathered from each branch; and
WHEREAS, According to the Congressional Research Service, there have been over 128,000 deployed veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) between 2000-2014; and
WHEREAS, Fewer than half of veterans who report symptoms of combat-related PTSD receive the care they need, and of those who do start treatment, between 20-50 percent do not finish; and
WHEREAS, The Vietnam experience demonstrates that the price of not treating PTSD is paid in suicide, substance abuse, homelessness, unemployment, divorce, and domestic violence; and
WHEREAS, The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention Act of 2014 was passed into law for the purpose of increasing access to mental health services through peer support and community outreach, and to boost the accountability of mental health care by requiring an annual evaluation of VA mental health and suicide-prevention programs; and
WHEREAS, The American Legion uses System Worth Saving (SWS) site visits to cross-pollinate best practices, identify gaps of care, and evaluate overall performance of the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration medical centers and Veterans Benefits Administration regional offices; and
WHEREAS, The SWS site visits do not currently include an assessment of each site’s emergency and non-emergency mental health processes in the Mail Out Questionnaire and facility tours; now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, By The National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion establish a Suicide Prevention Program and align the program under the TBI/PTSD Committee; and, be it further
RESOLVED, That the program be charged with examining recent trends of veteran suicide as it relates to traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma, etc. and analyzing best practices in veteran suicide prevention not currently used by the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for the purpose of encouraging aforementioned government agencies to adopt them; and, be it further
RESOLVED, That The American Legion will conduct an annual mental health survey in an effort to more accurately assess the veteran experience with traditional and non-traditional mental health resources; and, be it further
RESOLVED, That the System Worth Saving Mail Out Questionnaire be revised to add an assessment of each site’s emergency and non-emergency mental health processes; and, be it finally
RESOLVED, That the TBI/PTSD Committee submit an annual report to the VA&R Commission, and the National Executive Committee highlighting the results of the mental health survey and other initiatives towards suicide awareness at the VA and within Legion departments.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER BOLAND: This has the approval of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, your Subcommittee on Resolutions, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.
NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and second regarding Resolution No. 28. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Resolution No. 28 is adopted.
Resolution No. 29: Department of Veterans Affairs Establish an Opioid Treatment Program to Include an Opioid Detox Unit at Every VA Medical Center

Origin: Register Resolution No. 2745 (NC) Department Executive Committee

Submitted By: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

WHEREAS, Many veterans return home after serving in combat with unseen injuries and illnesses such as traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD); and

WHEREAS, These injuries are referred to as the “signature wounds” of Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) helped create a large population of opioid-addicted veterans by overprescribing painkillers for injuries; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, Congress passed and President Obama signed into law legislation that requires the VA adopt the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s “voluntary” opioid guidelines, which discourage the prescribing of opioids for chronic pain; and

WHEREAS, Over the past year, the VA has implemented these guidelines throughout its health-care system; and

WHEREAS, According to Dr. Carolyn Clancy, deputy undersecretary for health for organizational excellence at the Veterans Health Administration, the VA is working to increase treatment capacity nationwide and expand alternatives to the use of painkillers, such as acupuncture; and

WHEREAS, The department also is aggressively addressing the supply of prescription opioids; and

WHEREAS, Since 2012, the peak of opioid prescribing, according to VA they have reduced the number of its patients on long-term or high-dose painkillers by about a third; and

WHEREAS, The VA system’s treatment for opioid addicted veterans is limited; and

WHEREAS, In Fayetteville, North Carolina, home to Fort Bragg, the largest military installation in the U.S., 47% of opioid prescriptions are abused, according to an April study by Castlight Health Inc., a health enterprise software company; and

WHEREAS, The Fayetteville VA has an outpatient alcohol detox unit but no opioid detox unit; and

WHEREAS, The Fayetteville VA refers veterans to other local facilities for detoxification, the initial period of up to about a week when an addict comes off drugs, endures withdrawal and is stabilized; and

WHEREAS, The VA health system here has no residential addiction-treatment program, no inpatient opioid detoxification facility and only five doctors in a 21-county area able to dispense medications like buprenorphine, used to treat opioid-use disorder; and

WHEREAS, Addicted veterans can be referred to one of the 43 VA inpatient rehab centers around the country, which combined have 96 beds, according to a 2014 VA audit; and

WHEREAS, According to the audit, waits are usually longer than 30 days, which deters referrals, and beds often stay empty because of lack of staffing; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11 2017, That The American Legion urge Congress to provide adequate funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to address the opioid epidemic throughout the VA; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That an opioid treatment program be established at every VA medical center.
RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER BOLAND: This has the approval of your Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission and your Subcommittee on Resolutions, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second regarding Resolution No. 29. Are there any discussions? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Resolution 29 adopted. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your hard work and commitment. Thank you so much. The chair recognizes Past National Commander Comer.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COMER: Commander, I have a question for the chairman of VA&R. There is a resolution that I would like to see brought forward at the national convention that it's probably remiss in not getting it through today, but it's timely for the national convention.

There is an award that's given out throughout the nation, not by us but by the VA, and that is the Volunteer of the Year Award for all volunteers throughout the country. This year, we have an individual from Florida who is a Legionnaire, and it's probably the first time in probably 20 or 30 years that they've even recognized The American Legion as one of the volunteers; David Miller, I believe it is.

I would like to see David come to Washington and be presented that award at the same time the others receive the awards, the same arrangement for the awarding words and travel expenses, the same as Resolutions 7 and 8 here today, and with one exception. I think it would be nice if David, because it's given out by the VA, that he would get a tour of the Veterans Administration with one of our staff individuals that would take him over there and show him around to the VA. That's David Miller of Florida, he's a handicapped individual, he walks with two canes. But those people here that are from Florida, know the work that he does.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you, Commander Comer. Mr. Chairman, go forward.

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN BOZELLA: Thank you, again, commander. Past National Commander Comer, we will most certainly be glad to work on that and make this happen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: I now call on Randy Goodman, chairman of the Membership & Post Activities Committee, for the purpose of a report.

Oral Report: Membership & Post Activities Committee
Randy Goodman, Georgia, Chairman

National Commander Schmidt, members of the National Executive Committee, past national commanders, guests, and friends, good morning. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you this morning. I've always taken great pride in membership and addressing the subject matter so near and dear to my heart. You have a copy of my written report which highlights several key areas of the 2017 membership campaign. Please take some time to review it, and when you get a chance, you can discuss it with me at any time.

We will soon be celebrating 100 years of service to this country and the great impact The American Legion has had on this great nation. We need to move membership to the forefront of all of our efforts and place a priority on growth moving into the next 100 years. Maybe we have seen we've been too busy focusing on everything else that we forgot to place membership as our priority. But it has to start now. We need to have a desire to grow.

National Commander Schmidt recently sent out a message to our membership, equating our decline in membership over the last 25 years with the loss of $22 million and how it hurts our ability to support our many programs. We need to reverse a backward
trend that has gone on far too long. It's time to turn things around and move it forward. It can be done, but it will take a tremendous effort from all of us.

As we prepare to do the work, are you and your department up for the challenge? Are you willing to take a stand and challenge each other and your posts to make this happen?

So what do we need to do to make this happen? We need to place effort above everything else. Roll up our sleeves and focus on recruiting all eligible veterans and retaining those we now have. Post job fairs, post revitalizations, conduct open houses, involve yourself in the community, advertise your events, knock, knock, knock. Do whatever it takes to retain and bring new members into this great organization.

There are more than 14 million veterans who, right now, have the potential to become members of this organization. Fourteen million with the potential to become actively involved in more than 13,000 local posts. We have to ask them to become members and, of course, give them reasons as to why they should belong. There is a good chance we will not sign up all 14 million, but it should not prevent us from trying. There has to be a priority placed on recruiting new members and selling The American Legion's vision and mission. That's what the Gold and Silver Brigade winners are doing every day. But we need to increase the number of Legionnaires who are recruiting and earning these awards.

In 2015, we had 187 total Gold and Silver Brigade award winners, and they recruited nearly 11,000 new members into this organization. In 2016, there were 184 total winners, and they recruited above 11,000 members into this organization. This year, today, there are 26 members who have earned the Gold Brigade. There are another nine members who have earned the Silver Brigade, down considerably. Between these 35 members, they have recruited 1,820 new members into The American Legion. We are behind pace from the previous two years. It means we have some recruiting to do. The drop-off in the number of new members recruited is not only reflected in the Gold and Silver Brigade winners, but also in the overall number of members recruited this year. We are 15,000 new members behind the 2016 final new member total.

We cannot become dependent on just a few Legionnaires. There has to be more emphasis placed on recruiting if we're going to grow our membership base. Post and individual Legionnaires need to expose The American Legion to eligible veterans and ask them to join. That's what Gold and Silver Brigade winners are doing every day to earn their awards. They ask veterans to join and close the deal with their dues payment. I encourage each of you to just ask an eligible veteran to join our team, and it's not too late for this Legion year.

From now through June 30, we should encourage post commanders across this nation to earn the Post Excellence Award. The criteria is simple: One, attend district meetings and grow your post membership by at least one member over the previous year. Two, sponsor and actively participate in at least one primary youth program: Boys State, American Legion Baseball, oratorical, Boy Scouts, junior shooting sports, etc. Three, accomplish a community service project with members of The American Legion Family. Number four, accomplish a project supporting troops and veterans in your community. That can be done.

Another useful incentive to continue recruiting and retaining through June 30 is the 100 percent district commander's pin. District commanders can rally their post commanders, their team, to accomplish this goal. Communicate that to them.

There are other things that we can do as an outstanding organization to build upon our foundation. We need to educate the public on the programs within each of the Four Pillars and what The American Legion does in our communities across this great nation. It's time to expose The American Legion for what we do and who we are.

We need to educate potential members and show them the value of joining the ranks and becoming active members. We also cannot pass up opportunities to train and educate
our own members. There are many opportunities where we provide and conduct quality training for our volunteers, such as membership workshops, department and national conferences and conventions, district revitalizations, the LEAD program, Legion colleges.

And let me pause here to recognize Past National Commander Tom Bock who challenged the 2005 National American Legion College graduates to help make The American Legion a better organization. Thank you, Commander Bock, and the entire staff of the National American Legion College. You make a difference.

The training is not just limited to just these venues. We have to be creative on when and where we offer training. Maybe we conduct training at a district meeting or post meeting, at the NEC meeting, post a training video online or stream it, if you can. Let's revamp or retool the National Leadership and Information Conferences. We can take what is old and make it new. I am a product of the National Leadership and Information Conferences. I may not have become a post commander or a district commander or department commander and definitely not your Membership & Post Activities Committee chairman, had it not been for those venues. As you can see, a little passion here about membership and training. Because there has been a buzzword all week, "training." Continue with that, take that back with you. Training.

I believe our members and eligible veterans are folks who are more than just numbers and dollar signs. They are veterans who serve this country proudly, as you and I have. They need to be fully exposed to The American Legion. They live in communities our local posts are supporting through our programs. Their membership can help us carry out our objectives, but they need help from you. Members and posts are the lifeblood of The American Legion.

In the last two years, we have canceled 281 posts and only chartered 47, which leaves us with 234 communities where there are no American Legion posts to conduct programs under our Four Pillars of service. I think we can associate some of our lost membership with the cancellation of so many posts. It's not just the loss of posts, but not starting new ones when one goes away, not following demographics when they show us we can enhance our presence with vibrant new posts and members. We have to identify areas where the veterans are and where they're moving to, and charter new posts in those communities. That's why we need to expose The American Legion within existing communities and charter new posts in communities where there is no Legion presence.

All of us have the desire to accomplish this mission. Can we count on you to help carry this legacy forward? Commander Schmidt, thank you for allowing me this time to address the NEC. Before I close, I would like to ask National Commander Schmidt to join me at the podium.

...National Vice Commander Troiola assumed the chair.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN GOODMAN: Most of the time our membership awards are going to volunteers who have worked in the field. There is no change this year with the exception of one. The first two presentations are being given to two of our staff members for their membership efforts: Executive Director Verna Jones and National Adjutant Dan Wheeler. (Applause) Can we have both of them join us?

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You know, we've been talking membership pretty serious today, but I think it's time to have some fun about it and thank some people who have been leading by example. Our leaders are leading us here.

First, I want to start with our executive director out of our Washington, D.C. office, we all know her, Ms. Verna Jones. (Applause) Now, I'll tell you, we've got the national commander's membership pin; you just sign up three new members and you get a pin. Of course, if you sign up just one, in all probability you're going to hear from this national commander, either email or by phone.
I stepped off the airplane and down at the carousel, picking up my bags last Thursday in Louisville, Kentucky. I was standing there, and who appeared but our executive director. She said, "Commander, it's good to see you here." She said, "I want you to meet the newest member in The American Legion." And there was a young lady, a retired Army officer.

And I said, "Well, great." I shook her hand and welcomed her to our organization.

Verna said, "I met her on the airplane, and by the time we exited down the jet way and by the time we got down here to the carousel, I had her money." (Laughter)

And I tell you what, that's not all. We came back, drove up from Louisville. Of course, Verna was riding with us. We stopped on the roadside, pulled off to have a comfort break and stretch. We walked into a coffee shop to get a cup of coffee. As we were standing in line to get the coffee, in walked three servicemembers. One came in later, but two came in together. They were standing in line, and who were they standing behind? Verna Jones.

Verna chatted up a conversation, and Verna says, "Let me buy you all coffee."

They said, "Oh, no, no." That struck a conversation about, "We're on our way to an American Legion meeting." Lo and behold, before they left there, they had an application, that sergeant and that captain. Verna just asked, and that's all we have to do, is just ask. Of course, they were in uniform and that makes it a little easier.

Verna, first of all, I want to personally give to you the national commander pin. I know you've done more than three new members. You make it so easy. Verna, your national commander's pin. And also, certificate of appreciation to be presented to Verna Jones for your dedicated efforts and commitment to The American Legion by recruiting one or more new members, in this case three, at least, into our organization. A grateful American Legion appreciates and recognizes your commitment to carry the legacy forward. In witness whereof, this certificate is given under the hand of the national commander and duly attested by the national adjutant at Indianapolis, Indiana, on this day." Verna, you make us proud. (Applause)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JONES: Thank you, Commander. You know, for me it's easy because I can't imagine someone who served in the military that doesn't have the opportunity to be a part of this great organization. It just makes sense. I think that when we miss the opportunity to tell people about the wonderful things that we do, we miss some of our responsibility to our comrades. So recruiting members is just a part of what we do. Thank you for everything that you do for veterans every day, because you make it easy for the national headquarters and D.C. not only to recruit, but to do the things that we do for our comrades. So thank you. (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Verna, for your efforts, let us give you a shirt to brand more. Congratulations. (Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Well, we've got another member, another leader, another staff member of our organization that's been stepping out and recruiting new members as well, and that's our national adjutant, Dan Wheeler. (Applause)

I have conversations every so often with the national adjutant, and of course I get a spreadsheet about every two weeks of everybody that has just signed up one new member. So I saw his name on the list and I called him up and said, "Thank you for signing up one new member."

He said, "Well, I just signed up another one."

I said, "Well, thank you again." And before I knew it, he showed up on the list as signing up three new members. So Adjutant Dan, we appreciate not only your leadership, but your recruiting of new members into our organization. So I'd like to give to you the national commander membership pin for what you do.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: Thank you very much.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: And also a certificate of appreciation to you as well for your dedicated efforts and commitment to The American Legion by
recruiting one or more new members into our organization. A grateful American Legion appreciates and recognizes your commitment to carry the legacy forward. Of course, it's signed by you and I. (*Laughter*)

As leaders, we've got to lead by example, so congratulations, Adjutant Dan. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: Thank you, Commander. I've had the privilege of working here for 38 years, and I've worked with some of the finest people in the world, you people. I feel a little embarrassed taking this after Verna, because I know that Verna signed up over 70 members just last year. But I'm happy I've signed up somebody. I only go from my house to here and from here to my house, so I pretty much have to hit them in order to get them. (*Laugh and applause*) Thank you very much.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: I have one more I'd like to pass out this morning, if Past National Commander Comer would come forward. (*Applause*)

Commander Comer, we appreciate your efforts and your leadership and also your recruiter-ship. Of course, you, too, have earned the national commander's membership pin. So it's my pleasure to present this to you for a job well done. Of course, we're not done yet, we've got a few more days to this campaign.

Commander Comer, for your dedication, effort, and commitment to The American Legion by recruiting one or more new members into your organization. A grateful American Legion appreciates and recognizes your commitment to carry the legacy forward, and it is signed by the national commander and also the national adjutant. Sir, thank you for leading the way and showing the way as we enter the final days of our 2017 membership campaign.

We have a challenge. But you know what? Not only are we Legionnaires, but we're veterans. And regardless of what uniform we wore, what branch of service we served in, we always belong to an organization that had a mission that contributed to a greater mission. Regardless of the impossibilities, the detours, the naysayers, or "you can't do that" or "that will not work," we always found a way to complete the mission. Our mission is and always will be membership; it's the lifeblood of our organization. So Commander Comer, thank you for contributing to our mission and our legacy. (*Applause*)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COMER: Thank you, commander. I guess I'm not embarrassed anymore. (*Laughter*)

But the first one was easy, because that's my grandson who is serving in the United States Air Force. He's got out of high school, he's accepted to seven colleges, but he wanted to get into the Air Force. He's out at Travis Air Force Base right now, finishing his medical school. He'll be on to Turkey on June 25, so I'm very proud to him. When I went to him in San Antonio, Texas, and was there for his graduation from boot camp, he made me proud. He says, "Grandpa, I did it for you," because I was Air Force also. But then to go on, we're not through yet, we'll get more members. I want to thank you very much, and let's hope that all of you receive this wonderful award. (*Applause*)

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: We do have a lot more of those pins to give out.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN GOODMAN: Thank you, sir. That concludes my report. Thank you very much. (*Applause*) ...National Commander Schmidt resumed the chair.
2017 Membership Campaign Update

We are nearing the end of the 2017 membership campaign. Some departments have performed well throughout the year – others not so well. The 100% target date is May 10th in which we have one Department, Mexico, who has reached this goal. We expect several more to be closer to if not over 100% by May 10th.

We have four departments as of the 95% target date, whose membership has exceeded last year’s membership. No departments have exceeded 100% of their membership goal.

We are confident that if followed, the strategic plans that have been developed will continue to yield successful membership campaigns within the departments. So far, all the departments have met the requirement of developing and implementing their plans. We are now turning our attention to refining those plans in the upcoming months for the 2018 membership campaign. The membership committee will be meeting for the second time this year during the membership workshop to discuss and refine the current plan as needed.

District Revitalization has been a big part of the membership plan. Its primary purpose is to focus on DMS transfers, retention, training and development and post operations. It has a secondary purpose of signing up new members. We have seen volunteers who professed not to be membership people, go on and become top recruiters for their departments. Some of the participants have gone on to become gold and silver brigade winners. Posts that were once on the verge of closing their doors, now work feverishly to keep them open. The program is on pace for 2017 to assist over 2,000 posts!

DMS is a valuable tool to the membership program. Those members acquired each year are a great resource for posts’ membership growth. Members who now transfer into a local post as part of revitalization efforts, can be counted toward a department’s membership goal. The overall intent has always been to get these members into a local post. The renewal rate for those members who do transfer into a local post remains more than 20% higher than those who have not.

The final two updates are online renewals and DMS. The online renewal program continues to prove it was a smart idea to begin allowing our members to renew online. To date, 240,768 have renewed online. The goal for DMS is 122,000 and the current total is 94,589.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Commander, with pleasure, I move that we receive and file the report of the Membership & Post Activities Committee. We have no resolutions. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second. Are there any discussions? If not, all in favor, say aye. All opposed? The motion passed.

We will recess at this time and come back at 1:15. The flag of our nation in place. By the numbers: One, two. We're in recess.

...At 11:45 a.m., the National Executive Committee of the American Legion stood in recess.
Wednesday, May 10, 2017 Afternoon Session

At 1:15 p.m. the National Executive Committee was called to order by National Commander Schmidt.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: The National Executive Committee is back in session. At this time, I call on Chairman Walter Ivie of Texas for the Media & Communications Commission report.

Oral Report: Media & Communications Commission
Walter W. Ivie, Texas, Chairman

Thank you, Mr. Commander, and members of the National Executive Committee. You have my written report so I will keep my comments brief.

The Media & Communications Commission is pleased by the continued process and innovation demonstrated by Media & Communications Division staff members. They have worked hard to support other divisions, the Legion's many valuable programs and initiatives, while generating revenue and awareness of the organization.

The Web development team completed work on a significant upgrade to the national website during 2016. The results have exceeded expectations, as all key measurable metrics have shown significant increases. For example, the percentage of unique mobile visits to legion.org has grown by over 200 percent since the launch.

Right now, advertising in the magazine is nearly $20,000 ahead of budget, and we have seen steady growth in digital advertising. We are below cost in paper and distribution, while printing costs are expected to remain flat this year.

That said, we are concerned about the declining membership and its impact on magazine advertising. Staff members are working with peers in the Membership Division to provide support and tools to assist in recruitment efforts. Additionally, staff members are regularly meeting with representatives from James G. Elliott Company to develop new initiatives to grow revenue in the magazine. Among those ideas is a special keepsake edition of the magazine, celebrating the Legion's centennial, to be published in November 2018. That concludes my report. Thank you for your continued support, commander.

Report: Media & Communications Commission
May 10, 2017
Walter W. Ivie, Texas, Chairman

Operations overseen by the Media & Communications Commission are progressing smoothly. Media and Communications staff members are working together on high-profile targets to increase membership, revenue and awareness of The American Legion brand. Successes can be seen in record website traffic, digital advertising growth and e-newsletter program, among others.

The Media and Communications staff has been split once again from the Marketing Division, as a new Marketing Director has been appointed. Additionally, the Washington DC media relations staff has a director in place. The Indianapolis and Washington, DC offices are working together on various projects and regularly communicating to produce strong content from Washington staffers, publish it and distribute it through internal and external channels, raising awareness of the Legion brand and DC operations.

We are also working with the Marketing Division and First Degree to support projects like National Poppy Day, as well as working with other groups to support and promote the centennial celebration, the National American Legion Press Association and others.

Some examples of successes in the past six months or so:
Website: The redesign of the national website has been successful by all measurable metrics. Comparing April 2015-March 2016 to the previous 12-month period shows that page views increased by nearly 25 percent, while the percentage of unique visitors increased more than 30 percent and the number of visitors on mobile devices overall increased by more than 200 percent.

Digital advertising: Spurred on by the website makeover, The American Legion set a record for revenue gained from its website and e-newsletters during 2016. Overall, actual revenue was more than $580,000—an additional 21 percent increase from the previous year.

E-newsletters: The e-newsletter program continues to be a success with each of the 10 newsletters recording average open rates of between 25 and 40 percent, far superior to the industry standard of 14 percent. Additionally, the number of subscribers grew from 1.11 million in December 2015 to more than 1.45 million, as of December 2016.

Social media: Staff members have begun using Facebook Live to broadcast events live to our audience, including Washington Conference and the 2017 Veterans Inaugural Ball—A Salute to Heroes. The Commander’s Call Facebook Live video generated 20,000 views on Facebook—a significant increase from the way we previously handled livestream events, which rarely exceeded 100 viewers.

Magazine: Through the first three months of the 2017 budget, advertising revenue was up against the projection. Additionally, staff members are meeting regularly with our advertising vendor, the James G. Elliott Co., to develop new strategies and concepts aimed at keeping advertising strong as membership numbers threaten to drop below the 2 million mark.

Overall, The American Legion Media & Communications Division is running roughly $100,000 under the projected budget surplus of $129,226 for this point in the year. Part of the reason for being over budget is due to being 12 magazine pages over. This was created by adding pages for higher-than-expected advertising sales and the addition of the Travel section.

Through the June issue of the magazine, advertising is up $19,333 over budget. Through March, advertising on the national website stood at $61,022, ahead of last year but $1,477 under the budgeted goal, while The American Legion Online Update e-newsletter was also ahead of last year with sales of $57,150 against a budgeted goal of $75,000.

Printing costs are expected to remain flat in 2017, based on price reductions received from RR Donnelly while negotiating the current contract. Paper costs are under budget by roughly $33,000. Currently, the magazine is slightly under budget for postage costs.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Commander, motion to receive and file the Media & Communications Commission report, we have no resolutions. Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion, you heard the second regarding the Media & Communications Commission report. Are there any discussions? If not, all in favor say aye. Opposed? Commission report accepted.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for all your hard work. At this time, I’d like to call on Past National Commander William Detweiler, from the Department of Louisiana, for the purpose of a report on the TBI/PTSD Committee.

Oral Report: TBI/PTSD Committee

Past National Commander William M. Detweiler, Louisiana, Chairman

Thank you, commander, ladies and gentlemen of the NEC, and guests. You know, a few years ago we developed and established a post-traumatic stress and TBI committee. It
started out as an ad hoc committee, and it was formed to review the then-current treatments that were being used by the Department of Veterans Affairs in the treatment of traumatic brain injury and posttraumatic stress. Our concern as an organization at that time when the committee was formed was the overuse of drugs in the treatment of post-traumatic stress and TBI.

We continue to be concerned about the high suicide rate of the veterans returning from deployment, and the need for the VA to step up in its ability to provide proper mental health care for these individuals. One of the statistics I've heard recently, and I'm not going to go into the exact number, but apparently, it's a great percentage of the suicides that take place on a daily basis by our veterans; these are not veterans that have any contact with the VA. A good number of those veterans, on a daily basis that commit suicide, have never been to the VA and have no contact with the VA. That's an alarming situation.

We, as a committee, are authorized to meet once a year, we usually try to meet at the Washington Conference or a conference such as this, because we want to keep the cost down. We're pretty good about that, we're concerned about that. At the same time, we're concerned about the work that we're doing.

We began by examining and reviewing the evidence-based treatments that were widely in use, which consisted of a lot of drug use, mental health therapy sessions, and such. We also looked at the treatments that are so-called alternative medical treatments, such as hyperbaric oxygen and other treatments of that kind. Those also consist, if you've heard stories of people working with animals and that sort of thing, it helped a lot of these guys with post-traumatic stress, gals with post-traumatic stress.

Over the years, the committee has been briefed on a number of therapies by experts from the VA, DOD, experts using alternative therapies, and we even had a briefing early on about the difference in the way our troops are handled following a deployment and the way Canada handles their troops when they come out of a combat situation.

We are planning to hold a major symposium next spring that will talk about the advances that have been made, what needs to be done, and how can we continue to get Congress to properly fund research and look at these additional therapies.

New discoveries and accepted evidence-based therapies are coming online, and what were once thought to be alternative treatments are becoming more and more acceptable in the medical community. For example, hyperbaric oxygen is something kind of close to me in that my wife had to go through it because of the fact that she needed oral surgery. She has lymphoma. In order to have the oral surgery, she had to take 30 dives of oxygen therapy to improve the blood flow in the tissue to ensure that it would be successful, that the implant would be successful, which it is working.

Also, although the VA does not really authorize it, we know that in the two Marine Corps bases on either the Atlantic or Pacific, that therapy has been offered, I'm sure it's still being offered, if you want the therapy. The doctor can't prescribe it, but the Marine is offered the opportunity, if he or she would like to have the therapy, to have the therapy. It's kind of a crazy situation. But for years, that type of thing has been called voodoo medicine, and that's unfortunate. Because like we are learning with medical marijuana, it works for some, it doesn't work for others. We have also learned over the years in the briefings that this committee has had, that there is no one therapy that will treat everybody. There's no such thing as a cookie-cutter method of medical treatment for post-traumatic stress and TBI.

So we continue on a daily basis. The staff has been very good, Verna and her staff, and Lou Celli. They are very good in making sure that the committee is informed. We get a lot of information on a daily basis, a lot of studies, a lot of articles, and we continue to try to update ourselves. As we prepare for the symposium next spring, we will be doing that through conference calls, emails, et cetera, to try to develop the best and work toward
a very meaningful symposium that will be not only of value to our membership, but value to the medical community, VA, DOD, and others that may be interested in attending, it will be open.

You have three resolutions that were presented to you by the VA&R Commission earlier today, and they concerned suicide treatment. One of the other things that is uppermost in our minds is the care of our caregivers, proper education and proper care of the caregivers. Because of you, who have had the opportunity to know young men and women who have post-traumatic stress or TBI, you know the effect that it takes on the family.

And one of the other emphasis of the committee has been to encourage VA and DOD not to treat just the veteran; you've got to treat that whole family. You've got to work with that whole family to get the best that you can get, cutting-edge medicine, cutting-edge care and treatment for that whole family, and that's what we're all about.

So we'll keep you informed, and I'm sure that you'll be hearing more and more about the symposium that's planned. Mr. Commander, that's my report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Commander, motion to receive and file the report of the TBI/PTSD Committee. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second regarding the TBI/PTSD report. Are there any discussions? There being none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Report accepted.

I now call on Robert E. Newman of Indiana, chairman of the Internal Affairs Commission, for the purpose of a report.

Oral Report: Internal Affairs Commission
Robert E. Newman, Indiana, Chairman

Mr. Commander, thank you for the opportunity to serve as your chairman. Members of the National Executive Committee, my fellow Legionnaires, ladies and gentlemen. You have my report of our actions and deliberations before you. I draw your attention to the report and the great work that the Sons of The American Legion have accomplished, and I commend every department for supporting this great program. On a special note, this weekend alone, the Sons donated over $110,000 for the Child Welfare Foundation, bringing their totals to nearly half-a-million dollars this year alone. It's a great job. (Applause)

You all know what The American Legion Riders do for developing awareness of the Legacy Scholarship. I want to highlight the tremendous jobs they did of raising money on the ride to Cincinnati. The $1.3 million they raised this year was an all-time high in the 11-year history of the ride. Our Riders deserve our appreciation also. Equally important is what the 2,000 national chapters have accomplished back in our communities. This year the Legacy Run to the 99th National Convention will start in Dodge City, Kansas, on August 12, and complete the run to Reno on August 17, after 1,400 miles. Soon the complete route will be on the Web. Our planners are finalizing the route as we speak. This year's ride will have breathtaking scenery but will be very demanding. We thank the states and their many volunteers involved with this endeavor for their cooperation and support.

Now, the one thing I keep hearing in the halls and in the meetings is the word "training." In an Internal Affairs Commission meeting, I was definitely impressed by what the staff has put together. A white paper has been placed on your desk for your information. Not only have they accurately assessed the training currently being provided by national, more important, they have painted a long-term vision on where we should take this training
in the future. We need to develop more online training, more short YouTube how-to videos, and make our leadership and assessment tools available for training and delivered directly to our blue cap Legionnaires.

A great emphasis has been placed on train the trainer, allowing us to take our messages to the levels where we most desperately need it. Not only will this assist our domestic departments, more importantly, it will get to the remote locations in our foreign departments. This training will be valuable to both the Legion and the SAL. We need to engage, educate, and empower our members. This training will accomplish that.

Will it be ready tomorrow? No. It is still in the development phase, and we are now going through the resourcing process. The American Legion Extension Institute, as we know it today, either online or taught in our departments, will be branded as the American Legion Basic Training Course. The acronym ALEI will now take on a new name, The American Legion Education Institute. The new ALEI will encompass all online training being developed, from basic training to post leadership and vision development.

The American Legion Basic Training will now be free to all active Legion, Auxiliary, and SAL members. New members will be directed to gain access to the course. This will assist the engagement of our members and start the process of education and empowering them on our programs. This will increase retention, develop stronger posts, and develop leaders.

Recently we sent out our first training newsletter. It went to all leadership electronically. A hard copy is now on your desk. If you did not receive an email copy, you can go to legion.org/newsletters and sign up, or just see somebody from Internal Affairs and they can assist you in signing up.

The next immediate step we are taking is working with Media & Communications to develop a training tab on the splash page of the Legion website. This will be one-stop-shopping for all American Legion training.

My next topic is the National Emergency Fund. We have a little over $5 million in the fund. Individuals can receive up to $3,000 and posts can receive up to $10,000. The spring storms are just starting, and we are positioned to provide our members and their families with immediate assistance. Thank you again for your support for these very critical programs.

Mr. Commander, I submit my report and our resolutions for action of the National Executive Committee, with my deepest respect and appreciation for the support and encouragement we enjoy from this body. Thank you.

Report: Internal Affairs Commission
May 8-9, 2017
Robert E. Newman, Indiana, Chairman

Chairman Robert E. Newman (IN), called the Internal Affairs Commission to order at 9:00 a.m., May 8, 2017, and at 8:30 a.m., May 9, 2017, in the Herman G. Harrington Conference Room, National Headquarters, Indianapolis, Indiana.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION (ANNUAL SPRING MEETINGS REPORT)
Submitted by Jeff C. Frain (AZ), National Commander, Sons Of The American Legion

One hundred seventy four National Executive Committeemen, Alternates, Commission and Committee members attended the 2017 Spring National Executive Committee meeting representing 45 Detachments. Thirty-six guests also attended.

As of May 4, 2017, we have a total reported membership of 338,543. This is 92.01% of our 100% target and 84.6% of our membership goal for 2017 of 400,000 members.
This year we remained a strong supporter of the Child Welfare Foundation, raising as of April 28, 2017, $358,389.55. During the National Executive Committee meeting an additional $111,457 was donated to the Foundation, with more coming prior to May 31st. The total, after all donations this weekend, is over $469,846, 110.5% of goal ($425,000.)

The SAL is also focused on assisting The American Legion through donations to the National Emergency Fund. During the National Executive Committee meeting this past weekend $9,850 was donated to the NEF Fund, and an additional $12,591 was donated to various American Legion charities.

In addition to donations for CWF and NEF, our members presented the following donations: The Endowment Fund $1,000, Operation Comfort Warriors $6,940 and Legacy Scholarship Fund $300. Donations received from across the country, without the resolutions, totaled $97,797.

The Member Training and Development Committee continued training our members with the National Management Institute (N.M.I.) where we now have 353 S.A.L. leaders graduating all three phases of this Management training. The N.M.I. is a three-course seminar that encompasses Communication Skills and Public Appearances, Time Management and Personal Administration, Building Action Plans for results, Driving for Results, Develop Oneself, Acting with Integrity and Thinking Strategically.

Eleven resolutions were presented to the SAL National Executive Committee for consideration. Four were recommended for adoption, two were received and filed, two were held for study and three were held by the Commissions.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION (STRATEGIC PLANNING AD-HOC COMMITTEE)

PNC William Sparwasser (MD) provided an update on the SAL Strategic Planning Ad-Hoc Committee. A brief review of the National Level of The Sons of The American Legion from a business perspective in regards to overall functionality was provided to the Internal Affairs Commission. The committee has made great headway in their preliminary discussions and provided an overview (listed below) of issues to be examined and explored during their tenure.

- Complete a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities & Threats)
- Review the need for department driven training using volunteers.
- Review the following member level options for possible development:
  - pay dues on-line
  - PUFL
  - On-line member profile access
  - Track and manage training and involvement with special programs
  - Establish standard operating procedures, administrative guidelines, and job descriptions and training for all national officers, chairman, vice chairman and members of committees and commissions.
- Review financial impacts and make budgetary recommendations.

COMMISSION UPDATES

The Commission was also briefed on the redesigned 2018 three-part annual membership cards for both The American Legion (TAL) and Sons of The American Legion (SAL).

New fields added to the national portion of the card include: phone number, gender, date of birth, email, and branch of service. These changes will also allow direct reporting of address updates not available in prior years. Since this is the only form that is received
at national annually for every member of The American Legion and Sons, these improvements will greatly enhance record keeping. There were some minor updates to the department card that correspond to the national portion.

The Commission was further briefed on current training developed at the national level of the organization and new training initiatives that are either developed or planned on (National Training Newsletter; Department American Legion College modules; District Training-in-a-Box; Post Training-in-a-Box; Training Drop-Down Tab on thesplash page of Legion.org; and an array of post leadership modules) was presented to the commission. It was announced the current American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI) will be renamed American Legion Education Institute Basic Training Course and will be made available free of charge to current American Legion Family members. The full report can be found in the Training Subcommittee report that follows.

The artist, Matt Hall, who was commissioned to paint a Global War on Terror painting, presented two charcoal drawings for the Commission to consider to be hung in the National Executive Committee room. The commission selected a drawing with modification. The painting is scheduled to be completed by May 2018.

This part of the report consists of the following sections: Standing Committee Reports (Section I); Sub-Committee and Staff Reports (Section II); and Actions on Assigned Resolutions (Section III).

I. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEE

The Constitution and By-Laws Committee met in Indianapolis, Indiana at 8:30 A.M. on May 8, 2017. Present was Hon. Vincent M. Gaughan (IL), Chairman.

There being no business to come before the Committee, the Committee adjourned.

B. MEMBERSHIP & POST ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Randy Goodman (GA), Chairman of the Membership and Post Activities Committee reported on status of membership programs and results of their annual planning session held in January 2017. Chairman Goodman presented the written recommendations from the January Annual Membership Planning Session to the Commission for acceptance, which is attached.

2017 M&PA COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS RESOLUTIONS:

The following resolutions were discussed by the committee and the actions that were taken are as followed:

Resolution No. 189 (Convention 2016): REJECTED
“Post Credit For Members Gain Through Revitalization”

Resolution No. 195 (Convention 2016): RECEIVED AND RECORDED
“Membership Chairman Pins”

Resolution Submitted by M&PA Committee: RECOMMEND APPROVAL
“Transfer of 1st Year DMS Members”

2017 MEMBERSHIP DISCUSSION:

The following topics were briefed and discussed:
1. The importance and current measurable objectives are Recruitment, Retention, Revitalization, Reconnect and Brand Awareness.
   - Refer to Marketing Division for proper verbiage of acceptance to change “Brand Awareness” to possibly “Brand Image”
2. National Poppy Day briefly discussed by Scott Miller, Deputy Director, Marketing.
3. MyLegion Statistics and Renewals briefly discussed by Joe Gallagher, Deputy Director, IT.
4. District/County Commander Book and Video to be utilized and available through all outlets.
6. A Sub-Committee was created to discuss and review the National Membership Record Report. The Sub-Committee is Gary Schacher (NY), Chairman, Marvin Sandbek (OK), David Riley, Sr. (NY) and Walter Geraghty, Jr. (TX).
7. Strategic Plan (briefed in the following areas):
   - Marketing, Media & Communications
   - National Security
   - DMS/Fundraising
   - Growing Membership

AWARDS PROGRAM:
The committee reviewed and discussed the National Membership Awards Points Manual. It was recommended that a Reconnect Form be added to the National Membership Awards Points Manual as well as the Department Adjutants Administrative Manual.

THE AMERICAN LEGION STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW:
No changes were made to The American Legion Strategic Plan for Sustained Membership Growth.

DATES FOR 2018 & 2019:
2018 January Planning Session – January 12-13, 2018
2018 Membership Workshop – August 8-11, 2018
2019 January Planning Session – January 11-12, 2019
2019 Membership Workshop – August 7-10, 2019

C. AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The American Legion Riders Advisory Committee met on May 7, 2017 from Noon to 5pm in the Michigan Room, Sheraton Hotel. Chairman Robert B. Sussan (VA) presided over a meeting that was quite energetic with a number of ongoing issues to be addressed and researched by committee members. Each committee member and consultant are assigned Departments within geographical regions. Goals are to:
- Constantly impart on our respective area riders a mentality of “Legion First”
- Reinforce the image riders are imparting upon the public wearing the Rider vest with American Legion logo branding – this is paramount in maintaining the principles and goals upon which the riders were formed.
- Constantly reinforce SAFETY on all activities involving The American Legion Riders.

The American Legion Riders are, as a program, uniquely positioned within the departments and posts to have maximum impact on:
- Brand Awareness
• Brand Recognition
• Brand Marketing
• Membership

The Riders have a proven record of a remarkable impact (history on fundraising for the Legacy Scholarship Fund, highlighted by the past three years of $1.3 million per year) on fundraising and overall volunteer participation. The daily activities of Riders across the country bring credit to the organization and are an invaluable tool for our organization’s “content marketing.”

Currently, there are reportedly over 2,000 chapters in excess of 120,000 riders. At our meeting yesterday, the committee has taken on the task of refining those numbers and will attempt to ascertain an accurate number of not only active Rider Chapters, but also participating members from all facets of The American Legion Family.

**Legacy Runs** – Last year, in cooperation with the then Marketing, Media and Communications, the Legacy Run planning team worked with the MMC committee to optimize our public awareness and brand recognition to the public through print, radio and television advertising both before and during the actual Legacy Run. Tools used by chapters throughout the organization to include social media, both at the local and national level have positively impacted the program and our organization.

The American Legion National Legacy Run is a complicated logistical challenge which takes a tremendous amount of time to plan and execute. Foremost in not only the planning stages but also the execution stage is Safety of the Riders. At times these Safety concerns can conflict with media promotion and regardless of the issue, Safety will always win out.

We are in the final planning stages of Legacy Run 2017 to Reno with some new and improved enhancements to both planning and execution of the ride. This year’s run starts on August 12 in Fort Dodge, Kansas to Pueblo, Colorado to Grand Junction, Colorado to Richfield, Utah to Ely, Nevada to Fallon, Nevada and finally into Reno on August 17, 2017.

We discussed Centennial Legacy Runs to include rides traversing The American Legion Highway at both ends of the 100th Anniversary Celebration (2018 & 2019.) Plans are being discussed with Media & Communications and the newly formed Marketing Division. Again, of primary concern is SAFETY FIRST.

In our effort to constantly keep “Legion First” in our program, training is being instituted for Riders groups across the country. Of particular note is the Department of Florida where this past January, they held their 1st Annual Summit. Over 330 Riders participated in a two-day event where American Legion programs and principles were taught. This included awareness training on all of the Legion’s programs, scholarships and the Four Pillars. This was embraced by the Riders who were totally engaged and already there are indications that the 2nd Annual Summit next year has interest from over 500+ riders.

We are proud to be a program that embraces all branches of The American Legion Family and will continue to strive to make a positive impact on the Community, State and Nation while riding (safely) and promoting the principles and Four Pillars of The American Legion.
II. SUBCOMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

A. TROPHIES, AWARDS & CEREMONIALS [TAC] SUBCOMMITTEE

The Trophies, Awards & Ceremonials Subcommittee was called to order by Chairman James Bojanowski (NY) at 10:45 a.m. on Monday, May 8, 2017, to review the 2016 Official and 2017 Unofficial Awards, as well as the Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials manual. A motion was made and passed to accept the new publication as presented. Information on these awards is attached to this report.

Recommendations

The subcommittee reviewed the resolutions pertaining to the National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial, the National Global War on Terror Memorial, and the Gold Star Mothers National Monument. All were recommended for approval without financial support from the National Headquarters. The subcommittee recommended the following 2016 Official and 2017 Unofficial awards for approval.

Official Awards Approved For 2016:

The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal Award: Awarded annually to an individual(s) or organization for their outstanding service to the nation and to the programs of The American Legion by nomination by department action or by the National Commander.

RECIPIENT: 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard)

American Legion Baseball Graduate of The Year Award: Presented to the major league baseball player who played American Legion Baseball as a teenager and best exemplifies the principles and purposes of the program in sportsmanship, citizenship, general good conduct, integrity and playing ability.

RECIPIENT: Brian Dozier – Minnesota Twins, Post 49, Tupelo, MS

Bob Feller American Legion Pitching Award: Awarded annually to that American Legion Baseball player recording the greatest number of strikeouts during the regional tournaments and World Series of American Legion Baseball.

RECIPIENT: Gerald Hein, Post 4, Kennewick, WA (24 strikeouts)

Commissioner of Baseball Trophy: Awarded annually at the Major League World Series to that baseball team which becomes the National Champion as a result of playing in The American Legion World Series.

RECIPIENT: Texarkana Post 58, Texarkana, AR

Dr. Irvin L. “Click” Cowger Memorial R.B.I. Award: Awarded annually to The American Legion Baseball player who is credited with the most runs batted in by the official score keepers of the respective regional tournaments and World Series of American Legion Baseball.

RECIPIENT: Angelo Bortolin, Post 82, San Mateo, CA (16 RBI’s)

Ford C. Frick Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department having within its jurisdiction the runner-up team in the National Finals of The American Legion Baseball program.

RECIPIENT: Rowan County Post 342, Salisbury, NC
The Frank N. Belgrano, Jr. Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department which has rendered the most outstanding service during the year to the program of the Boy Scouts of America.

RECIPIENT: Department of New York

George W. Rulon Baseball Player of the Year: A Plaque is presented to recipient by appropriate official upon conclusion of The American Legion Baseball World Series. Citation is presented to recipient at a special Hall of Fame ceremony at Cooperstown, NY, the following summer.

RECIPIENT: Will Smith, Post 58, Texarkana, AR

The Howard P. Savage, Jr. Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department having the baseball team which becomes the Champion as a result of playing in The American Legion World Series.

RECIPIENT: Texarkana Post 58, Texarkana, AR

Jack Williams Memorial Leadership Award: Awarded annually to the manager and coach of the national championship team, as representative of the adult leadership Jack Williams stressed during his lifetime.

RECIPIENT(s): Texarkana, AR: Team Manager – Dane Peavy; Assistant Coaches – Reid Peavy, Jonathan Boucher, Steve Goodheart, Jonathan Orr

James F. Daniel, Jr. Memorial Sportsmanship Award: Awarded to The American Legion Baseball player participating in the World Series that represents the principle of good sportsmanship emphasized by the program.

RECIPIENT: Logan Vidrine, Texarkana, AR

American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Trophy: Awarded annually in four categories to the top performing Individual and Team in the Sporter and Precision categories competing in the annual USA Shooting National Junior Olympic Air Rifle Championship who are members of clubs and teams affiliated with The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program.

RECIPIENT(s):

Precision Team: Minnesota Centershots, Post 102, Anoka, MN – Abigail Buesseler, Elizabeth Ewert, Kamilla Kisch, Samantha Peterson

Precision Individual: Sarah Osborn, Patriot Shooting Club of Virginia, Post 233, Varina, VA

Sporter Team: Freeport HS NJROTC, Post 139, Freeport, IL – Alyssa Hornung, Lindsay Strohacker, Emma Thompson, Elizabeth Woitynek

Sporter Individual: Levi Carlson, National Ford HS

The American Legion Baseball “Slugger” Trophy: Plaque is presented to recipient, or designated representative, by appropriate official upon the conclusion of The American Legion Baseball World Series.

RECIPIENT: Tyler Villaroman, San Mateo, CA (.475 batting average)
Ralph T. O’Neil Education Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department within the continental limits in the United States showing the greatest Americanism activity in use of The American Legion School Medal Awards.

RECIPIENT: Department of Colorado

The American Legion Baseball “Big Stick” Award: Awarded annually to that American Legion Baseball player having the highest total number of bases as determined by the official score keepers of the respective regional tournaments and World Series of American Legion Baseball.

RECIPIENT: Zach Luckey, Omaha, NE and Angelo Bortolin, San Mateo, CA (27 total bases each)

Spafford National Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department of The American Legion having within its jurisdiction the winner of the National High School Oratorical Contest.

RECIPIENT: Department of Washington

Francis M. Redington Sportsmanship Award: Awarded annually to the athlete competing in The American Legion Junior Air Rifle National Championship who best exemplifies good sportsmanship and fair play.

RECIPIENT: Jimmy Ellefson (Post 374), Des Moines North MCJROTC, Des Moines, IA

Daniel J. O’Connor Award: Awarded annually to that Department attaining the greatest number of percentage points compiled from information contained in the Consolidated Post Reports and supporting Department narrative. (Originally named the William Randolph Hearst Trophy)

RECIPIENT: Department of Virginia

The American Legion and Scouting “Square Knot” Award: This award is designed to recognize American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion members who are actively involved in the Scouting program. This award is not meant to be a selective or limited award, but one that is available to any American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion member who completes the requirements for the award. The Award is meant to recognize dedication and work required by an American Legion, American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion member to assist in furthering the Scouting program in The American Legion.


The American Legion National Education Award: Awarded annually to an individual, group or organization that has promoted the education programs of The American Legion, including the promotion of “Need A Lift?” corresponding to the goals of The American Legion or has promoted or advanced education programs at the national level.

RECIPIENT: Sidney T. Ellington, Ph.D.
The American Legion Canadian Friendship Award: Awarded by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee at such times and places as may be consistent and appropriate. It shall be awarded to specific individuals who shall be war veterans within the accepted meaning of the term and members of authentic veterans' organization in Canada. It shall be awarded to such individuals in recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans' affairs and in the development and perpetuation of the spirit of international good will and comradeship between the United States and Canada and between their veterans' organization and The American Legion.


**INDIVIDUAL**– None Awarded

Department Award for 100% Post Children & Youth Reporting: Awarded annually to those Departments which achieve 100% of Posts indicating Children & Youth activity on Consolidated Post Reports.

RECIPIENT: Departments of Montana, Rhode Island, Virginia and Wisconsin

National Employer of Veterans Award Recipient(s): Awarded to an employer in recognition of outstanding achievement in the employment and retraining of veterans.

RECIPIENT(s): Category I Operation: Job Ready Veterans, Indianapolis, IN

2015 Category II Stresscon Corporation, Colorado Springs, CO

Winners Category III New York Shipping Association, Inc., Edison, NJ

Note: The 2016 National Employer of Veterans Award Recipient(s) will not be announced until 2017 National Convention.

National Employment Service Award Recipient(s): Awarded in three categories: Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) of the Year; Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) of the Year; Employment Service (ES) Office of the Year.

RECIPIENT(s) LVER of the Year: Nancy Brown, Wausau, WI

2015 DVOP of the Year: Dwight A. Butler, Fayetteville, NC

Winners: ES Office of the Year: Fargo Customer Service Office, Fargo, ND

Note: The 2016 National Employment Service Award Recipient(s) will not be announced until 2017 National Convention.

Enhance the Lives of Disabled Persons Award Recipient: The program is a joint project between the National Organization & the AETNA Company, to award those Posts that enhance the lives of disable persons by providing opportunities for their participation in community activities.

RECIPIENT(s) 2015 Winner

Outdoor Freedom Network, Broaddus, TX

Note: The 2016 Enhance the Lives of Disabled Persons Award Recipient will not be announced until 2017 National Convention.
National Employer of Older Worker Award Recipient: The program provides an Employer of Older Worker Award for a company that consistently hires older workers, especially veterans and serves as an inspirational recognition of a company with a record of support and commitment to the hiring of America’s older workers.

RECIPIENT(s): First Transit, Houston, TX
2015 Winner

Note: The 2016 National Employer of Older Worker Award Recipient will not be announced until 2017 National Convention.

National Department History Contest Awards: Awarded annually at the Fall Meeting of the National Executive Committee to those contestants entered in the National Department History Contest having submitted the One-Year History Narrative or Yearbook of the Department which best meets the standards established for that particular competition.

RECIPIENT(s): Department of North Carolina (One-Year Narrative History)
Department of Nebraska (One-Year Yearbook History)

National Post History Contest Awards: Awarded annually to those contestants entered in the National Post History Contest deemed by a duly authorized panel of judges to have submitted the One-Year History of the Post which best meets the standards established for the competitions.

RECIPIENT(s): Pony Express Post 359, St. Joseph, MO (One-Year Narrative History)
Julius L. Shryer Post 430, Durant, IA (One-Year Yearbook History)

International Amity Award: Awarded by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the National Executive Committee at such times and places as may be consistent and appropriate. It shall be awarded to specific individuals who shall be war veterans within the accepted meaning of the term and members of an authentic veteran organization established in the territory of any of the nations associated as war-time allies of the United States of America. It shall be awarded to such individuals in recognition of outstanding service in the field of veterans affairs and for service and contributions made in the development of international good will and comradeship between their organization and The American Legion.

RECIPIENT(s): None awarded for 2015

Distinguished Public Service Award: Awarded annually by the National Commander with the advice and consent of the Commander’s Advisory Committee at the time of the annual Washington Conference. It may be awarded to one or more person(s) of the United States Congress.

RECIPIENT(s): Senator Johnny Isakson (GA)

The Arthur D. Houghton Sons of The American Legion Trophy: Awarded annually to that Detachment of Sons of The American Legion in each of five membership categories (I – 200-1,000 members; II - 1,001-3,000 members; III - 3,001-6000 members; IV – 6001-12,000 members; V – 12,001 or more), each of said Detachments attaining the greatest percentage of increase over previous year’s membership when compared with all Detachments in its category.

RECIPIENT(s) Category I Detachment of Nevada
### General Henri Gouraud Trophy
Awarded annually to that Department in each of six categories established by the National Membership and Post Activities Committee, each of said Department having been the first in its respective category to attain or exceed its nationally assigned membership quota (effective 1986).

**RECIPIENT(s):**

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<td>Category V</td>
<td>None qualified</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category VI</td>
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### General John J. Pershing Honor Award
Awarded annually to that Department having the greatest percentage of its posts receiving the Honor Ribbon for having 100 percent or more of the post’s previous year’s membership enrolled for the coming year by December 31, and having reported such achievement to National Headquarters by not later than January 31.

**RECIPIENT:** Department of North Dakota

### Henry D. Lindsley Trophy
Awarded annually to the Department attaining the highest percentage of membership over its preceding year's membership by March 31.

**RECIPIENT:** None awarded for 2016

### The American Legion National Recruiter of the Year
Awarded annually to the individual certified with the highest number of new members recruited from among all of the departments.

**RECIPIENT:** Patricia Liddell, Department of Georgia

### Jerry L. Hedrick Membership Award
Awarded annually to the Department, not included among the several state Departments or the Department of the District of Columbia, attaining the highest percentage of membership as of March 31, over its preceding year’s membership.

**RECIPIENT:** Department of Philippines

### O. L. Bodenhamer Trophy
Awarded annually to that Department designated to lead the parade at the time of the ensuing National Convention.

**RECIPIENT:** Department of Georgia

### The American Legion Air Force Academy Award
Awarded annually to that cadet of the graduating class at the Air Force Academy who demonstrates the highest proficiency in all academic subjects.

**RECIPIENT:** Cadet Jeffrey R. Herrala

### The American Legion Coast Guard Academy Award
Awarded annually to that cadet of the graduating class of the United States Coast Guard Academy who is considered to have personally excelled in athletics.

**RECIPIENT:** Ensign Meghan Fornaro
The American Legion Merchant Marine Academy Award: Awarded annually to that graduating midshipman of the Merchant Marine Academy, enrolled in the Pre-Commissioning Seminar Course, and selected by the Academy Faculty, as achieving the highest grade pertaining to a 1,000-word composition dealing with the subject of National Security.

RECIPIENT: Midshipman Laurel Anne Ryback

The American Legion Military Academy Award: Awarded annually to cadet of the graduating class at the United States Military Academy with the highest standing in Chemistry.

RECIPIENT: Cadet Brian Bui

The American Legion Naval Academy Award: Awarded annually to that graduating midshipman of the United States Naval Academy who stands highest in those English, History and Government courses taken to complete a Foreign Affairs major.

RECIPIENT: Ensign Ethan Dalton

National Commander’s Blood Donor Awards: Presented to departments in different sized categories for participating in The American Legion’s Blood Donor Program.

RECIPIENT(s): Category I

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</tbody>
</table>
RECIPIENTS(s): Category VI Departments with less than 10,000 members:
Post Participation: No Submission
Individual Participation: No Submission

The American Legion National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award: To recognize an outstanding law enforcement officer as selected from Department law enforcement officer winners for distinguished on-and off-duty service. The accomplishments for which the award is presented shall have been in accordance with, or in furtherance of, established American Legion policies or programs and it shall have contributed to the preservation of law and order as well as the American way of life.
RECIPIENT: Sheriff David J. Mahon, Effingham County Sheriff’s Office, Effingham, Illinois

The American Legion National Firefighter of the Year Award: To recognize an outstanding firefighter as selected from Department for distinguished on-and off-duty service. The accomplishments for which the award is presented shall have been in accordance with, or in furtherance of, established American Legion policies or programs and it shall have contributed to the preservation of law and order as well as the American way of life.
RECIPIENT: Matt Brown, Lakeland Fire Department, Lakeland, Florida

Paul H. Griffith ROTC Trophy: Awarded annually to that Department giving the highest degree of support to the ROTC program within its jurisdiction, based on criteria drawn up by the National Security Commission.
RECIPIENT(s): Departments of Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana and North Dakota

The American Legion Fourth Estate Award: Awarded to press, radio, TV, or other communications media; to associations of same, to owners, executive heads or staff members; such award to be in recognition of outstanding service to community, state, or nation, which service shall have been in accordance with or the furtherance of established American Legion policies and programs.

The American Legion National Commander’s Public Relations Award: Awarded to an outstanding individual and/or organization for distinguished public service in the field of communications.
RECIPIENT: ESPN

The American Legion Patriot Award: Awarded to an outstanding citizen who has demonstrated a profound and exceptional commitment to military personnel and their families.
RECIPIENT(s): Bernard L. Marie

The American Legion Spirit of Service Award: Awarded annually by the Department of Defense and the six military departments that have identified the most
outstanding men and women that have received press coverage in Armed Service News dispatches, the Pentagon Channel, their military base newspapers and their hometown publications.

**RECIPIENT(s):**

- **Army:** CPL Bryce T. Wolford
- **Navy:** PO Levetina S. King
- **Marine Corps:** SSgt. David M. Jenks
- **Air Force:** SSgt. Russell H. Taylor
- **Coast Guard:** PO Geneva L. Cornelius
- **Air National Guard:** Igor A. Karlov

**Arch M. Cantrall Trophy:** Awarded annually to that American Legion Band winning first prize in competition with all other American Legion bands during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.

**RECIPIENT:** American Legion Band of Greater Kansas City, Independence, MO

**Glen R. Hillis Trophy:** Awarded annually to that Color Guard winning first prize in competition with all other Color Guards during the annual National Convention of The American Legion.

**RECIPIENT:** Newport Beach Harbor, Post 291, Newport Beach, CA

**The Lemuel Bolles Trophy:** Awarded annually to that band winning first prize in competition with all other bands during the annual National Convention.

**RECIPIENT:** American Legion Band of Greater Kansas City, Independence, MO

**William F. Lenker National Service Trophy:** Awarded annually to that State Department of The American Legion excelling in welfare work for war veterans, providing the membership of that Department shall be no less than 80% of the membership of the preceding year.

**RECIPIENT:** Department of Wisconsin

### 2017 UNOFFICIAL MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

**General Henri Gouraud Trophy:** Awarded annually to that department in each of six categories established by the National Membership and Post Activities Committee, each of said departments having been the first in its respective category to attain or exceed its nationally assigned membership quota (effective 1986).

**RECIPIENT(s):**

- Category I Not yet determined
- Category II Not yet determined
- Category III Not yet determined
- Category IV Not yet determined
- Category V Not yet determined
- Category VI Not yet determined

**General John J. Pershing Honor Award:** Awarded annually to that department having the greatest percentage of its posts receiving the honor ribbon for having 100 percent or more of the post’s previous year’s membership enrolled for the coming year by December 31, and having reported such achievement to National Headquarters by not later than January 31.
RECIPIENT: Department of Kentucky

The Henry D. Lindsley Trophy: Awarded annually to the department attaining the highest percentage of membership over its preceding year's membership by March 31.

RECIPIENT: None qualified for 2017

The Jerry L. Hedrick Membership Award: Awarded annually to the department, not included among the several state departments or the department of the District of Columbia, attaining the highest percentage of membership as of March 31, over its preceding year's membership.

RECIPIENT: None qualified for 2017

The O. L. Bodenhamer Trophy: Awarded annually to that department designated to lead the parade at the time of the ensuing national convention.

RECIPIENT: Not yet determined

Contained within this extensive program are a wide variety of prizes ranging from simple certificates and ribbons to valuable gifts and travel. The awards are designed to reward the membership success of dedicated Legionnaires at all levels of the organization and to encourage continued growth. By getting active in membership recruiting, and by asking a veteran to join our ranks, one or more of the many prizes and awards listed below can be earned. The department membership chairman can be contacted for more information.

EARLY BIRD/NEF KICKOFF - SEPTEMBER 14, 2016: Forty-one departments qualified for the 50% target date they are: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.


PEARL HARBOR DAY – DECEMBER 14, 2016: Thirty-seven Departments qualified for the 75% target date they are: Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, France, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mexico, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio,
Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin.


**PRESIDENT’S DAY – FEBRUARY 8, 2017:** Thirty-seven Departments qualified for the 85% target date they are: Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, France, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mexico, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin.

**LEGION BIRTHDAY – MARCH 8, 2017:** Twenty Departments qualified for the 90% target date they are: Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Mexico, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin.

**“BIG TWELVE” COMPETITION WINNERS:**

- **Category I** Pennsylvania
- **Category II** Minnesota, Illinois
- **Category III** Wisconsin, Iowa
- **Category IV** Nebraska
- **Category V** South Carolina, Vermont
- **Category VI** Rhode Island, Idaho

**CHILDREN & YOUTH – APRIL 12, 2017:** Three departments qualified for the 95% target date: France, Mexico, and South Carolina.

**ARMED FORCES DAY - MAY 10, 2017:** N/A departments qualified for the 100% target date: *Not yet determined.* By achieving 100% of the department's 2017 membership goal, the department will receive a plaque recognizing this achievement. The plaque will be presented at the National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

**DELEGATE STRENGTH – JULY 24, 2017:** Delegate strength is determined by the membership in the hands of the National Treasurer 30 days prior to the National Convention. Total number of delegates for each department is based on five delegates at large, one delegate for each 1,000 members or major fraction thereof, and the members of the National Executive Committee.

**DEPARTMENT COMMANDER OF THE YEAR:** Any department commander, who met or exceeds his/her 100% goal for 2017 by May 10, 2017, will receive a plaque recognizing his/her achievement. The plaque will be presented at the National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

**GOLD BRIGADE RECRUITER AWARD:** A Legioneer who recruits 50 or more NEW members by May 10, 2017, will qualify for enrollment in the elite GOLD BRIGADE of The American Legion.

**POST HONOR RIBBONS:** Post Honor Ribbons were shipped to 1,447 posts whose 2017 membership as of December 31, 2016 exceeded their final 2016 membership.

**CERTIFICATE OF MERITORIOUS SERVICE:** These certificates were awarded for 128 posts for attaining a new All-Time-High membership for 2017 by December 31, 2016.
**FIVE CONSECUTIVE YEARS ALL-TIME-HIGH:** These citations are awarded to Posts with five or more consecutive years of all-time high membership in 2017.

**DISTRICT COMMANDERS "RACE TO THE TOP":**
District commanders are the lynchpin of The American Legion's chain of command, serving as the vital link between the national and department organizations and all posts. As we are all aware, the local post is where the "rubber meets the road." If it doesn't happen at the post level -- it doesn't happen at all. District Commanders are the people charged with ensuring all posts in their district maintain their vitality.

Consequently, this unique award was created to provide a meaningful incentive for the five top district commanders in each category and reward their successful membership efforts. The winning district commanders and guests receive:

- Distinguished guests of the National Commander at National Convention.
- 1st class hotel accommodations for four nights at convention location.
- Legion cap that signifies they are Race-To-The-Top winners.

The following provides more specific information on how you can win.

Competition is divided into five categories based on the membership of the district without regard to geographic locations. District commanders will compete in each of the following categories based on the final 2016 totals, and a top district commander for the national award will be selected from each of the five categories. Second and third place awards will also be presented in each category.

- **Category I**  Districts of: 15 to 1,499 members
- **Category II**  Districts of: 1,500 to 2,999 members
- **Category III**  Districts of: 3,000 to 4,999 members
- **Category IV**  Districts of: 5,000 to 7,499 members
- **Category V**  Districts of: 7,500 and above members

**Trip to National Convention** will be presented to the top district commander and spouse in each category whose district membership on **March 31st** represents the greatest percentage over the final previous year membership of that district. **Cannot be less than 100% to qualify.** First place award entitles you and your guest to attend the 99th National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

**Second Place Awards** will be presented to the district commander in each category whose district membership on **March 31st** represents the second highest percentage over the final previous year membership of that district. **Cannot be less than 100% to qualify.** Winners will receive a $500 check.

**Third Place Awards** will be presented to the district commander in each category whose district membership on **March 31st** represents the third highest percentage over the final previous year membership of that district. **Cannot be less than 100% to qualify.** Winners will receive a $375 check.

**This year's winners are:**

**FIRST PLACE WINNERS: (TRIP TO NATIONAL CONVENTION – RENO, NEVADA):**

- **Category I**  Roger L. Archibald  Utah  126.08% District 4
- **Category II**  John W. Griffin  Georgia  105.28% District 6
- **Category III**  None qualified
- **Category IV**  No submissions
- **Category V**  Edwin B. Long, Jr.  Ohio  100.78% District 10

**SECOND PLACE WINNERS ($500 CHECK):**

- **Category I**  Robin D. Rucker  South Carolina  118.40% District 20
- **Category II**  Grady D. Richardson, Jr.  South Carolina  102.39% District 19
Category III  None qualified  
Category IV  No submissions  
Category V  None qualified  

THIRD PLACE WINNERS ($375 CHECK):  
Category I  Demorise E. Allen, Jr. Montana  110.98% District 9  
Category II  Kurt S. Lepinski Illinois  101.20% District 7  
Category III  None qualified  
Category IV  No submissions  
Category V  None qualified  

DISTRICT COMMANDER NEW POST ACHIEVEMENT AWARD  
RECIPIENTS:  
District Commanders, who achieve the goal of creating new American Legion Posts in their respective District and have the new Post's Temporary Charter Application on file at National Headquarters by May 10, 2017, qualify for a special recognition framed certificate.  

DISTRICT COMMANDER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD W/DISTRICT HONOR RIBBON:  
All district commanders whose May Target Date membership exceeds the previous year’s membership by at least the number of posts in that district will be awarded the District Commander Achievement framed certificate. In addition, the district will receive a District Honor Ribbon for its district colors.  

DEPARTMENT RECRUITER OF THE YEAR: Each American Legion post will have the opportunity to submit the name of the "Top Recruiter" for that post who has signed up the highest number of new members for the 2017 membership year by May 10, 2017. Department adjutants will determine the top new member recruiter for their respective department and certify their "Department Recruiter" to National Headquarters on or before May 31, 2017. The "Department Recruiter" properly certified from each department, will be awarded a plaque with his/her accomplishment inscribed thereon.  

NATIONAL RECRUITER OF THE YEAR: The individual certified with the highest number of new members recruited from among all the departments will be declared "National Recruiter of the Year”. The winner of this award receives an all-expense paid trip to the 99th National Convention in Reno, Nevada. The Internal Affairs Commission approved the recommendations of the Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials Subcommittee.  

B. TRAINING SUBCOMMITTEE  
The Training Subcommittee was called to order by Chairman Al Ford (MI) at 10:45 a.m. on Monday, May 8, 2017, at National Headquarters, Conference Room 314A, to address the Global War on Terror Painting and discuss planned training for The American Legion and our Programs.  

Global War on Terror Painting: Discussed two charcoal drawings submitted by Matt Hall, American Legion contract artist. The first drawing showed two American Soldiers assisting a wounded Afghani Soldier as the group trudges forward together over a tattered ISIS flag. The second drawing showed American and Afghani Soldiers on patrol while US airpower roars overhead. All members, save one, favored the first proposed painting with the following updates, corrections and additions:
• Remove any reference or representation of any flag being shown in the painting unless it is on the shoulder of an American Service member.
• Replace the Afghani Soldier with a child.
• Add an additional American Service member, in the background, as a minority, providing over-watch while the child is being assisted.
• The two American service members in the fore, assisting the child, show their faces.
• Represent the American on the right side of the drawing as a female medic.

**Training:** Discussion centered on training plan outlined by National covering online and in person. Rebranding of The American Legion Extension Institute to be called American Legion Basic Training. The course will be offered free to all current members of The American Legion Family. Those not a member will be charged, at the minimum, $9.95. If expired, they will be prompted to renew their membership and get the course for free, or pay the established premium ($9.95 - $14.95 – TBD). Everyone agreed it was a great idea.

The recommendations of the Training Subcommittee were approved by the Internal Affairs Commission.

C. INTERNAL AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT ON THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION (SAL)

The Sons of The American Legion Sub-Committee of Internal Affairs met at 10:46 a.m. on May 8, 2017. Members present were George V. West (NH), Chairman; Larry D. Sheets (FL), member; James F. Army (MA), member; William O. Moore Jr (KY), member; Mike Seaton (CA), Consultant; John W. Kerestan (IN), and Paul Brown (CA), Headquarters Staff.

The Chairman, Mr. George V. West (NH) opened this meeting thanking this committee for all the fine work they do and what the Sons are accomplishing.

The National Adjutant Brian J. O’Hearne and the National Commanders Advisory Chairman Douglas Bible (MN), Sons of The American Legion was introduced in behalf of SAL Commander Jeff C. Frain and gave brief comments on SAL programs, goals, and resolutions submitted this past meeting and for this year. They also discussed the new Sons Strategic Initiative Ad Hoc Committee and pending goals. Past National Commander Douglas Bible (MN), Chairman of the National Commanders Advisory Committee of the Sons also provided his report and recommendation for SAL National Commander for 2019-2020. All the SAL members in attendance thanked the Sub-Committee for their support and assistance throughout the year. The sub-committee expressed their thanks to the Sons of The American Legion for their accomplishments, continued growth and support to The American Legion programs and family. The SAL members were then excused for consideration of resolutions.

Six resolutions came before the Sub-Committee requiring action from the Internal Affairs Commission and the National Executive Committee of The American Legion. Their disposition is reported on the addendum at the end of this report along with the resolutions referred by the Sons and to another SAL Commission or held for further study.

The Sub-Committee reviewed all candidates for National Commander, Sons of The American Legion (2017-2018 and 2018-2019), National Vice Commanders, and National Appointments for all Commissions/Committees for 2017-2018. All Sons candidates were approved and Sons National appointments have been approved, received and filed until the SAL leadership presents the final list to the SAL National Executive Committee for their approval at the Post-SAL NEC at the National Convention in August 2017. The SAL Sub-
Committee of Internal Affairs has also approved the tentative selection of appointments for the SAL National Commanders Advisory Committee and the SAL National Committees on Committees to be announced subsequent to the National Convention in 2017.

The SAL Sub-Committee approved the Sons National Commanders Advisory Committee’s selection for National Commander 2019-2020 to be announced at the close of the National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

The recommendations of the Sons of The American Legion Subcommittee were approved by the Internal Affairs Commission to include the actions taken on resolutions. See Addendum B

D. LEADERSHIP EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT (LEAD) STAFF REPORT

Leadership, Education And Development, (L.E.A.D) is a one day, eight hour training session designed to provide professional development training for posts, districts and department level members. National staff subject matter experts cover a wide range of topics relevant to the Four Pillars (Americanism, National Security, Children & Youth and Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation) of The American Legion. Subject matter experts, any lesson plans, handouts and training materials will be provided at no expense to departments. Departments are responsible for identifying and providing the training facility and audio visual equipment.

In 2016, sixteen training opportunities were budgeted for a total of $52,500 which accounted for four National staff attendees at each event. Totals for 2016 were eleven LEAD events with $19,863 spent. Those lower costs are a direct result of what the LEAD program has been transitioning to; empowering departments to conduct their own training programs by providing department-picked trainers to receive Train-the-Trainer LEAD materials from national staff, thus allowing for more training opportunities at the district and post levels.

There are a number of new courses being developed for LEAD. Some of those new courses are:

- Post & Department Chaplaincy Program
- Post Color & Honor Guards
- Effective Use of Membership Tools
- American Legion Amateur Radio Program
- American Legion Centennial Celebration
- Parliamentary Procedure
- Leadership Development in The American Legion
- Developing an American Legion College

To qualify for a LEAD pin, any combination of 25 offered classes may be selected, making up eight hours of instruction. One classroom is needed for each eight hour session. If department desires a repeat of sessions or selects more than eight hours training, additional classrooms and equipment may be required.

Since LEAD’s inception 32 departments have participated in the training program with almost 3,500 Legion family members trained by national subject matter experts. The most requested classes continue to be: “American Legion Extension Institute” “Post Operations,” and “Developing an Effective Post Membership Team.”
E. NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUND (NEF) STAFF REPORT

Since its creation in 1989, the National Emergency Fund (NEF) has awarded just over $9,000,000 to American Legion family members and posts.

So far in 2017, we have approved 45 grants totaling $38,095. Almost all of the grants were for tornados in Illinois and Georgia, and one covering earthquake damage to a post in Oklahoma, a wildfire in Tennessee and eleven to the Carolinas for damage from Hurricane Matthew. With the spring storms just now getting started we expect those totals to increase.

Two Year Summary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grant Amount Approved</th>
<th>Donations Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2016</td>
<td>$181,794</td>
<td>$462,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 1 – Apr 26, 2017</td>
<td>$38,095</td>
<td>$73,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund balance:</td>
<td>$5,070,326</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. PAID UP FOR LIFE (PUFL) STAFF REPORT

At the Fall 2013 meetings, the Internal Affairs and Finance Commissions approved a restructured means of obtaining a Paid Up For Life membership. This year’s campaign has three email drops and one direct mailing with a goal of 8,000 new members by December 2017. The second email campaign has begun and the direct mail campaign is about to start.

So far in 2017 we have acquired 2,831 new members, adding $1,797,371 to the fund. Since January 2014 and to present, we have added 44,995 new members into the program with $28,993,625.74 to the PUFL trust fund.

III. RESOLUTIONS

Approved and forwarded to Sub-Committee on Resolutions

- Resolution No. 9: The Cadet Awards Program of the United States Military Academy
- Resolution No. 10: American Legion Centennial Postage Stamp
- Resolution No. 11: Amendment to the Uniform Code of Procedure for the Organization of National Conventions of The American Legion
- Resolution No. 12: Authorize Issuance of Temporary Charter to a Foreign Post (KO36)
- Resolution No. 13: Authorize Issuance of Temporary Charter to a Foreign Post (EG02)
- Resolution No. 14: Rescinding of Internal Affairs Resolutions
- Resolution No. 15: Support of Gold Star Mothers National Monument
- Resolution No. 16: National Global War on Terrorism Memorial
- Resolution No. 17: National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial
- Resolution No. 18: Consultants and Advisors to Committees and Commissions

Approved and forwarded to the Finance Commission

- Resolution No. 1: Make Contact Information for Newly Acquired DMS Members Available Immediately
- Resolution No. 4: Support of the United States WWI Centennial Commission
- Resolution No. 5: Commission Painting to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of The American Legion
- Resolution No. 7: Department of Veterans Affairs Physician of the Year Award
Resolution No. 8 Department of Veterans Affairs Health-Care Provider of the Year Award

Disposition of all other resolutions is addressed in Addendum A.

CONCLUSION
Thank you for your assistance and for giving us the opportunity to appear before you. Our commission is “Still Serving America.”

NOTE: The complete Internal Affairs Report with Subcommittee Reports and the entire staff report text can be provided upon request.

Attachments: Addendum A – Report to Subcommittee on Resolutions
Addendum B – List of Sons of The American Legion Resolutions

Addendum A
Report to Subcommittee on Resolutions

The Internal Affairs Commission recommends the indicated action on the listed resolutions, which are presently before this body for disposition.

Received and Recorded

Resolution No. 195 (OH) (DEC): Membership Chairman Pins

Rejected

Resolution No. 15 (2016 Fall NEC): Posts Located Outside of the Continental United States (Virgin Islands)
Resolution 189 (MN) (DEC): Post Credit for Members Gained Through Revitalization
Resolution 227 (VA) (DEC): Defibrillators for Legion Posts

Addendum B
Disposition of Action of Sons of The American Legion

In compliance with Resolution 21 “entitled”, “Establish Procedure for Handling Matters Originating from SAL National Conventions and SAL National Executive Committees”, adopted by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion at its meeting April 30-May 1, 1973, this is to report disposition made by the Internal Affairs Commission of SAL actions taken at the SAL National Executive Committee May 6-7 2017.

Approved

Resolution SAL Res. 4 – Spring 2017: Child Welfare Foundation Donation of $5,000 in Memory of Past Legion Internal Affairs Chairman Larry J. Besson (IL)
Resolution SAL Res. 5 – Spring 2017: Expense and Appointment Authorization for the National VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC) Washington, DC
Resolution SAL Res. 8 – Spring 2017: Update to Squadron Handbook to Recognize Women Veterans Providing Installation Ceremonies
Resolution SAL Res. 9 – Spring 2017: Digitally Disconnect Our Kids Youth Promotion

Received and Recorded

Resolution SAL Res. 1 – Spring 2017: Endorsement of Mr. Edward M. Cleary (AZ) for National Vice Commander
Resolution SAL Res. 2 – Spring 2017: Endorsement of Mr. David L. Van Duisen (WA) for National Vice Commander

The above recommendations for the SAL National Executive Committee were reviewed and approved by The American Legion Internal Affairs SAL Subcommittee and the Internal Affairs Commission.

The following were additional actions taken by the SAL National Executive Committee:

Held for Further Study

Resolution SAL Res. 3 – Spring 2017: National Convention Call-in for National Executive Committee Members of the Sons of The American Legion
Resolution SAL Res. 7 – Spring 2017: The Sons of The American Legion Expense Authorization for VAVS NAC James H. Parke Scholarship Foundation Board Member

Referred

Resolution SAL Res. 10 – Spring 2017: Funding Request for Additional Busing at the National Wreath Laying Ceremony
Resolution SAL Res. 11 – Spring 2017: Creation of Triple Nickel Ribbon

Disposed of Administratively

Resolution SAL Res. 6 – Spring 2017: Proper Respect for the Flag of the United States and The National Anthem When Participating in the Programs of the Sons of The American Legion

No.: SAL Res 1 – Spring 2017
Title: Endorsement of Edward M. Cleary (AZ) for National Vice Commander
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, The Sons of The American Legion is a program of The American Legion comprised of descendants of Veterans; and

WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion requires that candidates for national elective office in the Sons of The American Legion be presented to the National body by resolution; and

WHEREAS, Edward M. Cleary has distinguished himself as capable and willing to represent the Detachment of Arizona as elected national officer by his dedication and sacrifice for the good of the American Legion Family; now therefore let it be

RESOLVED, That the Sons of The American Legion in National Executive Committee assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 6-7, 2017, That the Sons of The
American Legion Detachment of Arizona hereby endorses Edward M. Cleary for the high office of National Vice Commander West at such future time and year as may become available; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the above resolution was endorsed by the Detachment of Arizona and the Department of Arizona with indicated National action submitted for the local resolving clause. The signatures of the Detachment Adjutant Chuck Treat and Department Adjutant Angel Juarez are on the submitted resolution.

No.: SAL Res 2 – Spring 2017
Title: Endorsement of David L. Van Duisen (WA) for National Vice Commander
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, The Sons of The American Legion is a program of The American Legion comprised of descendants of Veterans; and

WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion requires that candidates for national elective office in the Sons of The American Legion be presented to the National body by resolution; and

WHEREAS, David L. Van Duisen has distinguished himself as capable and willing to represent the Detachment of Washington as elected national officer by his dedication and sacrifice for the good of the American Legion Family; now therefore let it be

RESOLVED, That the Sons of The American Legion in National Executive Committee assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 6-7, 2017, That the Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Washington hereby endorses David L. Van Duisen for the high office of National Vice Commander West at such future time and year as may become available; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the above resolution was endorsed by the Detachment of Washington and the Department of Washington with indicated National action submitted for the local resolving clause. The signatures of the Detachment Commander Tom Rancourt and Department Commander Wayne Elston are on the submitted resolution.

No.: SAL Res 4 – Spring 2017
Title: Child Welfare Foundation Donation of $5,000 from the 2017 Budget
Origin: Child Welfare Committee

WHEREAS, The Child Welfare Foundation is a vital part of the Sons of The American Legion since its inception in 1987; and

WHEREAS, There is a constant and vital need for funding of many programs and grants that can assist children in need; and

WHEREAS, Donations by the Sons of The American Legion have provided greatly needed assistance to these children in our country; and

WHEREAS, The support and recognition provided by The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation has further established our organization as a true partner in the goals and principles of the "Legion Family"; now therefore let it be

RESOLVED, by the National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion in regular sessions in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 6-7, 2017 that a donation in the amount of Five Thousand Dollars, ($5,000) be made to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. And be it further;

RESOLVED, that the donation be made in memory of Past Internal Affairs Commission Chairman Larry Besson; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the funds be taken from the 2017 Child Welfare Foundation Donation budgeted line.
No.: SAL Res 5 – Spring 2017  
Title: The Sons of The American Legion expense authorization for VAVS NAC “Executive Committee” appointment  
Origin: VA&R Commission  
WHEREAS, The Sons of The American Legion is a member of the VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC), and  
WHEREAS, to reinforce the best volunteer care for our Veteran’s by expanding our involvement in the VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC), and  
WHEREAS, For the first time ever The Sons of The American Legion have been appointed to a two (2) year appointment on the NAC “Executive Committee”, and  
WHEREAS, this new position will require travel to the VAVS NAC annual meeting in the spring and travel to the NAC “Executive meeting” in the Fall in Washington D.C., now therefor be it  
RESOLVED, by the National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion in regular sessions in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 6-7, 2017 that we accept the appointment to the VAVS National Advisory Committee, and be it further  
RESOLVED, that the travel expense be authorized beginning with the Fall 2017 Executive meeting.

No.: SAL Res 8 – Spring 2017  
Title: Update to Squadron Handbook to Recognize Women Veterans  
Origin: Detachment of Wisconsin  
WHEREAS, Women have long been an important part of our American military and women veterans are an important part of our American Legion Family; and  
WHEREAS, there are portions of our documents and ceremonies that, by their language, may not properly recognize their contributions and vital role; now therefore let it be  
RESOLVED, by the National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 6-7, 2017, that the Squadron Handbook, Installation of Officers Ceremony beginning on page 17 of the 2016 edition, be updated as follows:  

Installation Ceremony, Page 17, Paragraph 2:  
The installing officer, who shall be either a department officer of The American Legion, a member of the Detachment Sons of The American Legion Committee, a post officer of The American Legion or a duly-appointed representative, shall preside following the opening ceremony. The sergeant-at-arms shall be called upon to bring forth the officers to be installed.

Installation Ceremony, Page 17, Paragraph 7:  
INSTALLING OFFICER: “You have been chosen to fill the various offices of this squadron. You will, I know, vindicate the trust that has been reposed in you, and fulfill in every way the obligations that trust entails. You will at once familiarize yourselves with the duties of your particular offices and you will proceed upon those duties in the same spirit of devotion and endeavor that characterized your sponsoring veteran’s service in any of the Great Wars, out of which came their basis for membership in The American Legion and your own in the Sons of The American Legion.

Installation Ceremony, Page 18, Acting Historian:  
ACTING HISTORIAN: “Historian, to you is entrusted the recording of all current records of this squadron. The collection of records of your post of The American Legion is of historical value, and the keeping of a record of squadron activities will, through you, become of priceless heritage to future generations.”
Installation Ceremony, Page 20, paragraph 5:
The gavel is handed to the new commander and the installing officer takes a seat.

No.:   SAL Res 9 – Spring 2017
Title: Digitally disconnect our kids
Origin: Children and Youth Committee

WHEREAS, today parents struggle to balance the benefits of modern technology with the health risks of children spending less and less time outdoors and more time interacting with their screens

WHEREAS, online activities are so exciting and addictive, it can be a challenge to pull kids away for a healthier activity causing higher rates of obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure among children, and

WHEREAS, the Sons of The American Legion, work toward the betterment of all children, and

WHEREAS, we, the Sons of The American Legion cannot expect children to live an active balanced life, if we do not model and promote these healthier behaviors, now therefore let it be,

RESOLVED, That the Sons of The American Legion in National Executive Committee assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 6-7, 2017, that the Sons of The American Legion encourage all Detachments, Districts and Squadrons to take a greater role in promoting and organizing outdoor and/or unplugged activities.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Commander, motion to receive and file the Internal Affairs Commission report with the exception of ten resolutions. We have Addendum A and B. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second. Are there any discussions? There being none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? The ayes have it. The report is accepted.

Resolution No. 9: Cadet Awards Program of the United States Military Academy
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission
Submitted By: Internal Affairs Commission
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, In May 1935, The American Legion created the sponsorship of the United States Military Academy at West Point which recognizes the cadet of the graduating class with the highest standing in chemistry; and

WHEREAS, In the past The American Legion provided $250 in the form of a gift for the superintendent of said Academy to purchase military and scientific books, with the balance being presented in the form of a gift certificate to the Academy bookstore; and

WHEREAS, Due to recent changes in the Army government purchase card operating procedures, the Academy is no longer permitted to offer gift certificates and gift cards as part of the Cadet Awards Program; and

WHEREAS, The service academy awards are some of our longest running awards and reinforce our commitment as an organization to the future of our country and its future leaders; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion purchase a pewter pitcher along with pewter stand, not to exceed the $250.00 annual maximum approved by National Executive Committee Resolution No. 5 (May 2007), for presentation by the United States Military Academy to the
highest standing cadet in chemistry which constitutes our dedicated and continued support of the Cadet Awards Program and the United States Military Academy.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER HAAS: Mr. Commander, this resolution has been approved by the Internal Affairs Commission and your Subcommittee on Resolutions. I move for adoption of this resolution. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Resolution 9 has a motion and a second. Are there any discussions? The chair recognizes Past National Commander Clarence Hill.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Do you think that word "Army" belongs there? It says, "United States Army Military Academy," and then the next line it just says, "United States Military Academy." I think it's just United States Military Academy.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Is the motion to amend?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER HILL: Yes. ...Second

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: The motion and the second is to delete the word "Army" in the "Resolve" clause. Any further discussion? There being none, all in favor? All opposed? Motion carries.

We have a motion and a second to accept the resolution as amended. Are there any discussions? There being none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Amended resolution approved.

Resolution No. 10: American Legion Centennial Postage Stamp
Origin: 100th Anniversary Observance Committee
Submitted By: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, The American Legion, the nation’s largest organization of U.S. wartime veterans, will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2018 and 2019; and

WHEREAS, For nearly one century, The American Legion has positively impacted the world, nation, states and local communities through acts of advocacy, patriotism and civic duty, including such accomplishments as establishing U.S. Flag Code; helping create the Veterans Administration; drafting and passing the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the GI Bill, which revolutionized U.S. economy and culture; connecting Agent Orange exposure with adverse health conditions suffered by war veterans; and conducting a multitude of local and regional community services over the last century; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion 100th Anniversary Observance Committee has made a priority of requesting a commemorative U.S. Postal Service stamp in honor of the organization’s anniversary; and

WHEREAS, A commemorative U.S. Postal Service stamp was issued for The American Legion’s 50th anniversary in 1969; and

WHEREAS, Then-American Legion National Commander Daniel Dellinger received a letter dated April 28, 2014, stating that the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee would review and consider The American Legion’s request, as stated and passed by the National Executive Committee in May 2014, in a resolution that has since expired due to inaction; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That the U.S. Postal Service be formally requested again to issue a commemorative stamp to honor The American Legion’s 100th anniversary.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER HAAS: Mr. Commander, this resolution has been approved by the Internal Affairs Commission and your Subcommittee on Resolutions. I make a motion for approval. ....Second.
NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: We have Resolution 10, it has a motion and a second. Are there any discussions? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Resolution 10 is adopted.

Resolution No. 11: Amendment to the Uniform Code of Procedure for the Organization of National Conventions of The American Legion
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission
Submitted By: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee at its meeting on October 12-13, 2016, adopted Resolution No. 25, revising the Implementation of the Legislative Programs of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, It is advisable to place the revision in the Uniform Code of Procedure for the Organization of National Conventions of The American Legion; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That the following paragraph which contains the changes of Resolution No. 25, October 12-13, 2016, shall be included in the Uniform Code of Procedure for the Organization of National Conventions of The American Legion as paragraph No. 8 under Resolutions to be Considered by the Convention.

“Beginning with the transition from the 115th to the 116th Congress (January 2017), all resolutions with legislative intent are to be reviewed by the appropriate convention committees at the National Convention immediately preceding the convening of a new Congress. The convention committees shall include in their reports to the National Convention an addendum listing those resolutions (including meeting information, resolution number and title), previously approved with legislative intent, that are to remain as part of the legislative program of The American Legion for the next Congress. Any resolution with legislative intent that needs to be updated in any way shall be submitted as a new resolution through either the National Convention or National Executive Committee. The resolutions with legislative intent which are to remain as part of the legislative program and any new resolutions for legislative action be reported to the NEC as provided under Rule 8-b of the Rules of the NEC. Note: Any resolution not carried forward or submitted as a new resolution will be removed from the legislative program and considered rescinded.”

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER HAAS: Mr. Commander, this resolution has been approved by the Internal Affairs Commission and your Subcommittee on Resolutions, and I move for adoption. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Resolution No. 11 has a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Resolution 11 adopted.

Resolution No. 12: Authorize Issuance of Temporary Charter to a Foreign Post
Origin: Membership & Post Activities Committee
Submitted By: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, Application for the issuance of a charter to a post outside of the United States has been received, properly endorsed by officers of the department which will accept responsibility for supervision, and all in conformity with Resolution No. 42, adopted by
RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That the national adjutant is authorized to issue a temporary charter to the following post to be affiliated with the named department: The MSG James M. Jackson Memorial Post KO36, located at Daegue, Korea, and affiliated with the Department of Philippines.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER HAAS: Mr. Commander, this resolution has been approved by the Internal Affairs Commission and your Subcommittee on Resolutions, and I move for approval. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Resolution 12 has a motion and a second. Are there any discussions? All in favor, I hope to hear a big, loud "Yes" for this new post. All in favor? Opposed? We've got a new post coming.

Resolution No. 13: Authorize Issuance of Temporary Charter to a Foreign Post
Origin: Membership & Post Activities Committee
Submitted By: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, Application for the issuance of a charter to a post outside of the United States has been received, properly endorsed by officers of the department which will accept responsibility for supervision, and all in conformity with Resolution No. 42, adopted by the National Executive Committee at its meeting of April 29-30, May 1, 1959; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That the national adjutant is authorized to issue a temporary charter to the following post to be affiliated with the named department: Liberty Post EG02, located at Lakenheath, England, and affiliated with the Department of France.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER HAAS: Mr. Commander, this resolution has been approved by the Internal Affairs Commission and your Subcommittee on Resolutions, and I make a motion to approve. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second on Resolution 13. All in favor, say aye. Opposed? We've got a second post coming on.

Resolution No. 14: Rescinding of Internal Affairs Resolutions
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission
Submitted By: Internal Affairs Commission
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, The Internal Affairs Commission reviewed its resolutions in accordance with the suggested review practices recommended by the National Conventions and the 1961 Report of the Program Study Committee by the National Executive Committee; and

WHEREAS, This review took place during the Internal Affairs Commission meeting held May 8, 2017, in Indianapolis, Indiana; and

WHEREAS, This study has found that resolutions should be rescinded because they have been superseded, accomplished, duplicated and/or are obsolete; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That the following resolutions are rescinded for the reasons indicated below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Reason</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Revocation Of Charter Of Middletown (Mass) Post #75</td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Restoration Of Charter Of Anthony Wayne Post, Department Of Pennsylvania</td>
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<td>1937</td>
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<td>Department Commanders' And Adjutants' Conference</td>
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<td>1947</td>
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<tr>
<td>60</td>
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<td>1949</td>
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<td>Reinstatement Of Quincy, Massachusetts Post</td>
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<td>Theatrical Enterprise Proposal</td>
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<td>1963</td>
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<td>Change Name Of Korean Conflict To Korean War</td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>Grant Past National Chaplain Title To The Very Reverend Charles H Brent</td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
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<tr>
<td>49</td>
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<td>Grant Past National Chaplain Title To Reverend Charles H. Brent (Deceased)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>1969</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>1981</td>
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<td>Wording Change</td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Gordon's Good Neighbor Program</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Appeal Of Paris Post No. 1</td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Retirement Of Inactive Awards</td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
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<tr>
<td>234</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>Creation Of A &quot;Special&quot; Certificate For 70 Years Of Continuous Membership</td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Presidential Medal Of Freedom (Awarded To Martha Raye)</td>
<td>Obsolete</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>United States Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity Grant</td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Rescinding &quot;Public Relations Media Awards Program&quot;</td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Clarification Of The Empty Chair Pow/Mia</td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>The Generals Ward &amp; Chennault &amp; Lt. Helseth Post No.1 Transfer From The Department Of New York To The Department Of France</td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>Appreciation To Host City</td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resolution No. 14: Posts Located Outside Of The Continental United States (Philippines, France &amp; Alaska)</td>
<td>Obsolete</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resolution No. 15: Support of Gold Star Mothers National Monument</td>
<td>Obsolete</td>
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</table>

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER PISA: The Subcommittee on Resolutions recommends amending resolution 14 to add two additional resolutions to the list to be rescinded. Those are: Resolution No. 14 Fall 2016: Posts Located Outside Of The Continental United States (Philippines, France & Alaska) and 2016 Mail Vote No. 1: Amendment To National Executive Committee Resolution No. 14, Adopted October 12-13, 2016. This resolution has the approval of the Internal Affairs Commission, your Subcommittee on Resolutions and I recommend approval of the amendment. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second. Is there any discussion? There being none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? The ayes have it.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Commander, I make a motion that we approve Resolution 14 as amended. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: We have a motion and a second to approve Resolution 14 as amended. Any discussion? There being none, all in favor, say aye. All opposed? Motion passed.

Resolution No. 15: Support of Gold Star Mothers National Monument

Origin: Internal Affairs Commission
Submitted By: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, One of the founding principles of The American Legion is, “To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the great wars”; and

WHEREAS, Historically, mothers of fallen servicemembers began calling themselves "Gold Star Mothers" during the First World War; and

WHEREAS, The National Convention of The American Legion held in Portland, Oregon, in 1932 established a definition for a Gold Star mother; and

WHEREAS, Since 1936, each year on Gold Star Mother's Day, the United States president calls on all Americans to display the nation's flag and hold appropriate meetings to publicly express their love, sorrow, and reverence towards Gold Star mothers and their families; and

WHEREAS, The Gold Star Mothers National Monument Foundation, a nonprofit organization incorporated in the state of New Jersey, developed a campaign to seek approval to erect a Gold Star Mothers National Monument in Washington, D.C. to express the nation’s gratitude to Gold Star mothers and families; and

WHEREAS, The United States Congress authorized The Gold Star Mothers National Monument Foundation to work with the National Park Service to identify the land and start the process to obtain the necessary approvals from the various committees and commissions overseeing the protection of the Mall or other federal property in the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, The erection of this monument was further authorized to be funded through donations from the private sector and voluntary individual donations and at no cost to the federal government of the United States or the District of Columbia or from the corporate body of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has long been in favor of honoring Gold Star mothers and families; now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion goes on record in support of the construction of a national monument dedicated to Gold Star mothers and families in our nation’s capital without financial obligation by The American Legion; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That our national American Legion media channels be utilized to advance awareness to our membership on the progress of the Gold Star Mothers National Monument.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER PISA: Commander, this resolution has the approval of the Internal Affairs Commission and the Subcommittee on Resolutions, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Resolution 15 has a motion and a second. Are there any discussions? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. The chair recognizes Past National Commander Detweiler.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DETWEILER: Mr. Commander, I don't know, maybe I'm wrong, but I thought that organization, maybe it has nothing to do with the organization, but it doesn't go by Gold Star Mothers anymore but goes by Gold Star Parents. You keep leaving out the dads.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Mr. Chairman?

INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION CHAIRMAN NEWMAN: I'm not aware that they have changed the name. If we want to amend it, I wouldn't think that we would have any problem with that.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: On the resolved clause on Resolution 15, it says it is "dedicated to Gold Star Mothers and families." The chair recognizes Past National Commander Brieden.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER BRIEDEN: I do not want to get in to the arena of changing genders, and I would rather it be "Gold Star Mothers," period.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you. Past National Commander?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MORIN: There is a national association for the Gold Star Mothers. They have a national charter and they have charters in states around the country, Gold Star Mothers. They do include families within that organization. I would move its passage, Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: It's already moved by our vote. Anybody opposed? Resolution 15 has passed.

Resolution No. 16: National Global War on Terrorism Memorial
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission
Submitted By: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, One of the founding principles of The American Legion is, “To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the great wars”; and

WHEREAS, From September 2001 through present, more than 2.8 million American soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen answered the call to aggressively pursue our nation’s enemies on fronts across the globe; and

WHEREAS, With an all-volunteer force they continue to fight in America’s longest war, which has so far resulted in more than 6,900 deaths and 50,000 wounded as a result of their commitment to freedom and democracy; and

WHEREAS, The Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation, a nonprofit organization incorporated in the state of Pennsylvania, is seeking congressional approval to build a memorial in Washington, D.C., to remember the selfless contributions of multiple generations of Americans who have served and sacrificed over the past two decades, and
to educate future generations of Americans and citizens around the globe about the fight against terrorism; and

WHEREAS, Senator Joni Ernst (IA) introduced Senate Bill 926, Congressmen Mike Gallagher (WI-8) and Seth Moulton (MA-6) introduced H.R. 873 in the 115th Congress, a bipartisan bill that will authorize the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation to lead the organizing efforts for the memorial and amend the Commemorative Works Act of 1986 to waive the 10-year requirement after ending of war to build a memorial by summer 2024; and

WHEREAS, The erection of this memorial should be funded through donations from the private sector and voluntary individual donations and at no cost to the federal government of the United States or the District of Columbia or from the corporate body of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is in favor of honoring these veterans with such a memorial; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion goes on record to support waiver of the 10-year requirement after ending of war to start the process for construction of a memorial dedicated to Global War on Terror veterans in our nation’s capital without financial obligation by The American Legion and to allow the site selection process to start soonest; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion would support the American Battle Monuments Commission, if recommended, to serve as the administer because of their expertise in coordinating the erection of previous national monuments in the National Capital Region for fundraising, design and construction of the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That our national American Legion media channels be utilized to advance awareness to our membership on the progress of the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER PISA: Commander, this resolution has the approval of the Internal Affairs Commission and your Subcommittee on Resolutions, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.


Resolution No. 17: National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission
Submitted By: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, One of the founding principles of The American Legion is, “To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the great wars”; and

WHEREAS, There were 500,000 Americans who served in the Gulf War in a coalition force from 34 nations led by the United States in response to Iraq’s invasion and annexation of Kuwait during the codenamed operations of Desert Storm (January 17, 1991 thru February 28, 1991) and Desert Shield (August 2, 1990 thru February 28, 1991) and there were almost 400 fatalities; and

WHEREAS, The National Desert Storm Memorial Association, a nonprofit organization incorporated in the state of Arkansas, developed a campaign to seek approval to erect a National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial in Washington, D.C. in honor of those who served during Desert Storm and Desert Shield; and
WHEREAS, The 113th Congress has approved that the National Desert Storm Memorial Association may proceed to establish the National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial as a commemorative work on federal land in the District of Columbia without the expenditure of federal funds; and

WHEREAS, The National Desert Storm Memorial Association was given authority to work with the National Park Service to identify the land and start the process to obtain the necessary approvals from the various committees and commissions overseeing the protection of the Mall or other federal property in the District of Columbia to obtain the property and design approval as well as conduct fundraising; and

WHEREAS, The erection of this memorial should be funded through donations from the private sector and voluntary individual donations and at no cost to the federal government of the United States or the District of Columbia or from the corporate body of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, It would be ideal if Congress would have assigned the responsibility of overseeing the design, fundraising and construction to the American Battle Monuments Commission due to their expertise and knowledge of erecting memorials as was done for three memorials in Washington, D.C.: the American Expeditionary Forces Memorial, the Korean War Memorial and the World War II Memorial and after construction the administration was given to the National Park Service; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is in favor of honoring these veterans with such a memorial; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion goes on record in support of the construction of a memorial dedicated to Desert Storm and Desert Shield veterans in our nation’s capital without financial obligation by The American Legion; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion would support the American Battle Monuments Commission, if recommended, to serve as the administer because of their expertise in coordinating the erection of previous national monuments in the National Capital Region for fundraising, design and construction of the Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That our national American Legion media channels be utilized to advance awareness to our membership on the progress of the National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER PISA: Commander, this resolution has the approval of the Internal Affairs Commission and the Subcommittee on Resolutions. I move for its adoption. ...Second.


Resolution No. 18: Consultants and Advisors to Committees and Commissions
Origin: Internal Affairs Commission
Submitted By: Internal Affairs Commission

WHEREAS, The Outline of Authorization, revised October 2016, under the section General Information, sub-heading Appointment of National Commander’s Representatives, Consultants and Advisors (Applies to all commissions and committees) states that the number of consultants and advisors who shall serve with voice but not vote shall number as “deemed appropriate and necessary”; and
WHEREAS, Several commission and committee sections that follow the General Information section contradict the General Information section by stating that the number of consultants for that specific commission or committee shall be limited to three, for example, the Committee on Children & Youth, on Page 5, states, “There is authorized to be affiliated with this committee no more than three consultants…”; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That the Outline of Authorization be revised to correct the commission and committee sections that contradict the General Information section such that all commission and committee sections reflect that consultants shall number as many as deemed appropriate and necessary.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER PISA: Commander, this resolution has the approval of the Internal Affairs Commission and your Subcommittee on Resolutions, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You've heard the motion and the second on Resolution 18. Any discussion? If not, all in favor, say aye. All opposed? Resolution 18 is adopted.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER PISA: Commander, attached to this report is Addendum A and Addendum B. Move that the action of the Internal Affairs Commission become the action of the NEC. ...Second.


I now call again on Chairman Robert E. Newman for the report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Study Departments and Posts Located Outside the Continental United States.

Oral Report: Ad Hoc Committee to Study Departments and Posts Located Outside of the Continental United States
Robert E. Newman, Indiana, Chairman

Mr. Commander and members of the National Executive Committee, I want to thank you for allowing us to study the issues and to assess what is best for our organization, our membership, as well as the veterans and their families we serve in foreign departments and outlying areas.

There are nine posts in Mexico, with 25 posts assigned to the Department of Mexico, of which ten are active. The remainder are located further south, in Latin America. Meeting yesterday, we heard from National Vice Commander Paul Espinoza and Billy Johnson regarding their trip to Mexico. They visited four posts in the Chapala region, which happened to be very active and highly respected in their communities. We learned some very interesting facts about the posts in the area and how they support the veterans and the local community. Actually, you could say the Legion posts are the pillars of the community because of their humanitarian projects from working with orphanages, building parks, and supplying the local fire station with equipment.

A basic concern is that posts are not familiar with what The American Legion programs do, the resolution process, myLegion.org, and basic post operation issues. The leadership wants to do the right thing but are not getting the information. They are open to working with stateside departments to sponsor stateside youth for Boys State, but just don't know how to do it. There is a major need for training and training materials and operating manuals. They are just not getting them.

We also heard from National Vice Commander Fae Casper, Past National Commander Dellinger, and Past National Commander Rehbein regarding their visit to
Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. They report that the Virgin Islands desire to remain with the Department of Puerto Rico rather than be transferred to Florida, as Resolution 15 of the fall meetings directed. As you know, this resolution was held for further study. They report training of leadership and the general knowledge of The American Legion was needed.

As far as the Department of the Philippines and the posts in Korea, we were very impressed to the positive approach of the membership the posts in Okinawa and Korea have taken, and it appears they have accomplished this without any top-down assistance. The Korean posts appear to be relying on information from the national headquarters and very positive leadership within the area of the operation. These posts report they prefer to stay with the Department of the Philippines rather than being assigned to Alaska, as Resolution 14 from the fall 2016 meetings directed.

The effective date of February 1, 2017, in this resolution was amended by a mail vote last fall to change the effective date of transfer to June 17, 2017. It is the recommendation of the committee both Resolutions 14 and 15 should be rescinded as recommended by the Internal Affairs Commission and Resolutions Subcommittee.

The bottom-line assessment of this committee is there appears to be a lack of communication between the foreign departments and the outlying posts assigned to them. There is no mentoring process for the leadership to groom new leaders for guidance for the establishment of the Four Pillars programs. Some posts appear to be like this, to remain independent, while others seek mentorship to assure growth and participation in The American Legion programs.

We need training for the outlying posts as well as continuation of the visits by American Legion senior leadership, accompanied by staff, to get a firsthand look at their issues and problems such as reported to this ad hoc committee. For the good of The American Legion, leadership training and mentoring is the key to effective operations of these posts. They want to do the right thing, and our members need well-trained leaders.

Mr. Commander, this concludes my remarks from the foreign department ad hoc committee. Thank you for allowing us to serve this great nation as we carry the legacy forward.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Commander, motion to receive and file the report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Study Departments and Posts Located Outside of the Continental United States. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You have a motion and a second. Do I hear any discussion? There being none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Report accepted.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I now call on Past National Commander David K. Rehbein of Iowa, chairman of the 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, for a report.

**Oral Report: American Legion 100th Anniversary Observance Committee**

**Past National Commander David K. Rehbein, Iowa, Chairman**

Thank you, Mr. Commander. Commander, members of the NEC, past national commanders, guests, The American Legion 100th Anniversary Observance Committee continues to fulfill multiple tactics under six key categories: Organizational, Post and Department Activities, Media & Communications, Special Events and Programs, Library and Museum Outreach, and Merchandising.

On behalf of the committee, I first would like to thank Past National Commander and Past National Adjutant Bob Spanogle for his leadership of this committee. Prior to his resignation on January 1, he helped this committee chart a course that we will continue to
follow towards August 2018. That will be the official opening of The American Legion Centennial period.

To fulfill our goals, the committee looks forward to working with all commissions, committees, and staff divisions to use the centennial message to achieve three purposes: One, drive awareness of the Legion's legacy and vision; two, grow membership; and three, promote participation in the Legion Family.

Some great opportunities exist in the area of corporate sponsorships, and this committee looks forward to working with the Marketing Commission and its staff in support agencies to maximize those opportunities. We also envision, with the support of our leading candidates for national commander, a membership campaign fueled by the centennial message, calling on all eligible veterans to join us.

We're working now with the Departments of Minnesota and Indiana and their convention corporations to put on two very special national conventions, as we celebrate our 100th Anniversary in 2018 in Minneapolis, 2019 in Indianapolis. There will be some unique changes in the Legacy Run for those two national conventions, that you will be hearing more about in the future. Those changes will not only continue to raise funds for the Legacy Scholarship, but will also raise awareness, membership, and participation for Legion Family.

I'm delighted to report that more than 2,300 local posts have begun profiles on the national interactive Web platform. If you have not been to www.legion.org/centennial to look at any of those, go there. You will find things that posts have done in the past that we all can be very proud of.

We also have had more than 700 memorials and monuments that have been uploaded to our national database in just eight months. National staff is now working on a new public-facing website that will elevate more of those local post stories, the memorial database, national Legion treasures, chronologies, photos, videos, and much more.

In November of 2018, you can anticipate receiving a very special and expanded issue of *The American Legion Magazine*. That issue will be titled, "100 Years for God and Country, An Illustrated History of The American Legion." That's scheduled to be printed and circulated. We're looking at a page count of something over 200 pages for that magazine.

Museum outreach has been an area of emphasis. On June 20, The American Legion will open an exhibit in the National World War II Museum in New Orleans. That exhibit is titled, "The Greatest Legislation, An American Legion Centennial Salute to the GI Bill." That exhibit features illustrated panels, videos, and the actual cover page and signature page of the original Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, as well as the original speech that FDR gave after signing the bill. Some of those items are on loan from the National Archives. Some of them are on loan from the FDR Museum.

The kickoff to that event is a GI Bill forum that will be moderated by 100th Anniversary Honorary Chairman Theodore Roosevelt IV. That will be on June 20 at 5 p.m. Included in that forum will be some panel members to include former Senator James Webb, who was the architect of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. We will also have Student Veterans of America CEO Jared Lyon, as well as two members of our staff, Verna Jones and John Kamin, to talk about the current and future state of the GI Bill, because we want that exhibit to portray that the GI Bill does not end, it needs to continue. In this way, we are trying to connect an American Legion historical accomplishments with continuing advocacy today and plans for the future.

A similar approach is underway now with the United States World War I Centennial. We have been working with that commission, represented by Jack Monahan from Connecticut, who represents The American Legion on that commission.
We were very well represented at the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City on April 6 for ceremonies commemorating the 100th anniversary of the U.S. entry into World War I. As part of that event, we handed out something over 2,500 magazines, membership applications to the crowd that was present, and it was a very well-received contribution on our part.

We will continue to work in the spirit that we have. We want The American Legion's centennial, beginning in 2018, to be not only an event that we as Legionnaires will remember, but an event that we will use to help reeducate the American public about what The American Legion is, who we are, and what we do.

Mr. Commander, I appreciate the chance to serve as chairman of this committee. I want to thank the members of the Media & Communications staff, in particular, Jeff Stoffer and Holly Soria, for all of the work that they have done to put this effort together. But I also want to thank members of some other divisions that have worked with us, specifically Bridget and her people in Convention, and the folks from Emblem Sales. You've seen the Emblem Sales merchandise. There will be more, you will like it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Report: American Legion 100th Anniversary Observance Committee
May 7-8, 2017
Past National Commander David K. Rehbein, Iowa, Chairman

The American Legion 100th Anniversary Observance Committee is now solidifying action items and milestones to fulfill the remainder of its five-year strategic plan to commemorate the organization’s centennial.

The committee met May 7-8, 2017, to refine plans, set deadlines, assign staff and estimate financial considerations of its work going forward. The committee has followed six key areas of emphasis since its original five-year plan was drafted and submitted to the National Executive Committee in 2014. Those six areas are: organizational, post and department activities, media and communications, special events and programs, library and museum outreach and merchandising. Within each category is a set of objectives and tactics to achieve them. The committee has also looked upon its work as both an opportunity to reflect on The American Legion’s legacy and to help set a vision for its second century.

A summary of the committee’s status now and vision going forward is as follows, based on those categories:

Organizational. Every department and hundreds of posts have established centennial committees, chairpersons or panels to work on 100th anniversary opportunities at the state, regional and local levels.

1. The national 100th Anniversary Observance Committee will now begin meeting twice a year, in advance of the Spring NEC and in advance of the Fall NEC meetings, starting in October 2017.
2. The 100th Anniversary Honorary Committee will no longer meet as a body at the Washington Conference, but its members will be invited to the regular 100th Anniversary Observance Committee meetings in Indianapolis. Members of the Honorary Committee have begun fulfilling their media and promotional responsibilities, including public service announcements, interviews and appearances.
3. At the national level, the number of divisions and other involved parties in the centennial is growing, and organizational responsibilities are being distributed. Increasingly involved in the planning and execution now are: the Department of Minnesota and its convention corporation, the Department of Indiana and its...
convention corporation, the American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, American Legion Riders, Emblem Sales, Membership and Post Activities staff, Internal Affairs staff, Convention and Meetings staff, Marketing Division staff, Media & Communications Division staff, Legislative Division staff, the National World War One Centennial Commission, the National World War II Museum, and others.

4. To assist local, regional and state centennial efforts, national staff members have given presentations at department conferences and meetings, prepared and distributed PR tools, and conducted well-attended workshops at the national convention for the past four years.

Post and Department Activities. American Legion national staff members have worked closely with departments and posts to build enthusiasm, awareness and suggested centennial activities at the regional level. Included are:

1. National and department presentations and workshops from national staff to assist with centennial post profile creation and Every Department Has a Story media.
2. National staff members have encouraged local American Legion centennial groups to engage the whole community and select local honorary committees consisting of those who have benefitted from American Legion youth programs and other services.
3. A new American Legion Memorials Database was introduced in September 2016 and so far has generated nearly 700 submissions. In addition to recording online monuments and memorials in American Legion Family communities, this activity is also built to drive public awareness about the Legion centennial and its commitment to honor and remembrance. It is strongly encouraged as a total American Legion Family activity, to include youth groups and schools, to honor the nation’s military history, particularly the World War I story during its centennial.
4. The American Legion Department of France is planning events and activities to commemorate the birth of the organization in Paris. Included in the department’s plans are ceremonies at Arc de Triomphe in Paris, coordinating with the U.S. Embassy, with a possible closure of the Champs Elysees in mid-March 2019 for a gathering that would gain national media exposures.
5. Centennial PR Toolkits and other resources for posts are available now and will continue to be promoted.

Media & Communications. The American Legion Media & Communications staff has been developing media programs and building awareness of the centennial on numerous fronts, including:

1. Development, management and promotion of an interactive web platform at www.legion.org/centennial where more than 2,300 posts have now begun or completed profiles.
2. Production and distribution of a monthly centennial e-newsletter that now has more than 10,400 subscribers and is achieving open rates of approximately 25 percent.
4. “Indivisible: The Story of Our Flag” is now in its second printing and has sold more than 2,500 copies, to go along with first-edition sales of approximately 20,000.
5. A special centennial issue of The American Legion Magazine is now strategized, and assignments are being fulfilled to complete it. Its working title is “100 Years for God and Country: An Illustrated History of The American Legion.” It is scheduled to be published in November 2018.

6. The Media & Communications staff continues to produce “Every Department Has a Story” placemats, which can be used in print or online. Departments profiled so far include: Alaska, Montana, Wyoming, Kansas, Iowa, South Dakota and Connecticut. In process are France, Minnesota, Arkansas, Hawaii and Wisconsin. These will supply the Media & Communications staff with material for the centennial magazine and a wall-display chronology that will be made available at the department and post levels, as well. Material from the placemats will also be used for a public-facing centennial website, due to be launched in September 2018.

7. A new American Legion history video is now being developed for multiple uses, including American Legion Education Institute treatment and as a complete documentary for use at Legion College, available also for download through social media.

8. Development, production and distribution of two booklets for centennial program development at the local level: “Legacy and Vision” and “Centennial Celebration Workbook.”

9. The Media & Communications team has also researched, written, designed and is now preparing to install an exhibit that will debut June 20 at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, titled: “The Greatest Legislation: An American Legion Salute to the GI Bill.”

10. American Legion Media & Communications staff distributed poly-bagged copies of the April American Legion Magazine at the centennial of U.S. entry into World War I in Kansas City on April 6, 2017.

11. Additional Media & Communications initiatives and efforts include a planned “post treasures” social media campaign that could later result in a physical display of unique items that belong to Legion posts, the development of a centennial PR Toolkit, advertising and PSA resources, physical media displays for local use, and more.

**Special Events and Programs.** The opening of “The Greatest Legislation: An American Legion Centennial Salute to the GI Bill” on June 20 kicks off a planned calendar of events that aim to draw attention to the organization at the local, state, national and international levels. Primary focus will be placed upon the following:

1. The Greatest Legislation: An American Legion Centennial Salute to the GI Bill will open June 20, 2017, at the National World War II Museum and then be available for display with similar GI Bill forums, on a traveling basis, following its run in New Orleans.

2. American Legion custom centennial tours of World War I and World War II sites in Europe are proposed by the National World War II Museum and Manoir du Quesnay, one for larger groups, one for smaller, more intimate touring. Both opportunities present compensation potential for the national organization.

3. Centennial Legacy Runs will be conducted in August 2018 and 2019 to include portions of U.S. Highway 281 – The American Legion Highway – concluding in Minneapolis and Indianapolis, in respective years.

4. Centennial National Conventions in Minneapolis (2018) and Indianapolis (2019) are now in the planning stages, to include vintage aircraft, re-enactors from past war eras, special centennial staging and distinguished guests who benefited from
American Legion youth programs, as well as 100th Anniversary Honorary Committee members.

5. A time capsule that was buried in St. Louis in 1969 is scheduled to be unearthed at some point during the centennial window.


**Library and Museum Outreach.** The American Legion 100th Anniversary Observance Committee wishes to see the centennial story told in museums, libraries and other well-visited institutions across the country and beyond. Current targets for this include:

1. The National World War II Museum in New Orleans where “The Greatest Legislation: An American Legion Salute to the GI Bill” is scheduled to open on June 20, 2017. The span of the exhibit is not yet confirmed, but once it is done there, the exhibit can travel to other museums, libraries or public places for display.

2. The National World War I Museum in Kansas City is a likely destination for the GI Bill traveling exhibit, and that request will be made, but more to the point of the Liberty Memorial there, it is also an opportunity for The American Legion to share its story of having led the Allied generals of World War I on a victory tour of the United States, including the memorial in 1921 in Kansas City.

3. Bob Hope Patriotic Hall in Los Angeles also has deep American Legion roots and will be approached for display space of some kind, perhaps a location of the GI Bill exhibit with a similar forum.

4. Art and artifacts from Pershing Hall in Paris, once known as the European headquarters of The American Legion, may be available on a loan basis for display during the centennial. The NEC passed a resolution in Fall 2016 urging that the art and artifacts be placed under the management of the American Battle Monuments Commission, and the status of these items is unclear.

**Merchandising.** Centennial apparel, art, souvenirs and other items are entering the marketplace, led by 100th Anniversary polo shirts, caps and pins. In addition, The American Legion is working with Congress and the Legislative Division for approval of a U.S. Mint American Legion centennial coin that would be struck in 2019. The centennial merchandising program involves:

1. Apparel sales, such as T-shirts, polos and caps have produced nearly $100,000 in revenue since they were introduced, not counting sales of the centennial bookazine, “Indivisible: The Story of Our Flag.”

2. An American Legion Centennial art print by popular illustrator Matt Hall is now in development. Sketches are expected in the second quarter of 2017, at which time the prices for signed, numbered prints will be determined, as will sales plans for standard unsigned posters for display at local posts or in personal homes.

3. A&A Engraving reports that 33 department versions and 12 individual member versions, out of 100 made from each, of the American Legion Centennial limited edition pistols have sold so far since they were introduced in 2014.

4. Additional merchandising possibilities under consideration include: an American Legion liquor decanter, coins, yard signs, promotional items for display at posts and collectible coins.

To summarize, the committee and the staff continue to work to leverage the centennial into one great national – and international – expression of The American Legion legacy.
and vision alike. In order to accomplish this, it’s going to take teamwork, from the local posts to national headquarters, from St. Louis, Mo., to Paris, France, and a commitment of enthusiasm from all staff divisions who represent the commissions and committees of the organization, as well as the American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion and Legion Riders. The goal of the committee’s meeting this spring was to set in motion action items to get that all done, according to a five-year plan that is now coming up on its third birthday. If at the end of this centennial effort, we can look back and say that it had a positive influence on brand awareness, membership, corporate relationships, fundraising or simply letting people know how The American Legion is poised to continue serving veterans and their families long into its second century, that will be how we measure success.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Commander, motion to receive and file the report of the 100th Anniversary Observance Committee. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and a second regarding the 100th Anniversary Observance Committee report. Are there any discussions? There being none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Motion passed. I now call on Chairman Richard W. Anderson of Connecticut for the Americanism Commission report.

Oral Report: Americanism Commission
Richard W. Anderson, Connecticut, Chairman

Mr. Commander and members of the National Executive Committee, guests, I am privileged to stand before you and report on the actions of your Americanism Commission. Copies of my detailed report have been distributed for your review, so I will only brief on some of the highlights from our meetings.

The Committee on Youth Education met on Saturday and Sunday and reported to the commission on Monday. In accordance with the resolution that this body passed of the National Executive Committee spring 2016 meeting entitled, "American Legion Legacy Scholarship Enhancement," this year the Legacy Scholarship was enhanced to provide verifiable need-based scholarship awards and was enhanced to also give consideration to children of disabled veterans and with a combined VA disability of 50 percent or greater, after giving first priority to eligible children of the fallen. After verification that all documentation was submitted and an applicant met eligibility requirements, the formula applied for determining scholarship awards was as follows: The total cost of attendance to an institution of learning, minus state and federal scholarship awards the student has received, minus the expected family contribution, and this resulted in determining the remaining gap of a financial need.

This first year of the scholarship enhancement, the number of online applications that were opened was way beyond expectations. There were a total of 896 applications opened. Of those 896 total applications, there were 362 completed: 27 were children of the fallen, 335 were children of disabled veterans. Per the resolution, applications received from children of the fallen were given first consideration. Of those submitted, no children of the fallen demonstrated a financial need, showing through their supporting documentation that they were well provided for through the federal and state educational assistance.

Of the 335 applicants received from the children of disabled veterans, 84 were fully complete. Of those 84, there were 55 who demonstrated verifiable eligibility and financial need. Per the funding strategy authorized in the governing resolution, a total of $784,134 was made available for the 2017 scholarships.
This year, the commission approved the committee's recommendation to award 55 students an American Legacy Scholarship dispersing $671,892 in scholarships for the undergraduate and/or graduate studies. All 55 students are children of a disabled veteran having been assigned a disability rating of 50 percent or greater by the VA. Also in accordance with the resolution, there will be $112,241 returned to the trust fund for continued growth.

The data gathered from applicants of fallen servicemembers reinforces the research regarding the diminishing impact that The American Legion Legacy Scholarship has had over the past five years due to a much greater availability of federal educational assistance, most notably, the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship, as well as state educational benefits that are evolving for children of fallen servicemembers, thus fulfilling their educational costs. These statistics appear to validate the research conducted by staff that children of the fallen are much fewer in proportion and so well provided for that we likely never would have achieved the level of impact and benefit that we desired, had we continued to focus solely upon providing the children of the fallen. But again, I emphasize to remain mindful that, although currently well provided for, children of the fallen will continue to be given first and primary consideration, as doing so could be impactful in the event that government appropriations or state educational benefits should ever change.

The Committee on Youth Cadet Law Enforcement met on Monday, and I am proud to report to you and pleased that the Departments of Wisconsin and Indiana have joined us in the pursuit to fulfill our obligations to bring every state into our realm. Thank you to both of you, departments.

The commission approved the Committee on Youth Education's recommendation that David Azerrad, director of the B. Kenneth Simon Center for Principles and Politics at The Heritage Foundation, be awarded The American Legion National Education Award. Azerrad devotes his time and research at The Heritage Foundation to increasing the public's and youth's understanding of America's founding principles.

The 80th National Oratorical Contest proved to be another successful competition this year. We congratulate Andrew Steinberg from the Department of Massachusetts for having won the competition and congratulations to that department for having claim to producing this year's national champion. Over $136,000 in scholarships was awarded to participants during the national finals.

Scott Moore, Jr. from Tennessee was selected the 2017 American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year and will receive a $10,000 scholarship. Runner-up recipients of a $2,500 scholarship are Mitchell Woods from Virginia, Jonathan Huntley from Massachusetts, and Koen Weaver from New York.

Your commission received a briefing from Mr. Eddie Holbrook, chairman of the Cleveland County American Legion World Series Executive Committee in Shelby, North Carolina, detailing plans for an expanded live telecast of the 91st American Legion Baseball World Series, to be held August 10 through 15 in Shelby, North Carolina.

Your Americanism Commission strongly, and I mean strongly, encourages all Legion Family members to show your support by turning on your TVs and promote watching the series on ESPNU, and that can be done in various ways now. With this new telephone that I just got, I'm getting used to it, it's pretty cool. You can put your ESPN icon on that, put on the ESPN channel and put on ESPNU, if you only do it but are not able to watch the game put it on there, because it's imperative that ESPN understands the growth that this organization is pursuing with their baseball program. So we would ask that and you will be reminded, but I would hope that you would bring that back to your departments. That TV coverage will be held on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday of the World Series.

Our service to veterans and their families through Temporary Financial Assistance program for 2016 reached over $830,010. With the help of The American Legion, there
were 1,396 children of 600 veterans who were afforded food, clothing, utilities, and shelter to help maintain the integrity of the family home.

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation board of directors met on Sunday and were presented with donations in excess of $100,000 from the Sons of The American Legion that they raised during their recent spring NEC meeting, bringing their total for this current program year to over $490,000. With the continued strong support of the Legion Family, the Child Welfare Foundation continues to work for the betterment of all children.

Mr. Commander and members of the National Executive Committee, the Americanism Commission thanks you for your longstanding support. At this time I’d like to thank my director of the Americanism Division, Jill Druskis, and her staff for promoting the principles of The American Legion Americanism Commission for all the hard work that they do, and I thank them at this time. Mr. Commander, this concludes my report.

Report: Americanism Commission
May 8-9, 2017
Richard W. Anderson, Connecticut, Chairman

The Americanism Commission met at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana on May 8-9, 2017. There were 91 members present, including members of the Americanism Council, Baseball Committee, Committee on Children & Youth, Committee on Youth Education and Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee. We were privileged to have with us Past National Commanders John “Jake” Comer (MA), Daniel Ludwig (MN), Daniel Dellinger (VA), Robert Turner (GA), Anthony Jordan (ME) Thomas Bock (CO) and Dale Barnett (GA). Other distinguished guests included American Legion Auxiliary National President Mary Davis (WA), Sons of The American Legion Americanism Chairman Gerald Hammerschmidt (KS), and other honored guests representing The American Legion and affiliated organizations.

REPORT ON THE AMERICAN LEGION WORLD SERIES
Eddie Holbrook, North Carolina, Chairman, Cleveland County ALWS Committee

Eddie Holbrook, Chairman, Cleveland County American Legion Baseball World Series (ALBWS) Committee updated the commission regarding the various events scheduled for the 2017 American Legion World Series including the expanded live telecast to a total of nine games. The expanded coverage provides every team the opportunity to be on live TV. Mr. Holbrook reported on a new promotion magazine which highlights the “buzz” around the World Series and the future for the publication moving forward. Also important this year is TV viewership for the American Legion World Series. Mr. Holbrook challenged everyone to “Turn their TV’s on” as an important way to assist in driving viewership on ESPN U.

REPORT ON TROOP & FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS
Bruce Drake, Maine, Assistant Director, Americanism Division

The Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) program awarded 32 grants in 2016. These grants provided comfort and therapeutic items, activities and events for several hundred wounded, injured and ill servicemembers and their families, estimated to have directly impacted more than 7,500 individuals.

OCW highlights of 2016 include:
• Collaborating with VA&R staff to deliver $69,000 in grant items to fourteen VA Medical Centers in Texas, Alabama, Nevada, District of Columbia, Indiana, Colorado, Utah, California, Washington, Louisiana, and New York.
• Hosting a wounded warrior and her spouse as weekend guests in Cincinnati during the national convention and Past Department Commander Club luncheon.
• Hosting 800 wounded warriors and their families from Brooke Army Medical Center for a day of fun and barbeque at Six Flags San Antonio, Texas.
• Sponsoring a whitewater rafting trip for 32 wounded veterans on the Colorado River.
• Sponsoring a week-long vacation for 5 wounded warriors and their families from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center at the Serve Our Wounded Warriors Farm in Virginia.
• Sponsoring 95 wounded warriors from Ohio, Kentucky and Pennsylvania for a weekend fishing retreat on Lake Erie with the Kentucky-Ohio Bluegrass Military Coalition.
• Continued support with the Department of France to the Landstuhl Military Medical Center which is the first evacuation hospital for combat wounded servicemembers from Iraq and Afghanistan.
• Sponsored baseball game tickets for veterans in VA Care in Washington and Alabama in conjunction with the American Legion department headquarters from each state.

These highlighted grants are just a fraction of the comfort that The American Legion’s OCW program was proud to provide in the last year.

Donations to Operation Comfort Warriors for 2016 have been recorded at $651,718 which was an increase from 2015 efforts.

During 2016, The American Legion’s Family Support Network fielded 1,198 requests for information and assistance just at national headquarters alone, with untold other requests certain to have been received at post and department levels throughout the nation. Despite reductions in Reserve and National Guard activations and deployments, military families still have special needs that The American Legion continues to address through our Family Support Network.

REPORT OF THE BASEBALL COMMITTEE
Gary Stone, Missouri, Chairman

The American Legion Baseball Committee met Monday, May 8, 2017, at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel.

The committee discussed the regional re-alignment for the 2017 regional tournaments. Based on the new policy to count only senior teams to determine the top 15 departments for consideration of an additional team to fill the 64 team regional pairings, the committee recommends that national staff be directed to make the necessary re-alignments, if any, based on May 15th registration numbers for the 2017 regional tournaments.

Your committee also discussed and adopted the 2017 American Legion Baseball National Tournament Rules and Policies and heard a briefing on the eight regional site inspection reports that have been submitted by the assigned tournament directors.

Requests from the Departments of Delaware, Florida and Massachusetts for rezoning were presented for the committee’s review and approval. The committee recommends approval of the Plan "A" Zoning requests for these departments.

The committee discussed hosting a welcome reception and panel discussion at the 2018 American Baseball Coaches Association (ABCA) convention to be held in January.
in Indianapolis. The ABCA convention is attended by nearly 6,000 baseball coaches from all levels in the sport. The Legion baseball program has exhibited at this convention for over 15 years and this is the first time for the convention to be held in Indianapolis. Your committee recommends for national staff to begin coordination efforts with the ABCA and identify potential panel members for consideration by the committee at the 2017 Fall Meetings.

An update on marketing and promotional efforts was received by the committee and the highlights include the following:

- The legion.org/baseball website previously never exceeded 800,000 hits in any month prior to 2016. In June, July and August of 2016, all three months exceeded the 800,000 hits with a high of 1.55 million hits in July
- Over the last 12 months, legion.org/baseball has seen 11 months with at least double the traffic than the previous year’s mark
- The legion.org/baseball website represented 40% of all traffic on the legion.org network over July and August 2016
- Increased content has led to a surge on social media, with impressions dwarfing all previous records. Over three million people were reached over 2016, which makes social media almost as powerful as the legion.org/baseball website has been in terms of reach
- The Magazine and Dispatch, as well as American Legion Online Update and social media, will feature more promotion of the ALWS in advance in order to try and increase viewership on ESPNU

The committee received an update on the 2017 online registration status and is pleased to report that 2,746 teams with intent to play have registered online for the 2017 season. An additional 1,000 plus teams are expected to register in the next three weeks as the high school baseball seasons conclude throughout the country.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & YOUTH
Herbert J. Petit, Jr., Louisiana, Chairman

The Committee on Children & Youth met at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel, Panorama A, 21st floor in Indianapolis, Indiana, on Monday, May 8, 2017.

PNC William Detweiler (LA), President of the American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation (EFC), updated the committee on the status of the EFC. During 2016, the fund transferred over $174,834 to The American Legion for Children & Youth and Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation programs. The Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program, which is partially funded by the EFC, received $120,000. The TFA program will continue to be a focal point in promotional efforts by the board of directors in order to bring visibility to the Endowment Fund.

TFA continues to provide for the basic needs of children of eligible veterans through cash grants made possible through the generosity of the American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation. During 2016, TFA assisted 1,396 children of 600 veterans throughout the United States maintain shelter, utilities, food and clothing with over $830,010 in cash grants. For the first quarter of this year, TFA has provided over $210,000 to 294 children of 138 veterans’ families.

The Board of Directors of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation (CWF) met on Sunday, May 7, 2017 at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel in Indianapolis. During their meetings, the Sons of The American Legion presented donations from their recent
spring meetings totaling over $100,600. This amount brings their total donations to the CWF to over $564,566 for the current donation year (June 1, 2016-May 31, 2017).

The 11th annual national Children & Youth Conference will be held on September 15-17, 2017, at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel in Indianapolis. This conference will educate Legion representatives from 52 departments on current children’s issues and the children & youth programs of the Americanism Commission. Conference participants will learn practical implementation strategies for conducting children & youth programs and conferences within their departments. As our children and youth programs work best due to a concerted effort from all members of the Legion family, please encourage the children & youth representatives from the Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion in your departments to consider joining us for a number of informative sessions.

The committee considered one resolution. After review and discussion, the Committee on Children & Youth recommended to reject the following resolution:

- **Support Anti-Cyberbullying Education For Our Youth**

**COMMITTEE ON YOUTH EDUCATION**
Michael Bredeck, Minnesota, Chairman

The Committee on Youth Education met on May 6-7, 2017, at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The committee developed the following recommendations for review and consideration by the Americanism Commission:

- **American Legion Legacy Scholarship**

In accordance with Resolution No. 1 of the National Executive Committee Spring 2016 entitled *American Legion Legacy Scholarship Enhancement*, the Legacy Scholarship was enhanced this year to provide verifiable need-based scholarships awards versus the previous merit-based, and now also provides scholarship awards to eligible children of disabled veterans who have a combined VA disability rating of 50% or greater, after giving first award priority to eligible children of the fallen.

**2017 SNAPSHOT OF THE NEWLY ENHANCED AMERICAN LEGION LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP:**

- 896 applications were opened.
  - 362 were completed
    - 27 were children of the fallen
      - Of the 27, there were 25 that uploaded all required documentation
      - Of the 25, there were 0 demonstrating a verifiable gap need (well provided for through other federal and state sources)
    - 335 were children of disabled veterans
      - Of the 335, there were 84 that uploaded all required documentation
      - Of the 84, there were 55 deemed eligible who demonstrated a verifiable gap need

- Total award available amount per National Treasurer: $784,134.34

- Disbursement of scholarships
  - $671,892.80 to 55 eligible children of disabled veterans having a verifiable gap need
    - 12 students demonstrated maximum need of $20,000
- Lowest demonstrated need was one student of $586
- Disbursements:
  - 12 students demonstrating a maximum need of $20,000
  - 7 students demonstrating a need between $20,000 - $15,000
  - 17 students demonstrating a need between $15,000 - $10,000
  - 7 students demonstrating a need between $10,000 - $5,000
  - 12 students demonstrating a need between $5,000 - $0
- $112,241.54 to be returned to the Legacy Scholarship Trust Fund

The above appears to validate that the decision to base the Legacy Scholarship on need vice merit was wise, and that the extensive research conducted in the fall of 2015 seems to have come to bear – the word about the Legacy Scholarship was likely being shared, as the total number of applications opened this first year of enhancement far exceeded expectations of many, and that children of the fallen are much fewer in proportion and so well-provided for that we likely never would have achieved the level of impact and benefit desired had we continued to focus solely upon the children of the fallen.

The following is a more detailed report of the above snapshot:

At the Spring 2017 meetings the Committee on Youth Education will review the 55 students identified as recipients of the 2017 American Legacy Scholarship, disbursing $671,892.80 in scholarships for their undergraduate and/or graduate studies. In accordance with Res. No. 1 NEC May 2016, all 55 awardees identified are children of Post-9/11 veterans having been assigned a disability rating by the VA of at least fifty-percent (50%), after first given award priority to eligible children of the fallen.

Per the funding strategy authorized in Res. No. 1 NEC May 2016, the National Treasurer advised that a total of $784,134.34 was made available for the 2017 scholarship awards. After awarding $672,892.80 in scholarships, there is $112,241.54 that will be returned the trust fund for continued growth in accordance with the governing resolution. There were a total of 896 online applications opened, of which 362 were submitted by the application due date of April 20, 2017, as required, with 27 having been received from children of fallen service members and 335 from children of Post-9/11 veterans having been assigned a combined disability rating by the VA of at least fifty-percent (50%).

Applicants of the fallen and disabled were required to submit the following documentation:
- DD1300 (Report of Casualty): Fallen
- VA disability rating: Disabled
- DD214: Fallen and Disabled
- Proof of attendance at a post-secondary institution that are not be for-profit and/or only nationally accredited: Fallen and Disabled
- Proof of cost of attendance from the institution (tuition, books, fees, room and board) – this letter also reflects state and federal scholarship awards received: Fallen and Disabled
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, reflecting an Expected Family Contribution (EFC): Fallen and Disabled
After verification that all documentation was submitted and the applicant was eligible, the cost of attendance minus state and federal scholarship awards minus EFC resulted in determining a remaining gap. Of the 27 applications submitted by children of the fallen, 25 applications were complete and received primary. Of the 335 applications submitted by children of Post-9/11 veterans having been assigned a disability rating by the VA of at least fifty-percent (50%), 84 were complete to receive further evaluation for eligibility and need assessment.

The data gathered from the 25 applicants of children of fallen service members reinforces the research regarding the diminishing impact of The American Legion Legacy Scholarship over the past several years due to a much greater availability of federal (e.g., the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship), and state educational benefits that are evolving for children of fallen service members, thus fulfilling their education costs.

In accordance with the enabling resolution, the committee also discussed topics and issues regarding the scholarship and the application process; final review and approval will be during the committee’s 2017 Fall Meeting.

The American Legion National Education Award

Recommendation was made that The American Legion National Education Award be awarded to David Azerrad, Director, B. Kenneth Simon Center for Principles and Politics, The Heritage Foundation. Azerrad devotes his time and research at The Heritage Foundation to increasing public understanding of America’s founding principles. Azerrad teaches the tenets of the American political tradition to policymakers, political leaders and the public, while connecting the nation’s first principles to the thorny questions of the day. A popular speaker, Azerrad gives talks around the country on topics related to the American Founding, constitutionalism, modern liberalism and conservatism, and the American Dream. He has spoken on many college campuses and addressed audiences in more than 25 states, to include his annual presentation to the delegates of The American Legion Boys Nation program. His work reflects the highest values of The American Legion’s education goals and initiatives.

YOUTH CADET LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE
Larry Price, South Dakota, Chairman

On May 8, 2017 the Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee met at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel, Library Room.

The following topics presented and discussed:

1. **Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee Strategic Plan**
   Discussions included having a Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program information table at The American Legion National Convention, creation of a Youth Cadet Law Enforcement program Facebook page and mailing a personal letter of invitation from Chairman Price to all departments without a program. These action items were approved for the 2017 Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee Strategic Plan.

2. **Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Programs**
   There are currently twenty-one departments with Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Programs: Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin.
3. **SPPADS Conference**

Members of the Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee will attend the national SPPADS Conference June 25-30 in Columbus, Ohio. Hosted by the Ohio State Highway Patrol, SPPADS stands for (S)tate and (P)rovincial (P)olice (A)cademy (D)irectors.

The conference is composed of Training Academy Commanders from every State Police/Highway Patrol organization in the nation, and five Canadian Provinces, SPPADS members share information regarding training policies, curriculum development and equipment.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol, the Conference Host, has been a partner in The American Legion Buckeye Boys State program since 1936.

4. **Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Online Toolkit**

Recent Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program website enhancements have been made highlighting the department programs of Kansas, Massachusetts, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio and Virginia. Featured programs can be viewed at https://www.legion.org/juniorlaw/resources.

**REPORT OF THE YOUTH ACTIVITIES SUBCOMMITTEE**

Charles T. Tucker, Georgia, Vice Chairman


The subcommittee reviewed the following resolutions and recommended the following to the Americanism Commission:

- **American Legion Scouting Advisory Council** – Res. No. 191 CONV 2016 (WA) Reject
- **American Legion Scouting Advisory Council** – Res. No. 2735 CONV 2015 (NV) Reject
- **Eagle Scout Lapel Pin** – Res. No. 233 CONV 2016 (FL) Hold for Further Study
- **Proposed Change to the Junior Air Rifle National Championship** – Res. No. 240 CONV 2017 (AZ) Reject
- **A Recognition Program for the Boy Scouts of America Venturing Program** – Res. No. 241 (AZ) Handle Administratively

**Junior Shooting Sports Program**

The 26th American Legion Junior Three Position Air Rifle National Championship will be held July 18-22, 2017, at the USA Shooting range facility located at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The second annual Junior Shooting Sports Chairmen’s Conference will be held September 15-17, 2017, at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel in Indianapolis, Indiana. Additional information will be posted on the program website. This is the same weekend as the annual Children & Youth Conference.

**American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program**

“A Constitutional Speech Contest”

The 80th National Finals Contests were conducted on April 21-23, 2017, at the Wyndham Indianapolis West. The 53 department winners who entered the national competition were all outstanding representatives of today’s youth. The top three national finalists are:
First Place  Andrew Steinberg (MA)   $18,000
Second Place   Robyn Anzulis (MD)   $16,000
Third Place  Chad Durante (WV)  $14,000

The National Finalists are also the recipients of a $1,500 scholarship for having participated in the quarter-final contest.

The Media & Communications Division provided a Facebook live webcast of the National Final Contest with more than 6,800 views and 133 shares.

The 2018 contest will be held on April 13-15 at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel. The certification of department winners is due to National Headquarters by March 18, 2018.

The 48th annual meeting of department chairpersons will be held September 22-24, 2017, at the Sheraton Hotel in Indianapolis, Indiana.

American Legion & Scouting

Scott Moore Jr. from Clarksville, Tennessee, was selected the 2017 American Legion Eagle Scout of the year and will receive a $10,000 scholarship. Runners-up recipients of the $2,500 are Mitchell Woods from Hampton, Virginia, Jonathan Huntley from Westfield, Massachusetts, and Koen Weaver from Mount Morris, New York.

Twenty-nine applications were submitted from the following departments: Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

At the end of 2016, there were 2,451 Scouting units chartered by American Legion posts, American Legion Auxiliary units, and Sons of The American Legion squadrons, serving 61,575 young men and women.

At the end of 2016, there were 588 American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion members who received the Scouting “Square Knot” award since its inception in 2003. This award is presented in recognition of their dedication and support in furthering Scouting programs of The American Legion.

The fourth annual American Legion Department Scouting Chairman’s Conference will be held October 27-29, 2017 in Irving Texas at the Boys Scouts of America’s “Scouting U” training facility. The conference is for all American Legion department Scouting chairmen and or their designees. The conference is a non-call-in conference and all expenses associated with participation is that of the attendees. Conference agenda topics will include the following: updates from your national headquarters staff, updates from the Boys Scouts of America liaison, and opportunities for dialogue with other Scouting program chairmen. Additional information will be posted on the program website.

American Legion Boys State & American Legion Boys Nation

The 2017 session of American Legion Boys Nation will be held July 21-29, 2017, on the campus of Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia.

The 82nd annual meeting of American Legion Boys State Directors and Chairmen will be held September 22-24, 2017 at the Sheraton Hotel in Indianapolis, Indiana.
The Citizenship and Naturalization Subcommittee met on Monday, May 8, 2017, in the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel, Panorama B, 21st floor. Discussions of the subcommittee began with reviewing its purpose and focus for promoting understanding, appreciation and active participation in the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship and government, as well as it seeking the cultural assimilation of legal immigrants and residents seeking a legal path to citizenship into local communities.

The Citizenship & Naturalization Subcommittee concluded by summarizing its recommendations to the Americanism Commission:

That the Americanism Commission use all means available to promote and grow Americanism youth programs that foster citizenship and patriotism of our nation’s youth.

That the Americanism Commission use all means available to encourage and promote the honoring of Constitution Day and Citizenship Day on September 17, 2017, and that staff use available resources including newsletters, e-bulletins and other means of communication to promote the same.

That the Americanism Commission strongly urge active participation in the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship and American government and undertaking local community “Get Out The Vote” activities including encouraging all eligible citizens to register to vote and to cast ballots in all available elections at the federal, state and local levels.

That the Americanism Commission continue to use all means available to encourage honoring National Motto Day on July 30 of each year and the public and private display of “In God We Trust” and that staff use available resources including newsletters, e-bulletins and other means of communication to promote the same.

That the Americanism Commission use all means available to encourage promoting positions, programs and initiatives that uphold the path to legal immigration and naturalized citizenship.

That the Americanism Commission strongly urge vigor by Legion posts, districts and departments to collaborate with the Office of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) by undertaking activities that assist and assimilate immigrants seeking the legal path to naturalized U.S. citizenship and urging all departments and posts to provide a color guard for naturalization ceremonies.

Addendum A: Resolutions Not Approved

Rejected

Resolution No. 240 (AZ) (2016 Nat’l. Conv.): Proposed Change to the Junior Air Rifle National Championship
Register Resolution No. 2735 (NV) (DEC): American Legion Scouting Advisory Council
Register Resolution No. 2746 (WY) (DEC): Support Anti-bullying Education for our Youth

Hold for Further Study

Resolution No. 233 (FL) (2016 Nat’l. Conv.): Eagle Scout Lapel Pin
Resolutions

Resolution No. 241 (AZ) (2016 Nat’l. Conv.): A Recognition Program for the Boy Scouts of America Venturing Program

Addendum B

The Americanism Commission recommends the following dates for the events/meetings from our report, presented to the body for disposition.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>MEETING DATE</th>
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<tr>
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<td>American Legion Boys Nation – 2018</td>
<td>July 20-28, 2018</td>
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<td>American Legion Boys Nation – 2019</td>
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<td>American Legion Boys Nation – 2020</td>
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<td>American Legion Boys Nation – 2021</td>
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<td>Americanism Conference – 2017</td>
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<td>Americanism Conference – 2019</td>
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<td>Baseball Regionals – 2017</td>
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<td>Baseball Regionals – 2018</td>
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<td>Baseball World Series – 2018</td>
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<td>Baseball World Series – 2019</td>
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<td>Children &amp; Youth Conference – 2017</td>
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<td>Jr. Shooting Sports Conference – 2018</td>
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<td>Oratorical Contest Finals – 2018</td>
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<td>April 9-11, 2021</td>
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<td>April 22-24, 2022</td>
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<td>Scouting Chairman’s Conference</td>
<td>October 27-29, 2017</td>
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<td>Shooting Sports Nationals – 2018</td>
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<td>Shooting Sports Nationals – 2022</td>
<td>July 19-23, 2022</td>
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RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Commander, a motion to receive and file the report of the Americanism Commission with the exception of Addendum A and Addendum B. ...Second.
NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and a second regarding the report from the Americanism Commission. Are there any discussions? There being none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Report accepted.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Commander, attached to the Americanism Commission report is Addendum A and Addendum B. I move that the actions of the Americanism Commission become the actions of the National Executive Committee. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and a second regarding Addendum A and B. Are there any discussions? There being none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Motion passed.

I believe at this time we will now collect any Operation Comfort Warrior donations as well as National Emergency Fund donations or any other donations.

...National Vice Commander Boldt assumed the chair.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER KOUTZ: Thank you very much, commander. As you know, Operation Comfort Warriors is a very true and dear to my heart. We've done an outstanding job in Indiana. I know many of you in this room have many donations and fundraisers for Operation Comfort Warriors, and I want to thank you for that.

I want to give you some checks from Indiana that has been done, and I know we've got three more Operation Comfort Warriors events coming from now until the end of the month. But here are some of them and the checks I've got in the envelope:

American Legion Post 64, $49,000. American Legion Post 64 SAL Squadron 64, $5,000. American Legion Post 64 Auxiliary, $500. That's a total of just the first Sunday in April every year, we have a ham and bean and cornbread dinner. That day we raised $54,500. (Applause)

That's a lot of beans and a lot of music, and we had some good music. (Laughter)

We have that the first Sunday in April. But next year, since the first Sunday in April is on April Fools' Day and I don't want to be fooled by this, we're going to move it to the last Sunday in March. (Laughter)

Other donations, American Legion Post 276, $1,000. Harley-Davidson of Indianapolis, which we're going to have to run out there, they're having it next weekend, there will be a lot more money coming from them, $505.24. SAL Squadron 230, $500. 8th District SAL, $500. American Legion Riders Chapter 485, $300. American Legion Post 44, $300. Auxiliary Unit 66, $220. 11th District Commander Tim Elson, $200. American Legion Post 52, $200. American Legion Post 414, $200. Sergeant Major Raymond Oeth from Rolla, Missouri, he sends in $25 a month every month, brings it over to 8th District and gives us the money, $200.

Auxiliary Unit 170, $150. Richard and Andrea Woodke, $150. SAL Squadron 72, $100. SAL Squadron 22, $100. American Legion Post 172, $100. John Widman, past detachment commander, Fort Wayne, $100. Jerry and Linda Jordan, $100. Larry Lowry, $100. Edward and Vandella Harris from Indianapolis, $100. American Legion Post 178, $100. Mark and Pam Smith, and you know Mark downstairs that has all the good-looking rifles and pistols, him and his wife, $100. American Legion Sixth District, $42. And Janet Bunch, $30. Commander, I have checks in here, all of them totaling $59,897.24. (Applause)

One other thing we're doing in Indiana and I'd like to see, where we did it in our last district meeting. As you know, you go around, it's a bad thing to say about funeral homes, but funeral homes they've always got these little envelopes out there that you can donate to. We went and got a thousand of these printed and we've got envelopes in every funeral home in our district. We're hoping all of Indiana does that and you can all do the same thing. The envelopes were expensive, like $260 for a thousand of them, but if it brings in money for Operation Comfort Warriors, we don't care. Thank you very much. (Applause)
I'll introduce Jimmy May from Bloomington, he's our department commander this year. Of course, you know Paul Steward and Jerry Jordan, our NEC and our alternate. Thank you. \(\text{Applause}\)

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you, Indiana, and for your great contribution, it enables The American Legion to take care of those who have borne the battle. Michigan.

NEC MEMBER WEBSTER (MI): Well, not being as rich as Indiana we have a small donation here to OCW for $8,711.10. \(\text{Applause}\)

There's also another check in here for Child Welfare Foundation for $108. And with me here now is Ray Moore, our past department commander and our next alternate NEC. Thank you. \(\text{Applause}\)


NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER GOSA (MS): Mr. Commander, we have a couple of checks for you. We have one for the National Emergency Fund of $6,000. \(\text{Applause}\)

We have one for the National Child Welfare Fund for $4,250, and one for Operation Comfort Warriors for $550. \(\text{Applause}\)

With me I have my department commander, Murry Toney. If you get in trouble, he'll arrest you. \(\text{Laughter}\)

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you, Commander.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER BAXA (WV): On behalf of the state of West Virginia, we'd like to grant to you $1,500 for the Endowment Fund. Thank you, sir. \(\text{Applause}\)

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Well, thank you. \(\text{Applause}\)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER BAXA: With me is our state membership chairman, Frank Cooley. We hope everyone has a good meeting. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you, West Virginia. Any others? Well, thank you all. Thank you all very, very much.

...National Commander Schmidt resumed the chair.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: At this time, I call on your national adjutant, Daniel Wheeler of Virginia, for announcements.

Announcements

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: Just a reminder that the reception will start a half hour early, at 5:30, and the dinner will start a half hour early, at 6:30, the commander's dinner honoring members of the NEC and visiting Legionnaires.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Thank you, Mr. Adjutant.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Commander, we have a special order of business. I move that the National Executive Committee go into executive session. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: We have a motion and a second for the National Executive Committee to go into executive session. Any discussion? There being none, all in favor, say aye. All opposed?

Members of the National Executive Committee who are speaking for their department may stay. Alternates who are not representing their department as the sole spokesman on the NEC must leave. Past national commanders may stay, national officers may stay, including the executive director, Indiana office. The chairman of the Finance Commission may stay. The chairman of the Internal Affairs Commission may stay. The parliamentarian
may stay. All other are requested to leave. We will take a five-minute recess and reconvene in executive session.

...At 2:24 p.m., Wednesday, May 10, 2017, the National Executive Committee went into Executive Session.

...At 2:37 p.m., The National Executive Committee recessed, to reconvene at 8:30 a.m., Thursday, May 11, 2017.
...At 8:30 a.m., the National Executive Committee of The American Legion reconvened, National Commander Schmidt presiding.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: I now call to order the National Executive Committee meeting. The colors of our country in place. By the numbers: One, two. I now call on the national chaplain, Harry Klee of Texas, for the invocation.

Invocation
Harvey H. Klee, Texas, National Chaplain

Precious Lord, we thank You for the grace of another day and the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Help us to work together eagerly, honestly, and joyfully, knowing that everything we do has a place in Your purpose for us. Give us the will and desire to launch out into deep waters and to aim for goals that are high and difficult. Make us responsive to great things when we are called upon, and when our own powers are inadequate, show us where to turn for the help that we need. Lord, may what we begin today in effort and cooperation be done with Your inspiration, continued with Your help, and completed with Your guidance. Amen.

Pledge of Allegiance and
Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion
Kevin J. Owens, Oregon, National Sergeant-at-Arms

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Call on the national sergeant-at-arms, Kevin Owens of Oregon, to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

...The National Executive Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Good morning, everyone. I now call on our national adjutant, Daniel Wheeler of Virginia, for the roll call.

Roll Call
National Officers

National Commander
Charles E. Schmidt, Oregon

National Adjutant
Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia

National Vice Commanders
Paul Martel, Florida
Fae Casper, Georgia
Douglas L. Boldt, Nebraska
Paul L. Espinoza, New Mexico
Vincent James Troiola, New York
Past National Commanders

Keith A. Kreul, Wisconsin (Excused)  
Clarence M. Bacon, Maryland (Excused)  
John P. 'Jake' Comer, Massachusetts  
Miles S. Epling, West Virginia (Excused)  
Robert S. Turner, Georgia  
Dominic D. DeFrancesco, Pennsylvania (Excused)  
Bruce Thiesen, California (Excused)  
William M. Detweiler, Louisiana (Excused)  
Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota  
Joseph J. Frank, Missouri (Excused)  
Anthony G. Jordan, Maine (Excused)  
Butch L. Miller, Virginia (Excused)  
Hon. Alan G. Lance, Sr., Idaho (Excused)  
Richard J. Santos, Maryland

Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania  
Hon. John A. Brieden, III, Texas  
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado  
Paul A. Morin, Massachusetts  
Martin F. Conatser, Illinois  
Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan (Excused)  
David K. Rehbein, Iowa  
Clarence E. Hill, Florida  
Jimmie L. Foster, Alaska  
Fang A. Wong, New York (Excused)  
James E. Koutz, Indiana  
Daniel M. Dellinger, Virginia  
Michael D. Helm, Nebraska  
Harold D. Barnett, Georgia

National Executive Committeemen

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Committeeman</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>Willis Frazier</td>
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<td>Alaska</td>
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Oklahoma  Bobby D. Bryant
Oregon  Robert D. Liebenow
Pennsylvania  Dennis C. Haas
Philippines  Lawrence E. Wade
Puerto Rico  Luis A. Ayala
Rhode Island  Robert D. Winston (Excused) Cory D. Bates (Excused)
South Carolina  Cecil F. Hennis
South Dakota  Paul A. Evenson
Tennessee  Gary R. Drennon
Texas  C. W. Sparks, Jr.
Utah  Terry D. Schow
Vermont  Francis J. Killay
Virginia  Thomas E. Saunders
Washington  William R. Wallace (Excused) Ken C. Lee
West Virginia  William W. Kile
Wisconsin  Kenneth J. Rynes, Jr.
Wyoming  Terry E. Miller

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: That completes the roll call.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: We have a quorum. Next on the agenda, we get to hear from our national vice commanders. Let me say about our national vice commanders, they have been working hard with you and for you for this great organization. First we'd like to hear from Vice Commander Paul Martel of Florida.

Remarks: Paul Martel, Florida, National Vice Commander

Good morning, everyone. I'm going to make this short. I was told if I don't, they're going to shoot me right here on the podium.

I want to start by saying to our national commander, I apologize. I apologize for not meeting the criteria that we started when you took over as our national commander, and that is a negative. But the positive side is that, being an optimist, is that I have the great honor and the privilege to be able to be associated with the Central Region. Those department commanders did and are doing a great job to the best of their ability.

I want to say to you that I believe, because of these commanders, that every state that I went to, they had a plan. Whether it be two, three, five, or ten years out, they, each one, had a plan. And the best part about it is their vice commanders who are going to be their department commander is in on it. The adjutants are lockstep with them.

I believe that what they have done this year to help stop the slide of membership is that they have driven pilings into the ground deep, deep. The reason they have done this, the same as a dam that holds millions and millions of gallons of water: they have driven these pilings into the ground so that the future commanders can start putting cement in front of those pilings. I believe, I believe that they are on the right track.

True, as the speaker said yesterday, we are losing a lot of members. But with the attitude that these commanders have and with the determination, they have started
something that I believe will stop the slide. It may not be done this year, although we're not done because I have not heard the fat lady sing. *(Laughter)*

But they have started to stop the slide, and it's under your leadership, commander, that this has started. In the future, national commanders will have a better opportunity to grasp hold of this era that we have gone through, and turn it. I am honored to be part of that. I am honored to have had the privilege to have friends in the Central Region, new friends and some I knew before. This is the greatest organization in the world, and we are all proud, each and every one of us, and rightly so.

In closing, as I say all the times in my speech, may God bless each and every one of you as you travel this great country, doing the work of The American Legion. And most certainly, may God bless the greatest country the world has ever seen, a place we call the United States of America. God bless you and thank you so much. *(Applause)*

**RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN KILE:** Comrade commander, motion to receive and file the report of the National Vice Commander Paul Martel. ...Second.

**NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT:** You heard the first and second. Any discussion on that report? All in favor, say aye. Opposed? We accept your report, national vice commander, and thank you for all you're doing. Next, let's hear from National Vice Commander Fae Casper of Georgia.

**Remarks: Fae Casper, Georgia, National Vice Commander**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Good morning, commander. My honor to have been selected as the sixth female in the history of The American Legion to serve as your national vice commander. This became quite a topic when we were talking amongst some of us the other day, and we had to go back and research it and make sure. I thought for sure there were a lot more. But then I found out I was in this little small group, and I said, "How did I get there?"

It's been an interesting year. Traveling to all of the states that I'm assigned, with the exception of the District of Columbia and Mississippi, we've had scheduling conflicts, so I haven't been able to get there. But the food in different places is something different sometimes. Things I've never eaten before, but I'll try them.

It's been great to see the differences in how our departments are actually run. We're all based the same, but boy, do we run things differently. I'm used to how Georgia does it, and then I get out there and it's totally different in some areas. Big thing is, we get our job accomplished, and that's the important thing.

I just look forward to the next four months until our term is over, but I also don't look forward to it because I'm going to hate to not be able to travel and represent this great organization. I love The American Legion. I'm here for you, whether you're in one of my states that I'm assigned to or any other state. I thank you for the opportunity to visit the foreign countries this year. I think that's been a highlight for many of us, and I think all of us have learned a lot of information from that.

I had the honor of going to the Virgin Islands, and it was a great experience. Although I only flew in, spent a day, and came back, I found that one of the things that we need to do for the Department of Puerto Rico, is to train. They're there. They want to be involved. They want to be doing American Legion business. But when we change officers as often as we do in The American Legion, we need to know that they need training the same as Wyoming or some other state that's doing that. So great that Internal Affairs is now working on this program of more training, whether it's by the Internet or person-to-person.
So again, thank you very much for allowing me to serve this year, and I look forward to being involved in the Legion for many years to come. Thank you. (*Applause*)

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN KILE: Commander, motion to receive and file the report of National Vice Commander Fae Casper. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second. Are there any discussions? There being none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? The ayes have it. Next I call on National Vice Commander Douglas L. Boldt of the Department of Nebraska.

Remarks: Douglas L. Boldt, Nebraska, National Vice Commander

Mr. Commander, members of the NEC, past national commanders, Legionnaires all, and guests, what a pleasure to be part of the team this year. As I think about the things we've done and accomplished, I understand that there is success, even though the numbers don't necessarily indicate that.

As I think about some of the new programs we implemented, for example, when we call up those members of The American Legion who recruited one or three members, and you listen to their strategies and why they do it, and they wonder why we're taking the time to call them. You can hear the enthusiasm and the excitement that they have generated, and you know that that's going to be passed on.

As we think about moving the legacy forward, the opportunity that we've had to get into our schools and talk to the administration, open those doors, talk to the teachers and open those doors. As we've had an opportunity to spend time with our young children, we know that today they know more about The American Legion that they've ever known before.

So I look forward to all those opportunities. I know that we have marked success with those. It's been a great eight or nine months. I look forward to the next three or four months working with this team that we have in the leadership of the national commander.

And commander, thank you for your leadership. That ends my report. (*Applause*)

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN KILE: Commander, motion to receive and file the report of the National Vice Commander Boldt. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and a second. Are there any discussions? There being none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Motion accepted. I call on National Vice Commander Paul L. Espinoza from the Department of New Mexico.

Remarks: Paul L. Espinoza, New Mexico, National Vice Commander

Good morning, everyone, national commander, National Executive Committee, past national commanders, guests, and staff. It has been my honor to serve in the last eight and a half months as national vice commander which you elected me back eight and a half months ago. Out of 15 departments in the Western Region, I have visited and will be visiting 13 of them, if not two or three times on each department.

Those departments that I've been to thus far have been, far and beyond, working very hard. As Paul stated earlier, I am embarrassed myself. As a past national commander stated yesterday, yes. But one thing I do have to say is that these departments in the West have been working far and beyond since September 14 of the 50 percent target date, which there was no one in the West in the top ten, we now have today, there's five in the top ten of the West. I know we start off slow, finish fast, but that's not the way it should be. We've got to start off fast and finish fast, that's with everyone. They do work very hard in the West, and they all work differently, but they're all there for the same reason that we all are. They all
do work for the Four Pillars that we all stand for. They go far and beyond for their communities and their membership.

It is my honor to serve in the last eight and a half months, and I will do and continue to serve not just in the next three and a half months, but further after that. I'm always lecturing everywhere I go that membership is 365 days a year, 24/7, it never stops. I know we have to put a stop to the slide, and I know that future national commanders will continue to put more boundaries in front of that slide and we'll go back up where we're supposed to be. I have confidence in the West, confidence in the leadership I've been visiting. They're doing strong and working strong far and beyond. Continuity is going to be happening in the West as well, giving to the future leadership what the older leadership has done.

Again, it is my honor and I will continue to serve this fine American Legion, the best organization we have around the world, and I thank you very much for this opportunity you have given me, and I will keep on doing it in the future. Thank you and God bless. Thank you very much. (Applause)

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN KILE: Commander, motion to receive and file the report of National Vice Commander Espinoza. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second regarding the report. Are there any discussions? There being done, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? The ayes have it. I now call on National Vice Commander Vincent James Troiola from the Department of New York.

Remarks: Vincent James Troiola, New York, National Vice Commander

Commander, national officers, past national commanders, NEC all, good morning. Yesterday you heard from Past National Commander Jake Comer when he spoke about a Legion post in his state that had gone to their community, started a brand new post, and got 50 members. I had the opportunity, about a month before they received their charter, to go and visit the post for a meet-and-greet. The post was named after a soldier that served in Iraq, his name was Shane P. Duffy. I had the opportunity to meet his parents when I went to that post, and sit down and talk to them and look at the pride in their eyes of how proud they were that The American Legion would step up, and this young soldier that would start this Legion post and have their son honored by this. It was deeply humbling to visit that post.

Another example of that is when I visited Delaware. There was a post in Wilmington, Delaware, that was run as a gambling hall for 15 years. Two Legionnaires, Michael Williamson and Mark Stump, decided it was enough. It was in a neighborhood that was almost at the poverty level. The people in the neighborhood thought it was a secret society meeting in the building. These guys stepped in, got rid of all the riffraff, the bookies and all that, and started this Legion post back on its feet and now it's a viable member of the community. This is the kind of pride that I saw on my visits throughout the states.

When I receive the reports from the national commander on the people that signed up three new members, I personally call or email them. When you speak to these members, the pride that they have and the energy that they have, and they say to you, "Three members is nothing. I'm going to keep signing members up." This is what we're all about.

Then you go to the testimonial dinners, which I've done about five or six of them already, and you hear the things that the department commanders and the leadership have done, and it makes you very proud to be a Legionnaire. I can't tell you how proud I am to serve this great organization.

Recently, we started having conference calls with all of the departments regarding membership. It's the same thing: You get on the phone, the leadership is on, the adjutant,
the department commander, the vice commanders, they're all there. They're all so proud of what they do for their departments, all the programs and the membership. But I do see a slight hint of discouragement, and I want to let you know, don't be discouraged. You're well on your way to stopping the slide for membership. Be proud of what you do, don't get discouraged, keep your chin up, and you'll all be fine.

I want to thank everybody for letting me serve this year. I'm proud to be a member with the other four vice commanders, these are all fantastic people. I know that, going forward, this organization is going to be proud and large. Thank you. (Applause)

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN KILE: Commander, motion to receive and file the report of National Vice Commander Troiola. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second. Are there any discussions? There being none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Motion passed. Let me say to all departments: You have given us a great corps of national vice commanders, and I am honored to serve with them. Let's give them a round of applause for their efforts. (Applause)

I now call on Paul Dillard of Texas, chairman of the Veterans Employment & Education Commission, for the purpose of a report.

Oral Report: Veterans Employment & Education Commission
Paul E. Dillard, Texas, Chairman

Commander, past national commanders, members of the NEC, and special guests, the Veterans Employment & Education Commission met on May 8, 2017, at the Sheraton Indianapolis for the purpose of reviewing resolutions for your consideration. Three of the resolutions, one of which was referred by the 2016 National Convention, and two resolutions reviewed for your consideration. You have my written report. However, I'd like to mention a few things regarding one of the resolutions, Resolution 20.

Resolution 20 is GI Bill Fairness for Wounded Service Members and Activated National Guard and Reservists. Regarding the education, the Post-9/11 GI Bill is a signature benefit that our country has awarded to those who have answered the call after 9/11. It is a true measure for how much our country values its heroes. But through careless and misguided policymaking, thousands of veterans have been denied these benefits due to the type of mobilization orders they received.

Under authorization orders 12304(b), National Guards and Reserve units have deployed around the globe supporting active duty combat and commands. Despite serving side by side with active-duty servicemembers, reservists deployed under these orders are denied benefits earned for deployment including health care post- and pre-mobilization, retirement age reduction, pay differential, and eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Over 7,000 servicemembers have been issued these orders, with the numbers expected to mushroom in the coming years.

If that doesn't sound bad enough, it is worse if the National Guard or reservists gets wounded or injured in the line of duty. If this happens, they are issued the 12301(h) orders which are issued for servicemembers to undergo medical treatment and rehabilitation to include battlefield injuries. Like 12304(b), these orders are not eligible for 9/11 GI Bill entitlement. Over 20,000 reservists have been issued these orders since 2007 including servicemembers wounded on the battlefield. We cannot allow the veterans to be forgotten and we must not let Congress neglect these issues. The American Legion is here to help our fellow veterans and their families.

A lot has been talked about membership, and I'd just like to talk just a little bit about what our D.C. staff does. Many of you are aware of the Job Fairs, the Hiring Our Heroes,
the events that they set up throughout the country. I personally have gotten to attend three of those, and the members there are abundant. I encourage you to go back to your posts, your counties, your districts, and your departments, and encourage them to support our staff when they come in for these events. You have a tremendous amount of members right there eligible, young veterans and also the servicemembers that's fixing to go through transition to get out. I have signed up new members at every one of these, but it's not necessarily just a couple of people sitting at the table. You actually need a few more to mingle. I'm the one that likes to mingle.

It's a great opportunity to do this while The American Legion light is still shining bright and our membership is there. They are eager to join, but they want some information. And it makes it hard, sometimes, if maybe just our staff is there, because they do not know the local posts in the area. If you have people from local posts or districts, because these people want to work, they want to get involved. I encourage you to go back to your departments and encourage them, when these do come in the area, get your folks out there and get involved, and we can help grow this American Legion. I want to thank you very much on that. Commander, this completes my report, and thank you very much.

Advance Report: Veterans Employment & Education Commission
February 27, 2017
Paul E. Dillard, Texas, Chairman

Members and guests of the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission and its two standing committees on Employment and Veterans' Preference and Veterans Education, Other Benefits and Homelessness met at the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C., on Monday, February 27, 2017. Those meetings were held in conjunction with the Fifty-Seventh Annual Washington Conference.

In addition, a Career Fair hosted with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce was conducted on Friday, February 24, along with a Financial Literacy, Resume Workshop and Networking Luncheon, to discuss the Commission’s ongoing initiative to assist veterans with a successful transition from active-duty to gainful employment and financial stability. Furthermore, we hosted a Credentialing Roundtable on Thursday, February 23. An Awards Selection Subcommittee composed of members of the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission and its two committees met on the morning of Tuesday, February 28, for the purpose of selecting the national winners and runners-up in the Commission's two national awards programs.

Finally, our commission went on a Homeless Veterans site visit to a local community service provider on Tuesday, February 28.

A synopsis of the meetings follows:

I. CAREER FAIR

The National Veterans Employment & Education Commission of The American Legion collaborated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to host a hiring event on Friday, February 24, in the International Terrace, Terrace Level, Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C. This event started with an opening ceremony, which included speakers Cara Lustig, Senior Associate, Events, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation; Timothy Green, Director, Office of Strategic Outreach, Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS); Verna Jones, Executive Director, Washington, D.C. Office; and Charles E. Schmidt, National Commander, The American Legion. There were 65 employers from various industries and 225 attendees that participated in the Career Fair. In addition, the smaller roundtables (at the Career Fair) gave prospective employers opportunities to engage job seekers in a more personal manner, creating a relaxed
atmosphere where veterans felt comfortable practicing their pitches and seeking job opportunities.

The American Legion manned a table at this event. The table was manned by Ariel De Jesus, Jr., Assistant Director, National Veterans Employment & Education Division and Donna Woods, Assistant Director, Human Resources Division. These Legionnaires discussed how The American Legion assists veterans with reintegrating back to their local communities. Additionally, they answered servicemembers/veterans questions about benefits and described the Legion’s programs as well as explained how to become a member. The employers and participants at this event were pleased with the outcome. The employers stated that the participants were professional and qualified. The participants liked that employers were from different industries and willing to hire veterans.

II. FINANCIAL AND VETERAN RESUME WORKSHOPS

On Friday, February 24, the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission hosted a Financial Literacy and Resume Workshops at the Washington Hilton. The workshops were designed to help veterans, servicemembers, and their spouses find meaningful careers in the civilian workforce, expand their networks and gain the tools necessary to stand out throughout the hiring process. Speakers for these workshops included Rodney Rolland, Human Resources Director, American Legion, and Judy Viccellio, Partner, New York Life. Following the morning workshops, attendees were able to mingle with each other and prospective employers during a networking luncheon. The forum speakers included: Lieutenant Colonel Adam Grim, Employment Director, Soldier for Life; Sonny Sandelius, Operations for Academy Programs, SANS CyberTalent; Donald Mills, FDM Senior Project Analyst for Fannie Mae, FDM Group; John Tansill, Head of Veteran Initiatives, FDM Group; and Thomas Abernethy, Associate Director, Accenture Federal Services.

The new Job Fair/Workshop dynamic that The American Legion and U.S. Chamber created really has stepped outside the box, benefitting frustrated job seekers. The opportunity to polish and use the skills they have been refining during their job searches seemed to tremendously benefit participants. Jobseekers stated that the workshops along with the Job Fair was very informative and filled with quality job opportunities.

Finally, in this 2016 Veteran Economic Opportunity Report focusing on the Veterans Economic Communities Initiative (VECI), VA provides a condensed update of the national portrait of the veteran population and offers a framework for community-based engagement. VECI was a pilot program offering tailored local support that improves veterans’ economic success in 25 of the most populated metropolitan areas across the country. Listed below are some key findings in the report.

- Much emphasis remains on transitioning servicemembers and assisting them in effectively utilizing their educational benefits. In 2010-2015, DOD separated an average of 309,000 servicemembers. 90 percent of them were enlisted.
- We have seen an increase in positive education outcomes of transitioning enlisted personnel. During the period of 2010-2015, enlisted transitioning servicemembers increased their 4-year college degree attainment to 7 percent from 3 percent.
- While the increase in educational attainment has increased for transitioning military, Post-9/11 GI Bill flexibilities also support short-term training, on-the-job training programs (OJT), and registered apprenticeships. These opportunities provide an opportunity for further exploration and education.
• 1 out of 4 Post-9/11 veterans are employed by the government industry (federal, state, local), followed by manufacturing, and professional and business services. While median income declined for the general population and veterans, both male and female veterans still trend significantly higher wages than their non-veteran counterparts.

Other Key Findings
• Post-9/11 era veterans attain 11 percent higher median earnings than non-veterans with similar demographic characteristics.
• The Post-9/11 GI Bill is key in improving the economic opportunity of veterans and their families.
• Women Veterans are doing well compared with their male and non-veteran female peers in both career earnings and education.
• Women Veterans attain 14 percent higher median earnings than non-veteran women with similar demographic characteristics.
• Women Veterans using the Post-9/11 GI Bill had a 10 percent higher completion rate compared with male veterans for all ages combined, an 8 percent higher completion rate across all individual age groups, and a 5 percent higher completion rate when compared with female students in the general population cohort.

III. NATIONAL VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION COMMISSION FORUM

On Monday, February 27, the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission assembled in Jefferson West, Concourse Level, Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington D.C., to address education, employment and small business concerns regarding veterans and their families. The meeting started with an update from Colonel Adam Rocke, Director, Soldier for Life Program, on the data and trends of transitioning soldiers into the civilian workforce. The Soldier for Life Program connects Army, governmental, and community efforts to build relationships that facilitate successful reintegration of soldiers, retired soldiers, veterans and their families in order to keep them Army strong and instill their values, ethos, and leadership within communities. Listed below are some of the data from Soldier for Life presentation.

• 250,000 servicemembers transition – 135,000 are Soldiers
• 60 percent of Soldiers are married
• 10 percent of enlisted retire; 30 percent of officers retire from the Army
• Army is 85 percent male
• 7 percent of enlisted have 4-year degree

1. The top 5 transitioning military specialties: 1) Infantry; 2) Quartermaster (Logistics); 3) Field Mechanics; 4) Engineers; and 5) Signal/Communications
3. The top 5 state transitions by the numbers: 1) Texas; 2) California; 3) Florida; 4) North Carolina; and 5) Georgia

Also, Barbara Carson, Associate Administrator, Office of Veterans Business Development, Small Business Administration, briefed the commission on the multiple
resources that are available for veteran entrepreneurs, such as the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University (IVMF) V-WISE program, Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs), Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), SCORE chapters, and their roles in promoting veteran business. Ms. Carson also mentioned the statistics that veterans are 45 percent more likely to start a business than their civilian counterparts; consequently, 2.4 million, or 1 out of 10 small business in the United States are owned by veterans, and these veteran-owned small businesses have generated 1.2 trillion dollars in receipts within the last year.

In addition, Parisa Featherson, Program Manager, Personal & Professional Development, Marine & Family Programs, Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS), briefed the commission on the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) program that Marines go through. The Marine TAP program includes an Employer Panel and Career Fair at the end of the TAP course, which the other service branches do not include. The Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS) has emerged from a one-time training event into a self-guided approach located at every Marine Corps installation delivered throughout a Marine’s military career. The Marine For Life Cycle model which begins at recruitment and is extended to veteran Marines has now incorporated transition readiness action points across the Marines’ service to enable them to gather resources and information to align with their future goals and aspirations. The Marine For Life Cycle approach allows the Marine to meet required Career Readiness Standards prior to attendance at the TRS.

Furthermore, Robert Worley, Director, Education Service, VA, discussed the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits and other educational benefits within the VA. He noted that as of February 23, VA issued $72.8 billion in Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit payments to 1,731,226 individuals since program inception, August 2009. Mr. Worley also mentioned that a new law requires institutions to submit to the VA – no later than one year after enactment – an annual report on the academic progress of students receiving Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. The VA will include this information in its annual reports to Congress. In addition, the threshold for compliance surveys has also changed. Now, the VA will need to conduct a compliance survey on institutions offering approved courses with at least 20 veterans of beneficiaries enrolled. Previously, the enrollment threshold was 300 veterans. The VA must survey each institution at least once every two years. Lastly, the commission hosted a corporate and public sector panel in order to discuss issues that may hinder veterans obtaining gainful employment as well as opportunities for them in high growth industries. Topics included: How Industry is leveraging veteran employees to recruit new veterans; Attracting older veterans (over 45) into the workforce; Outreach and Retention; Veterans’ Preference; Hiring Freeze; and Veterans getting into the Cyber-Security field.

The forum speakers included: Colonel Adam Rocke, Director, Soldier for Life Program, U.S. Department of Defense (DOD); Derek Fronabarger, Chief of Staff, Student Veterans of America (SVA); Linda Brooks-Rix, Co-Chief Executive Officer, AVUE Technologies; Timothy Green, Director, Office of Strategic Outreach Veterans’ Employment and Training Services (VETS), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL); Barbara Debbage, Foreign Service IT Recruiting Manager, U.S. Department of State; Edna Vega, Senior Recruitment Advisor, U.S. Department of State; Mark Escherich, Program Analyst, Veterans Recruitment & Hiring Programs, U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA); Hakeem Basheerud-Deen, Director, Veterans Services, Office of Personnel Management (OPM); Michael Michaud, Former Assistant Secretary, Veterans’ Employment and Training Services (VETS), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL); Thomas Dawkins, Workforce Development & Education Director, Microsoft Corporation; Florent Groberg, Director, Veterans Outreach & the Eastern Region Community, The Boeing Company; Patrick O’Leary, Veterans Affairs Manager, United Parcel Service (UPS);
IV. AWARDS SELECTION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Prior to the Washington Conference, the Chairman of the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission appointed an awards selection subcommittee to review all the nominations that had been received during 2016 in the Employer of the Year awards program, and in the Employment Service awards program. This subcommittee met on Tuesday, February 28, in Jefferson West in the Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C., to select winners in the small, medium and large employer, LVER and DVOP categories, as well as Employment Service Local Office of the Year, Employer of Disabled, and Older Workers categories. During 2016, Departments submitted 56 nominations for employers and employment services. 8 were for small companies (1-50 employees), 5 were for medium size companies (51-200 employees), and 9 were for large companies (201+employees). 4 were for Employer of Older Workers, 2 were for Enhancing the Lives of the Disabled. Departments also submitted 8 nominations for Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs), 13 for Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and 7 for Local Employment Service (ES) Offices. Those appointed to the subcommittee were James Fratolillo (MA) - Chairman, Randall Fisher (KY), James Brehio (MA), Dennis Tipsword (IL), Eric Measles (CA), David Eagan (TX) and Frederick Nelson (SD).

The winners and runners-up in the Employer of the Year categories will be reviewed by the Department of Labor for pending safety and health or fair labor practices violations before the announcement is made.

**SMALL EMPLOYER:** Precision Moulding & Woodworks, Inc.
New Bern, North Carolina

**MEDIUM SIZE EMPLOYER:** Lowe’s Improvement Center, Inc.
Rapid City, South Dakota

**LARGE EMPLOYER:** Sansone Auto Mall
Avenel, New Jersey

**ENHANCE THE LIVES THE DISABLED:** Lone Survivor Foundation
Houston, Texas

**EMPLOYER OF OLDER WORKERS:** Ken’s Super Fair Food & Shell Express
Aberdeen, South Dakota

**LVER OF THE YEAR:** Reginald Parker
Houston, Texas

**DVOP OF THE YEAR:** Bradley Aune
Fargo, North Dakota

**ES LOCAL OFFICE OF THE YEAR:** Eau Claire Job Center
Eau Claire, Wisconsin
V. SMALL BUSINESS

The National Veterans Employment & Education Commission conducted a Veterans Small Business Workshop on Friday, February 24, at the Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C. Approximately 30 veterans and military spouses participated in this event. Participants traveled from as far away as New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, as well as Maryland and Virginia.

The workshop, “Boots to Business Reboot”, was specifically designed for service members, veterans, and spouses who own their own businesses or thinking of starting one. The intensive entrepreneurship course was created by The American Legion in collaboration with local small businesses such as Vets GSA LLC, Goldschmitt & Associates LLC, and the National Veterans Small Business Coalition.

The workshop featured informative sessions presented by Charles McCaffrey, Director, Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC), National Capital Region. Topics at the workshop included: Introduction to Business Ownership; Basics of Opportunity Recognition; Understanding Markets and Competition; Small Business Economics; Picking the Right Legal Entity for your Business; Financing your Business; Introduction to Business Planning; and Business Resources.

Following the informational sessions, participants were invited to a networking luncheon where they interacted with federal and private sector representatives. Our commission understands that for many veterans, entrepreneurship is a viable option, especially for those veterans who may find the job market tough to navigate. Consequently, The American Legion recognizes how important it is that we assist and advocate on behalf for our veterans who are self-employed. This is why The American Legion is one of the few Veterans Service Organizations that have invested in tangible programs and services for veteran entrepreneurs.

The American Legion's Small Business Task Force is a consortium of accomplished veteran business owners who have volunteered to advise the Legion on legislative matters that pertain to veteran businesses. The group of 30 members shares their experiences -- ranging from the public and private sectors -- to help inform the National Veterans Employment & Education Division on matters relating to federal contracting for veterans, procurement and other areas that affect veteran business owners.

VI. VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

On Tuesday, February 29, the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission hosted a homeless veterans site visit at the U.S.VETS facility in Washington, DC. With 21 residential sites and nine service centers in 13 cities across six states, Washington, DC, and the territory of Guam, U.S.VETS personnel go into local communities to find homeless veterans and guide them to crucial services. The range of services includes housing and employment assistance, as well as access to veterans benefits and treatment for mental and/or physical disabilities and substance abuse.

On the site visit, The American Legion received a briefing from U.S.VETS about their programs and services. U.S.VETS is the nation’s largest nonprofit provider of comprehensive services to at-risk and homeless veterans. In addition, we had conversations with several veterans about the program and how helpful it has been in assisting them with becoming more independent and hopeful for the future. The American Legion’s Operation
Comfort Warriors Program donated $4,800 worth of comfort items and necessities to the U.S.VETS facility during the tour. The in-kind donation was well received by U.S.VETS.

VA and HUD reported roughly 40,000 homeless veterans on a single night in January 2016 (2016 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress). VA has taken decisive action toward its goal of ending homelessness among our nation’s veterans. To achieve this goal, VA has developed a plan to assist every homeless veteran willing to accept services retain or acquire: a safe housing; needed treatment services; opportunities to retain or return to employment; and benefits assistance. Also, VA has implemented a prevention initiative - the Supportive Services for Veterans and Families (SSVF), which is VA’s primary prevention program designed to help veterans and their families rapidly exit homelessness, or avoid entering homelessness.

The American Legion continues to place special priority on the issue of veteran homelessness. With veterans making up approximately 11 percent of our nation’s total adult homeless population, there is plenty of reason to give the cause special attention. Along with various community partners, The American Legion remains committed to seeing VA’s goal of ending veteran homelessness come to fruition. Our goal is to ensure that every community across America has programs and services in place to get homeless veterans in the housing (along with necessary health care/treatment) while connecting those at-risk veterans with the local services and resources they need.

Report: Veterans Employment & Education Commission
May 9, 2017
Paul E. Dillard, Texas, Chairman

The National Veterans Employment & Education Commission met on May 9, 2017, at Headquarters Room 311 in Indianapolis, Indiana for the purpose of considering those matters that had previously been referred for study and to discuss a range of other current matters.

Presiding: Paul E. Dillard (TX), Chairman

Also in attendance was:

The staff member present was Joseph C. Sharpe, Jr. (DC), Director, for the National Veterans Employment & Education Division, James Fratolillo (MA), Chairman, Employment & Veterans Preference Committee, John Sampson (NY), Chairman, Veterans Education, Other Benefits & Homelessness Committee, and James Pisa (AK), Chairman, Veterans Employment & Education Commission Liaison Committee.

MATTERS RECEIVED, CONSIDERED AND ACTED UPON BY THE COMMISSION:

RESOLUTIONS:

Your Subcommittee considered three (3) resolutions. One (1) was referred from the 2016 National Convention and two (2) resolutions from the Veterans Employment & Education Commission has been forwarded to the National Executive Committee for approval.

The Commission then discussed the following issues:
EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION COMMISSION FORUM

On Monday, February 27, the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission assembled in Jefferson West, Concourse Level, Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington D.C., to address education, employment and small business concerns regarding veterans and their families. The meeting started with an update from Colonel Adam Rocke, Director, Soldier for Life Program, on the data and trends of transitioning soldiers into the civilian workforce. The Soldier for Life Program connects Army, governmental, and community efforts to build relationships that facilitate successful reintegration of soldiers, retired soldiers, veterans and their families in order to keep them Army strong and instill their values, ethos and leadership within communities. Listed below are some of the data from Soldier for Life presentation.

- 250,000 servicemembers transition – 135,000 are Soldiers
- 60 percent of Soldiers are married
- 10 percent of enlisted retire; 30 percent of officers retire from the Army
- Army is 85 percent male
- 7 percent of enlisted have 4 year degree

1. The top 5 transitioning military specialties: 1) Infantry; 2) Quartermaster (Logistics); 3) Field Mechanics; 4) Engineers; and 5) Signal/Communications
3. The top 5 state transitions by the numbers: 1) Texas; 2) California; 3) Florida; 4) North Carolina; and 5) Georgia

Barbara Carson, Associate Administrator, Office of Veterans Business Development, Small Business Administration, briefed the commission on the multiple resources that are available for veteran entrepreneurs, such as the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University (IVMF) V-WISE program, Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs), Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), SCORE chapters, and their roles in promoting veteran business. Ms. Carson also mentioned the statistics that veterans are 45 percent more likely to start a business than their civilian counterparts; consequently, 2.4 million, or 1 out of 10 small business in the United States are owned by veterans, and these veteran-owned small businesses have generated 1.2 trillion dollars in receipts within the last year.

In addition, Parisa Featherson, Program Manager, Personal & Professional Development, Marine & Family Programs, Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS), briefed the commission on the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) program that Marines go through. The Marine TAP program includes an Employer Panel and Career Fair at the end of the TAP course, which the other service branches do not include. The Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS) has emerged from a one-time training event into a self-guided approach located at every Marine Corps installation delivered throughout a Marine’s military career. The Marine For Life Cycle model which begins at recruitment and is extended to veteran Marines, has now incorporated transition readiness action points across the Marines’ service to enable them to gather resources and information to align with their future goals and aspirations. The Marine For Life Cycle approach allows the Marine to meet required Career Readiness Standards prior to attendance at the TRS.

Furthermore, Robert Worley, Director, Education Service, VA, discussed the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits and other educational benefits within the VA. He noted that as of February 23, VA issued $72.8 billion in Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit payments to 1,731,226
individuals since program inception, August 2009. Mr. Worley also mentioned that a new law requires institutions to submit to the VA – no later than one year after enactment – an annual report on the academic progress of students receiving Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. The VA will include this information in its annual reports to Congress. In addition, the threshold for compliance surveys has also changed. Now, the VA will need to conduct a compliance survey on institutions offering approved courses with at least 20 veterans of beneficiaries enrolled. Previously, the enrollment threshold was 300 veterans. The VA must survey each institution at least once every two years. Lastly, the commission hosted a corporate and public sector panel in order to discuss issues that may hinder veterans obtaining gainful employment as well as opportunities for them in high growth industries. Topics included: How Industry is leveraging veteran employees to recruit new veterans; Attracting older veterans (over 45) into the workforce; Outreach and Retention; Veterans’ Preference; Hiring Freeze; and Veterans getting into the Cyber-Security field.

The forum speakers included: Colonel Adam Rocke, Director, Soldier for Life Program, U.S. Department of Defense (DOD); Derek Fronabarger, Chief of Staff, Student Veterans of America (SVA); Linda Brooks-Rix, Co-Chief Executive Officer, AVUE Technologies; Timothy Green, Director, Office of Strategic Outreach Veterans’ Employment and Training Services (VETS), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL); Barbara Debbage, Foreign Service IT Recruiting Manager, U.S. Department of State; Edna Vega, Senior Recruitment Advisor, U.S. Department of State; Mark Escherich, Program Analyst, Veterans Recruitment & Hiring Programs, U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA); Hakeem Basheerud-Deen, Director, Veterans Services, Office of Personnel Management (OPM); Michael Michaud, Former Assistant Secretary, Veterans’ Employment and Training Services (VETS), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL); Thomas Dawkins, Workforce Development & Education Director, Microsoft Corporation; Florent Groberg, Director, Veterans Outreach & the Eastern Region Community, The Boeing Company; Patrick O’Leary, Veterans Affairs Manager, United Parcel Service (UPS); Anthony Paolino, Military & Veterans Affairs Liaison, General Dynamics; and Heather Strawn, Senior Director of Federal Government Affairs, AbbVie, Inc.

EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER FAIRS

The National Veterans Employment & Education Commission of The American Legion collaborated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to host a hiring event on Friday, February 24, in the International Terrace, Terrace Level, Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C. This event started with an opening ceremony, which included speakers Cara Lustig, Senior Associate, Events, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation; Timothy Green, Director, Office of Strategic Outreach, Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS); Verna Jones, Executive Director, Washington, D.C. Office; and Charles E. Schmidt, National Commander, The American Legion. There were 65 employers from various industries and 225 attendees that participated in the Career Fair. In addition, the smaller roundtables (at the Career Fair) gave prospective employers opportunities to engage job seekers in a more personal manner, creating a relaxed atmosphere where veterans felt comfortable practicing their pitches and seeking job opportunities.

The American Legion manned a table at this event. The table was manned by Ariel De Jesus, Jr., Assistant Director, National Veterans Employment & Education Division and Donna Woods, Assistant Director, Human Resources Division. These Legionnaires discussed how The American Legion assists veterans with reintegrating back to their local communities. Additionally, they answered service members/veterans questions about benefits and described the Legion’s programs as well as explained how to become a
member. The employers and participants at this event were pleased with the outcome. The employers stated that the participants were professional and qualified. The participants liked that employers were from different industries and willing to hire veterans.

Additionally, on Friday, February 24, the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission hosted a Financial Literacy and Resume Workshops at the Washington Hilton. The workshops were designed to help veterans, service members, and their spouses find meaningful careers in the civilian workforce, expand their networks and gain the tools necessary to stand out throughout the hiring process. Speakers for these workshops included Rodney Rolland, Human Resources Director, American Legion, and Judy Viccellio, Partner, New York Life. Following the morning workshops, attendees were able to mingle with each other and prospective employers during a networking luncheon. The forum speakers included: Lieutenant Colonel Adam Grim, Employment Director, Soldier for Life; Sonny Sandelius, Operations for Academy Programs, SANS CyberTalent; Donald Mills, FDM Senior Project Analyst for Fannie Mae, FDM Group; John Tansill, Head of Veteran Initiatives, FDM Group; and Thomas Abernethy, Associate Director, Accenture Federal Services.

The new Job Fair/Workshop dynamic that The American Legion and U.S. Chamber of Commerce created really has stepped outside the box, benefitting frustrated job seekers. The opportunity to polish and use the skills they have been refining during their job searches seemed to tremendously benefit participants. Jobseekers stated that the workshops along with the Job Fair was very informative and filled with quality job opportunities.

The American Legion’s National Veterans Employment & Education Division, through its relationships, continues to play a vital role in assisting American Legion Posts to produce successful Job Fairs, small business development workshops, and employment training services throughout America. In addition, the staff of the National Veterans Employment & Education Division is also involved in a number of advisory committees. Director Joseph Sharpe Jr. is a member of the Small Business Administration's Advisory Committee, and Deputy Director Mark Walker is a member of the Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Veterans Advisory Committee.

Aside from advisory committees, The American Legion is also a stakeholder and active participant in numerous government agencies and private businesses’ veteran initiatives, where our input into their programs is highly valued. The American Legion has a representative on the Department of Labor’s Advisory Committee Veterans’ Employment, Training and Employer Outreach (ACVETEO) and Interagency Task Force on Veterans Small Business Development. Lastly, The American Legion participates in the Veterans’ Entrepreneurship’s Task Force (VET-FORCE) business forums and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s Service Member’s Affairs meetings.

Finally, in this 2016 Veteran Economic Opportunity Report focusing on the Veterans Economic Communities Initiative (VECI), VA provides a condensed update of the national portrait of the veteran population, and offers a framework for community based engagement. VECI was a pilot program offering tailored local support that improves veterans’ economic success in 25 of the most populated metropolitan areas across the country. Listed below are some key findings in the report.

- Much emphasis remains on transitioning servicemembers and assisting them in effectively utilizing their educational benefits. In 2010-2015, DOD separated an average of 309,000 servicemembers. 90 percent of them were enlisted.
- We have seen an increase in positive education outcomes of transitioning enlisted personnel. During the period of 2010-2015, enlisted transitioning
servicemembers increased their 4-year college degree attainment to 7 percent from 3 percent.

- While the increase of educational attainment has increased for transitioning military, Post-9/11 GI Bill flexibilities also support short term training, on-the-job training programs (OJT), and registered apprenticeships. These opportunities provide an opportunity for further exploration and education.

- 1 out of 4 Post-9/11 veterans are employed by the government industry (federal, state, local), followed by manufacturing, and professional and business services. While median income declined for the general population and veterans, both male and female veterans still trend significantly higher wages than their non-veteran counterparts.

Other Key Findings

- Post-9/11 era veterans attain 11 percent higher median earnings than non-veterans with similar demographic characteristics.

- The Post-9/11 GI Bill is key in improving the economic opportunity of veterans and their families.

- Women Veterans are doing well compared with their male and non-veteran female peers in both career earnings and education.

- Women Veterans attain 14 percent higher median earnings than non-veteran women with similar demographic characteristics.

- Women Veterans using the Post-9/11 GI Bill had a 10 percent higher completion rate compared with male veterans for all ages combined, an 8 percent higher completion rate across all individual age groups, and a 5 percent higher completion rate when compared with female students in the general population cohort.

LICENSING AND CREDENTIALING

The National Veterans Employment & Education Commission hosted a military credentialing on Thursday, February 23, in the International Terrace, Terrace Level, Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C. This event started with welcome remarks from National Commander Charles E. Schmidt and a keynote address from Major General Hugh Van Roosen, Deputy G-1 of the U.S. Army. The room was at capacity with over 50 stakeholders present from industry, federal government and academia.

The roundtable unveiled a sneak peak of The American Legion’s State of Military and Veteran Credentialing Report, created with support from a Military.com grant. The report identified eight opportunities for action for the Trump Administration:

- Improve the Post-9/11 GI Bill Licensing and Certification Benefit (pro-rate the cost of the exam)
- Ensure Quality of Certification Programs
- Ensure Quality of the Non-traditional Credential Preparation Programs
- Better Identify Labor Market Demand for Credentials
- Track Credential Attainment Outcomes
- Reduce State Licensure Barriers
- Develop Best Practices for Credentialing Servicemembers and Veterans
- Ensure Military and Veteran Interests are Represented in Civilian Workforce Credentialing Initiatives
In addition, briefings were presented from representatives from the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Labor, on initiatives and research studying military credentialing. While the entire ecosystem was discussed, special attention was payed to the Information Technology industry and Supply Chain Management. To that end, representatives from Microsoft, Amazon.com, CompTIA, and Pearson VUE were present to share their efforts to hire veterans and concerns over possible barriers of employment.


**NATIONAL EMPLOYER AWARDS**

During the Washington Conference, the Commission’s Awards Subcommittee met to select winners in the Employer of Veterans and Employment Service awards categories. Winners include:

**SMALL EMPLOYER:** Precision Moulding & Woodworks, Inc.
New Bern, North Carolina

**MEDIUM SIZE EMPLOYER:** Lowe’s Improvement Center, Inc.
Rapid City, South Dakota

**LARGE EMPLOYER:** Sansone Auto Mall
Avenel, New Jersey

**EMPLOYER OF THE DISABLED:** Lone Survivor Foundation
Houston, Texas

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**LVER OF THE YEAR:** Reginald Parker
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**DVOP OF THE YEAR:** Bradley Aune
Fargo, North Dakota

**ES LOCAL OFFICE OF THE YEAR:** Eau Claire Job Center
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

**HOMELESS VET OUTREACH:** The Department of Nebraska
Lincoln, Nebraska

**VETERANS ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

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Washington, D.C. Approximately 30 veterans and military spouses participated in this event. Participants traveled from as far away as New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, as well as Maryland and Virginia.

The workshop, “Boots to Business Reboot”, was specifically designed for service members, veterans, and spouses who own their own businesses or thinking of starting one. The intensive entrepreneurship course was created by The American Legion in collaboration with local small businesses such as Vets GSA LLC, Goldschmitt & Associates LLC, and the National Veterans Small Business Coalition. The workshop featured informative sessions presented by Charles McCaffrey, Director, Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC), National Capital Region. Topics at the workshop included: Introduction to Business Ownership; Basics of Opportunity Recognition; Understanding Markets and Competition; Small Business Economics; Picking the Right Legal Entity for your Business; Financing your Business; Introduction to Business Planning; and Business Resources.

Following the informational sessions, participants were invited to a networking luncheon where they interacted with federal and private sector representatives. Our commission understands that for many veterans, entrepreneurship is a viable option, especially for those veterans who may find the job market tough to navigate. Consequently, The American Legion recognizes how important it is that we assist and advocate on behalf for our veterans who are self-employed. This is why The American Legion is one of the few Veterans Service Organizations that have invested in tangible programs and services for veteran entrepreneurs.

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**VETERAN HOMELESSNESS**

On Tuesday, February 29, the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission hosted a homeless veterans site visit at the U.S.VETS facility in Washington, DC. With 21 residential sites and nine service centers in 13 cities across six states, Washington, DC, and the territory of Guam, U.S.VETS personnel go into local communities to find homeless veterans and guide them to crucial services. The range of services includes housing and employment assistance, as well as access to veterans benefits and treatment for mental and/or physical disabilities and substance abuse.

On the site visit, The American Legion received a briefing from U.S.VETS about their programs and services. U.S.VETS is the nation’s largest nonprofit provider of comprehensive services to at-risk and homeless veterans. In addition, we had conversations with several veterans about the program and how helpful it has been in assisting them with becoming more independent and hopeful for the future. The American Legion’s Operation Comfort Warriors Program donated $4,800 worth of comfort items and necessities to the U.S.VETS facility during the tour. The in-kind donation was well received by U.S.VETS.

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The American Legion continues to place special priority on the issue of veteran homelessness. With veterans making up approximately 11 percent of our nation’s total adult homeless population, there is plenty of reason to give the cause special attention. Along with various community partners, The American Legion remains committed to seeing VA’s goal of ending veteran homelessness come to fruition. Our goal is to ensure that every community across America has programs and services in place to get homeless veterans in the housing (along with necessary health care/treatment) while connecting those at-risk veterans with the local services and resources they need.

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

A very important part of the work of the National Veterans Employment & Education Division is the preparation and presentation of congressional testimony as well as letters of support on issues affecting the economic well-being and financial stability of America’s veterans. Since January 2017, the National Veterans Employment & Education Division has been involved with two (2) congressional testimonies and have written four (4) letters of support.

The following is a synopsis of the congressional hearings and correspondence held from January to May 1, 2017, on matters pertaining to the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission:

On February 6, the staff wrote a letter of support to Representative Allen Messer (IN) for “The Protection of Veterans from School Closure Act”, which would protect veterans from losing their GI Bill benefits from schools that have been closed.

On March 10, the staff wrote a letter of support to Senator Jon Tester (MT) for “The Grow Our Own Directive: Physician Assistant Employment and Education Act”, which would provide educational assistance to certain former service members for education and training as physician assistants for the purpose of being employed at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On March 24, the staff wrote a letter of support to Representative Virginia Foxx (NC) and Senator Lamar Alexander (TN) for “The Laws and Regulations that Protect Student Veterans and Military Families from Deceptive Colleges”, which would support oversight and legislation evaluating post-secondary education institutions on quality factors, such as, but not limited to, accreditation, transferability, cost, graduation rates, and acceptance in the job market.

On March 24, the staff wrote a letter of support to Representative Scott Peters (CA) for H.R. 1379, an amendment of Title 38, United States Code, to provide for the entitlement to educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs for members of the Armed Forces awarded the Purple Heart, which would grant 100 percent Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility to all Purple Heart veterans who qualify for a portion of the benefit.

On March 30, the staff testified before the Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce, House Committee on Small Business “Entrepreneurial Development Programs Resources to Assist Small Business.” It is vital that veteran-owned and service-disabled-veteran-owned businesses receive a fair and proportionate amount of federal contracts so these veterans can build and maintain successful businesses.
CONCLUSION

The National Veterans Employment & Education Commission is fully aware that it would be impossible to carry out its mandates without the active involvement of Posts, Districts, Counties, Departments and individual Legionnaires. We deeply appreciate their continued support and involvement. Chairman Dillard also like to thank the National Commander, the National Adjutant, the National Executive Committee, and the staff of both the Washington and Indianapolis offices for the outstanding support and cooperation they have provided during the past year.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Commander, motion to receive and file the report of the Veterans Employment & Education Commission with the exception of three resolutions. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second on the report. Are there any discussions? There being none, all in favor, say aye. All opposed? Report accepted.

Resolution No. 19: Support the Creation of a Department of Veterans Affairs Small Business Advisory Committee

Origin: Veterans Employment & Education Commission
Submitted By: Veterans Employment & Education Commission

WHEREAS, There is increasing demand among veterans for assistance in creating and operating veteran-owned small businesses in federal contracting; and
WHEREAS, Successful veteran-owned small businesses are good for the economy in the local community, state and nation; and
WHEREAS, Many transitioning servicemembers and veterans are not aware of relevant procurement opportunities available to them; and
WHEREAS, Public Law 106-50, the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999 established the Small Business Administration Advisory Committee on Veterans Business Affairs to serve as an independent source of advice and policy recommendations to the administrator of the Small Business Administration; and
WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs should have a similar advisory board in place as a source of advice and recommendations for veteran-owned small business; and
WHEREAS, To obtain more active involvement by the veteran-owned small business community in the development of financial accounting, reporting, and verification standards, the advisory board could provide focused input and feedback from a veteran-owned small business perspective; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion endorses the development of a veteran-owned small business advisory committee within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that will ensure equal parity for veterans in all small business government contracting programs, provide advice and recommendations on specific VA veteran-owned small business issues, and help shape legislation that assists veteran-owned small businesses succeed.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER STEWARD: This resolution has the support of the Veterans Employment & Education Commission and your Resolutions Subcommittee, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second regarding Resolution No. 19. Is there any discussion? There being none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Resolution 19 is adopted.
Resolution No. 20: GI Bill Fairness for Wounded Servicemembers and Activated National Guard and Reservists  
Origin: Veterans Employment & Education Commission  
Submitted By: Veterans Employment & Education Commission  
WHEREAS, In the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act, authorization 12304b was created under Title 10, which allowed reserve component troops to meet the challenges around the globe by mobilizing without counting against caps on active forces; and  
WHEREAS, Even while serving side-by-side with active duty servicemembers, these reservists are denied benefits earned for deployments including health care (pre- and post-mobilization), retirement age reduction, pay differentials, and eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, due to 12304b not being included in Title 38 of the U.S. Code, as “active duty”; and  
WHEREAS, Members of the National Guard or reserve who are wounded in combat are given 12301(h) orders, which are similarly restrictive for their recovery, treatment and rehabilitation; and  
WHEREAS, H.R. 1384 corrects these oversights via amendment of U.S. Code Titles 5, 10, 37 and 38 to be inclusive of the §12304b mobilization authority in determining eligibility for all servicemembers who have mobilized under these orders; and  
WHEREAS, The American Legion has identified the complicated and challenging process of selecting and applying for schools; now, therefore, be it  
RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion supports present and future amendments to U.S. Code Titles 5, 10, 37 and 38 commensurate with U.S. Code Title 10 authorized service, such as 12304b and 12301(h) in order to provide Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits for these combat wounded, National Guard and reservists.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER STEWARD: This resolution has the support of the Veterans Employment & Education Commission and your Resolutions Subcommittee, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.  
NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second regarding Resolution No. 20. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor of Resolution 20, say aye. Opposed? Resolution 20 is adopted.

Resolution No. 21: Support State and National Funding for Troops to Teachers Program  
Origin: Resolution No. 235 (SC) 2016 National Convention  
Submitted By: Veterans Employment & Education Commission  
WHEREAS, The Troops to Teachers program sponsored by the Department of Defense has been in effect since 1994; and  
WHEREAS, The Department of Defense abruptly halted funding in 2016 to review program procedures, resulting in uncertainty among Troops to Teachers employees and applicants; and  
WHEREAS, The program has relaunched with new procedures for state and federal grants; and  
WHEREAS, The Troops to Teachers program helps both veterans as they re-enter civilian life and helps fill school teaching shortages; now, therefore, be it  
RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion support renewed funding for the Troops to Teachers program at both state and national levels.
RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER STEWARD: This resolution has the support of the Veterans Employment & Education Commission and your Resolutions Subcommittee, and I move for its adoption. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second regarding Resolution No. 21. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. All opposed? Resolution No. 21 is adopted. I now call on our national historian, Paul D. Bennett of Missouri for the purpose of a report.

**Report: National Historian**

Paul D. Bennett, Missouri, National Historian

National Commander Schmidt, national officers, National Executive Committee members, distinguished Legionnaires and guests; good morning to each of you. Commander Schmidt I take a moment to thank you for your visit to Missouri in late October. I truly hope you enjoyed your homecoming in Craig, Missouri your hometown, as much as I did accompanying you on your trip.

One of my first duties as national historian was to oversee the annual National History Book Contest. It was my honor to announce those winners to you at our Fall NEC. For many years, department historians and past national historians have weighed a problem of giving feedback to the many contestants of our National History Book Contest. I’m proud to say that with Library/Museum Director Howard Trace and his trusty assistant in the library Ms. Lynda Lydick, we resolved that problem, by developing a computer program that allows us to give the feedback of all the judges involved in judging a particular book. Lynda’s help and ideas went a long ways in developing this program and solving a long time problem. Thank you Lynda and Howard. A second perceived problem, was the way we handled the book judging. That problem was also resolved. In the coming months we're going to be discussing the possibility of an additional contest, so hopefully by 2020 we can put that into the records.

Upon my return home from our Fall Meetings, I sent a letter to all department and past national historians expressing my ideas for the new year. As has been an annual problem with the department and post entries in the History Book Contest I sought to express attention to detail to all historians. Then in March of this year, I again contacted all department historians and reminded them of our annual contest and expressing the desire to receive many more entries.

I currently am preparing for our Annual Historian Luncheon at our National Convention; this year in Reno, Nevada. Invitations will soon be arriving in the mail. Commander Schmidt, it continues to be a great honor to serve you and the NEC as national historian. To Mr. Howard Trace and his excellent library staff I say, "Thank you." Commander, that concludes my report.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN KILE: Mr. Commander, motion to receive and file the report of National Historian Paul Bennett. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second regarding the historian's report. Any discussion? If not, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Report accepted. (Applause)

Thank you, Paul. I now call on James W. Oxford from the Department of North Carolina, chairman of the Legislative Commission, for the purpose of a report.
Commander, since you did bring it up, as a North Carolinian, I'd like to say, "Go Tar Heels!" Commander Schmidt, national officers, past national commanders, members of the National Executive Committee, and special guests. While the Legislative Commission was not called to meet at this meeting, we have prepared a written report for your review and it has been distributed. Attached to that report is Addendum I, listing the resolutions with legislative intent pertinent to the 115th Congress, including those approved by this National Executive Committee, the 98th Annual National Convention, and the 2016 Fall NEC meetings.

The Legislative Commission has met once since the National Executive Committee meeting last October. That meeting was held on February 27, 2017, at The American Legion Washington Conference. There were more than 33 members present. We also had 60 other guests present with standing room only. Interest and attendance such as this is inspirational and shows that now, more than ever, Legionnaires realize the actions taken by the U.S. Congress are important. I had the honor of chairing this meeting, and our national legislative council chairman Dewey Moss of Georgia, presented his report on council activities.

The commission continued our efforts to increase education about the legislative issues impacting The American Legion and to promote better understanding of the American political process. Guest speakers included staff directors for both the House and Senate Veterans Affairs committees. After their prepared presentations, a question-and-answer session brought out other issues for discussion. Both sides benefited from this information exchange.

The Legislative staff discussed the impact of pending legislation including VA and DoD budgets, the ongoing status of the Choice Act, appeals modernization, accountability in the VA, the flag amendment, and the centennial coin bill, and others. The American Legion continues to be an active and vocal participant in the nation's legislative processes. In the first five months of the 115th Congress, The American Legion has provided testimony for eight congressional hearings. There was another one scheduled yesterday but was canceled by Congress. They're also working on four other testimonies, not including normal congressional roundtables.

We have had several meetings at the White House and even participated in two presidential bill or executive order signings. Work has also been done on more than 30 pieces of legislation, with a big win on the appeals modernization process, which we are predicting passage in the near future. I'd like to take just a moment. The Legislative Division, the VA&R, the VE&E, were also active participants in the creation of that appeals process bill. We did work closely with the White House and Congress in creating that bill. Those bills are included in your packet, and I would encourage you to review them to ensure everyone is aware of The American Legion positions on those pieces of legislation, before discussing the issues with your representatives, just to make sure you're saying what The American Legion wants and we need to support.

Our Legislative Council puts Legionnaires in hundreds of congressional offices to amplify our voice, and when our action alerts go out, we monitor the feedback and can see thousands of contacts with senators and representatives. Most recently, The American Legion asked our members to reach out to members of Congress, seeking their support of The American Legion Centennial Coin Act. That action has yielded great results and has us on track for passage for that centennial coin.

In closing, nothing is more important in our national legislative effort than our Legion Family and the collective voice they carry. When the call is made for help, we want Capitol
Hill and the White House to hear the thunder of The American Legion voice. We need everybody's help there. We need more Legionnaires involved, and the best way to do that is to sign up for action alerts. If you don't know how to do that, see Matthew Shuman and we can get you signed up for that. Our mission as The American Legion family is to protect the rights and benefits of the American veterans. We can and will accomplish that mission, but we need every member's help.

Commander, the Legislative Commission appreciates your continued support and involvement, as well as that of the national adjutant, the National Executive Committee, and the staff in Washington, D.C. and Indianapolis. I thank you for the honor and privilege of chairing this commission and serving this great organization and having the opportunity to carry the legacy forward. I would like to take just a moment, introduce our legislative director, Matthew Shuman. (Applause)

I'll just make a couple of other short announcements. The Legislative staff in D.C. has been short-handed. We have recently added three people to those positions: Derek Fronabarger has been on board a couple of weeks and is really beginning to show his effectiveness and how much he's going to be able to help us. John Gennace and Larry Lohmann are coming on board June 5, so that will fill out all of those lobbyist positions, and we will see a benefit from those positions. Matthew, thank you for what you do, you're doing great work, keep it up. Commander, that concludes my report.

Advance Report: Legislative Commission
April 17, 2017
James W. Oxford, North Carolina, Chairman

There has been one meeting of the National Legislative Commission since the National Executive Committee last met in October, 2016. Thirty-three (33) members of the Commission met on February 27, 2017 at the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, DC. Legislative Commission Chairman Oxford (NC) chaired the meeting. National Legislative Council Chairman Dewey Moss (GA) presented his report on Council activities.

The Commission welcomed two guest speakers to its meeting who participated in a panel discussion about the veterans’ legislative agenda for the 115th Congress. The guest speakers were: Jon Towers, Majority Staff Director for the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs (HCVA); and Tony McClain, Minority Staff Director of the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs (SCVA). Each speaker was asked to list the legislative priorities for his committee leader – HCVA Chairman Phil Roe (TN) and SCVA Ranking Member Jon Tester (MT). Afterwards, a lively question-and-answer session occurred, with many Commission members fully engaged in the discussion. Also in attendance – and participating in the Q&A – was Steve Robertson, former director of the Legislative Division.

Legislative Director Matthew Shuman reported on the status of current legislation impacting on issues critical to The American Legion. Major discussion topics included: legislation to address VA’s Choice program, as well as to improve VA’s appeals process; and, to address the continuing problems with transparency and accountability in the VA.

Recent Congressional Developments

The First Session of the 115th Congress convened on January 3, 2017. Major issues on the agenda for both chambers revolved mainly around deficit reduction and its effects on the budgets of the Departments of Defense (DOD) and Veterans Affairs (VA). To date,
The American Legion has participated in eight congressional hearings during the First Session.

The American Legion and the Citizens Flag Alliance continue to support a proposed constitutional amendment: “The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.” The American Legion supports passage of the measure and ratification by the state legislatures. A House bill, House Joint Resolution (H.J. Res.) 61, was introduced on February 2, 2017 by Representative Steve Womack (AR). This measure currently has 23 cosponsors, and more are being sought. A Senate companion measure is in the works, with a sponsor and co-sponsors being sought.

The Legislative Division thanks everyone who attended the Washington Conference to visit with their respective Members of Congress. We also extend a special thanks to those who have already submitted their Call-In Status Reports. Thus far, the Legislative Commission has received about 168 reports and more are still coming in. These call-in reports keep us informed of the great work that you and the departments are doing to advance our legislative priorities. The reports are also an excellent resource for keeping track of which congressional offices were visited and the issues that were discussed. If you have not already submitted a report, we look forward to seeing it soon. You can use the following web form to submit the report quickly and conveniently: http://www.legion.org/legislative/aar.

A more substantive report on congressional developments will be presented by the Legislative Commission at the May 10-11, 2017 meetings of the National Executive Committee.

Below is a list of bills that the Legislative Division has worked on during the First Session of the 115th Congress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bill Number</th>
<th>Official Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Issue Code</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H.J. Res. 61</td>
<td>Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States giving Congress power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.</td>
<td>Protecting the American flag from acts of physical desecration by passing a constitutional amendment – SUPPORT</td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 303</td>
<td>Retired Pay Restoration Act</td>
<td>To amend title 10, United States Code, to permit additional retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or combat-related special compensation. – SUPPORT</td>
<td>DEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 333</td>
<td>Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act</td>
<td>To amend title 10, U.S.C., to permit retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability rated less than 50 percent to receive concurrent payment of both retired pay and veterans’ disability compensation, to extend eligibility for concurrent receipt to chapter 61 disability retirees with less than 20 years of service, and for other purposes – SUPPORT</td>
<td>DEF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Number</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 1301</td>
<td>Making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes</td>
<td>DEF</td>
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<tr>
<td>S. 339</td>
<td>Military Widow’s Tax Elimination Act of 2017</td>
<td>DEF</td>
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<td>H.R. 1216</td>
<td>Protecting Veterans From School Closures Act of 2017</td>
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<td>H.R. 1384</td>
<td>Reserve Component Benefits Parity Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 1379</td>
<td>To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the entitlement to educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs for members of the Armed Forces awarded the Purple Heart</td>
<td>EDU</td>
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<td>H.R. 91</td>
<td>Building Supportive Networks for Women Veterans Act</td>
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<td>H.R. 95</td>
<td>Veterans’ Access to Child Care Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 105</td>
<td>Protect Veterans from Financial Fraud Act of 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 299</td>
<td>Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Number</td>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 467</td>
<td>VA Scheduling Accountability Act</td>
<td>To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs complies with requirements relating to scheduling veterans for health care appointments, to improve the uniform application of directives of the Department, and for other purposes – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 906</td>
<td>Furthering Asbestos Claims Transparency (FACT) Act</td>
<td>To amend title 11 of the United States Code to require the public disclosure by trusts established under section 524(g) of such title, of quarterly reports that contain detailed information regarding the receipt and disposition of claims for injuries based on exposure to asbestos, and for other purposes – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 907</td>
<td>Newborn Care Improvement Act</td>
<td>To amend title 38, U.S.C., to improve the care provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to newborn children – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 918</td>
<td>Veteran Urgent Access to Mental Healthcare Act</td>
<td>To amend title 38, U.S.C., to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish mental health care to certain former members of the Armed Forces who are not otherwise eligible to receive such care and for other purposes. – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 1005</td>
<td>To amend title 38, U.S.C., to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans</td>
<td>To amend title 38, U.S.C., to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans – SUPPORT</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 1162</td>
<td>No Hero Left Untreated Act</td>
<td>To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to carry out a pilot program to provide access to magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy to veterans – OPPOSE</td>
<td>VET</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 1181</td>
<td>Veterans 2nd Amendment Rights Protection Act</td>
<td>To amend title 38, U.S.C., to clarify the conditions under which certain persons may be treated as adjudicated mentally incompetent for certain purposes – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 1259</td>
<td>VA Accountability First Act of 2017</td>
<td>To amend title 38, U.S.C., to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, and for other purposes – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 1328</td>
<td>American Heroes COLA Act of 2017</td>
<td>To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for annual cost-of-living adjustments to be made automatically by law each year in the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans, and for other purposes – OPPOSE</td>
<td>VET</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Number</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Sponsor</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 1329</td>
<td>Veterans Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2017</td>
<td>To increase, effective as of December 1, 2017, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, to amend title 38, U.S.C., to improve the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, to improve the processing of claims by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 1390</td>
<td>To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay costs relating to the transportation of certain deceased veterans to veterans’ cemeteries owned by a State or tribal organization.</td>
<td>To amend title 38, U.S.C., to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay costs relating to the transportation of certain deceased veterans to veterans’ cemeteries owned by a State or tribal organization – SUPPORT</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 1545</td>
<td>VA Prescription Data Accountability Act of 2017</td>
<td>To amend title 38, U.S.C., to clarify the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to disclose certain patient information to State controlled substance monitoring programs, and for other purposes – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 1564</td>
<td>VA Beneficiary Travel Act of 2017</td>
<td>To amend section 504 of the Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 to specify the funding source for travel related to examinations by physicians not employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding medical disabilities of applicants for benefits under title 38, U.S.C., to codify section 504 of the Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 1996, and for other purposes – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 1725</td>
<td>Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2017</td>
<td>To amend title 38, U.S.C., to improve the treatment of medical evidence provided by non-Department of Veterans Affairs medical professionals in support of claims for disability compensation under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 1848</td>
<td>To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on the use of medical scribes in Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers</td>
<td>To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on the use of medical scribes in Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 2493</td>
<td>Wounded Warrior Service Dog Act</td>
<td>To direct the Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs to jointly establish a program for the awarding of competitive grants to non-profit organizations that address physical and mental health needs of servicemembers and veterans with assistance from service dog – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 90; S. 233</td>
<td>Providing Veterans Overdue Care Act of 2017</td>
<td>To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out certain major medical facility leases of the Department of Veterans Affairs – SUPPORT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill No.</td>
<td>Bill Title</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Committee</td>
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<td>S. 423</td>
<td>CHAMPVA Children’s Care Protection Act of 2017</td>
<td>To amend title 38, U.S.C., to increase the maximum age for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program, and for other purposes – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
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<tr>
<td>S. 426</td>
<td>Grow Our Own Directive: Physician Assistant Employment and Education Act of 2017</td>
<td>To increase educational assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for education and training of physician assistants of the Department, to establish pay grades and require competitive pay for physician assistants of the Department, and for other purposes – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
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<tr>
<td>S. 681</td>
<td>Deborah Sampson Act</td>
<td>To amend title 38, U.S.C., to improve the benefits and services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to women veterans, and for other purposes – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 744</td>
<td>Protecting Veterans Credit Act of 2017</td>
<td>To amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to delay the inclusion in consumer credit reports and to establish requirements for debt collectors with respect to medical debt information of veterans due to inappropriate or delayed billing payments or reimbursements from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes. – SUPPORT</td>
<td>VET</td>
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</table>

**Issue Code Listing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>AER</td>
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<tr>
<td>BUD</td>
<td>Budget / Appropriations</td>
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<td>Constitution</td>
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<td>CPT</td>
<td>Copyright / Patent / Trademark</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>ENG</td>
<td>Energy / Nuclear</td>
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<td>FOR</td>
<td>Foreign Relations</td>
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<td>FUE</td>
<td>Fuel / Gas / Oil</td>
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<td>LBR</td>
<td>Labor Issues / Antitrust / Workplace</td>
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<td>SMB</td>
<td>Small Business</td>
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<td>TAX</td>
<td>Taxation / Internal Revenue Code</td>
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<td>TRA</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>Trade (Domestic / Foreign)</td>
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<td>UNM</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
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<td>VET</td>
<td>Veterans</td>
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**Report: Legislative Commission**

**May 10 – 11, 2017**

James W. Oxford, North Carolina, Chairman

This report provides a summary of congressional actions since the National Convention on issues of particular concern to The American Legion. The report is arranged by program areas.

**Recent Congressional Developments**

The First Session of the 115th Congress convened on January 3, 2017. Major issues on the agenda for both chambers revolved mainly around final fiscal year (FY) 2017 appropriations for the Department of Defense (DOD) and the remainder of the federal government, with the exception of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The American Legion has participated in nine congressional hearings during the First Session.

On April 28, President Trump signed **Public Law 115-30**, which extended FY17 funding for federal government operations for an additional week. The House passed the measure earlier in the day by a 382-30; the Senate followed suit shortly after, approving the bill by voice vote. The extra time gave House/Senate leadership and appropriators time
to develop a spending measure to fund the federal government for the remainder of FY17, which ends on September 30.

The House on May 3 voted 309-118 to approve legislation to fund the federal government for the remainder of FY17. The funding measure used **H.R. 244** – a veterans bill – as the legislative vehicle for the appropriations. On May 4, the Senate cleared the funding bill by a 79-18 recorded vote, clearing the legislation for the President’s signature. President Trump signed the measure on May 5 as Public Law 115-31.

**AMERICANISM**

On February 8, 2017 Representative Steve Womack (AR) introduced **House Joint Resolution (H.J. Res.) 61**, a flag protection constitutional amendment for the 115th Congress. It has been assigned to the House Judiciary Committee. The measure currently boasts 23 cosponsors. The American Legion will continue to seek passage of a constitutional amendment to protect the American flag because it is the right thing to do. Let “We the People” decide.

On May 5, 2017 the President signed into law the final continuing appropriations measure for FY17, as **Public Law (P.L.) 115-31**. Under the provisions of the new law, Department of Justice programs received $29 billion in funding for the remainder of the fiscal year (until September 30, 2017). Specific areas of interest to The American Legion include:

- **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI):** The FBI received $9.2 billion for this year;
- **U.S. Marshals Service:** This agency would receive $1.2 billion;
- **Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA):** $2.1 billion is tabbed for this agency;
- **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF):** The legislation contains $1.3 billion; and,
- **Juvenile Justice Grants:** One program area that has been a primary Legion concern since 1974 is the account for juvenile justice grants, which totals $247 million for FY 2017. These grants address such concerns as child abuse, youth gangs and violence against children, missing / exploited children, and underage drinking.

**INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

On September 29 the President enacted **P.L. 114-227**. This measure amends title 36, United States Code, to authorize the American Battle Monuments Commission to acquire, operate, and maintain the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial in Marnes-la-Coquette, France, in the western suburbs of Paris. The site also includes a cemetery with 68 graves for the pilots of the Lafayette Escadrille and the Lafayette Flying Corps who died during their service in the war.

The Lafayette Escadrille was a squadron of American airmen, formed in 1916, who volunteered for service with the French during the First World War. Serving under French officers and flying French warplanes, it was hoped that the service of these Americans would persuade the American public to push the U.S. government to abandon its policy of neutrality and join the fight with the French against “the Huns” (Germans). When the U.S. finally joined the fight against the Central Powers, many Americans from the Escadrille joined the American forces to continue the fight for freedom.

On December 14, 2016, the President signed **P.L. 114-269**, the **Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Congressional Gold Medal Act**. The OSS was the World War II predecessor to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Special Operations Command. It was created in 1942 by President Franklin Roosevelt who appointed General William Donovan – a
World War I Medal of Honor recipient—as its director. Therefore, Donovan is the founding father of the US intelligence and special operations communities.

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian honor Congress can bestow.

On March 28, President Trump signed P.L. 115-15, the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017. The measure permanently recognizes March 29 each year as “National Vietnam War Veterans Day” as an appropriate occasion to fly the American flag. This law added March 29 as a day for displaying the American flag, as enumerated in Title 4, U.S. Code, Section 6(d). With enactment of this new law, there is no longer a need for the President to sign a resolution recognizing this significant date.

The President on March 31 signed P.L. 115-18. This legislation designates a location in our nation’s capital for a memorial to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Under the provisions of P.L. 114-223, the Continuing Appropriations Act for FY 2017—signed by the President on September 29, 2016—military construction accounts received a total of $7.9 billion, an increase of $282 million over the administration’s request, for the entirety of FY 17. This amount included $1.27 billion for family housing projects, with another $304 million slated for military medical treatment facilities. It further appropriates $673 million for the construction or alterations of Guard and Reserve facilities, and $246 million for essential safety improvements and infrastructure work at four DOD Education Activities facilities in the U.S. and overseas.

In addition, the final continuing appropriations legislation (P.L. 115-31) contained $247.7 million in funding for military construction related to Overseas Contingency Operations for FY17.

On March 16, the House voted 240-175 to approve H.R. 1181, the Veterans Second Amendment Protection Act. The measure now goes to the Senate for consideration. The measure would prohibit the VA from considering any beneficiary assisted by a fiduciary as “mentally defective” without a magistrate or judicial authority ruling that the beneficiary is a public danger for the purpose of reporting their names to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), or any other database intended to identify persons who would be excluded from keeping, possessing, or owning firearms. The American Legion supports this legislation.

Final funding for the Department of Defense (DOD) for the balance of FY17 was contained in P.L. 115-31. The measure allots $593 billion for DOD programs, an increase of $19.9 billion over the FY 2016 enacted level. It includes $76.6 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations funding— including $14.8 billion in supplemental funds requested by the current administration.

Defense spending includes:

- **Military Personnel and Pay**: $132.2 billion for military personnel and pay accounts, including a 2.1 percent pay raise for all uniformed personnel and civilian employees. This funding level provides for 1.305 million active-duty troops and 813,200 Guard and Reserve troops.
- **Operation and Maintenance**: $223 billion; this category supports key readiness programs to prepare our troops for combat and peacetime missions, including flight time and training, equipment and facility maintenance, and base operations.
- **Research and Development**: $73.7 billion; this area will fund research, development, testing, and evaluation of new defense technologies. It will help to
advance the safety and success of current and future military operations and prepare our nation to meet a broad range of future security threats.

- **Procurement**: $123.3 billion; these funds support our nation’s military readiness by providing the necessary platforms, weapons, and other equipment our military needs to train, maintain the force, and conduct successful operations.
- **Health**: $34.1 billion for DOD health and family programs; the legislation includes funding for cancer research, as well as traumatic brain injury and psychological health research and suicide prevention outreach programs.

**VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION**

Under the provisions of P.L. 114-223, signed by the President on September 29, 2016, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) received a total of $176.9 billion for FY17 funding. Discretionary funding totaled $74.4 billion, an increase of $2.9 billion above the FY 16 level. Included in the discretionary funding accounts are:

- **VA Medical Services** – $52.8 billion, $2.8 billion above last year’s enacted level. Individual accounts which interest The American Legion include: $7.9 billion in mental health care services; $7.3 billion in homeless veterans treatment, services, housing, and job training; $1.5 billion for Hepatitis C treatment; $284 million for traumatic brain injury treatments; $250 million in rural health initiatives; and, $173 million in suicide prevention activities.
- **Medical and Prosthetic Research** – The new law provided $675 million for this account, an increase of $44 million over the previous year’s funding.
- **Advance Appropriations for All Veterans Programs for FY 2018** – $170.3 billion. Discretionary medical programs will be funded in 2018 at $66.4 billion. In addition, mandatory programs will be funded at $103.9 billion. This was done to eliminate the possibility that VA programs would go unfunded in case of a government shutdown.
- **National Cemetery Administration** – This agency received $286 million for its operations, $15 million more than FY 2016.
- **Information Technology (IT)** – This account received $4.28 billion, an increase of $178 million.
- **Disability Claims Processing** – $2.9 billion was allocated to address the burgeoning claims backlog. This amount is an increase of $30 million over the President’s request and $148 million above the 2016 enacted amount. This funding will support 242 new staff to tackle claims and appeals work, $153 million for digital scanning of claims; and $27 million for centralized mail. Funding for the Board of Veterans Appeals was increased by $46 million to a total of $156 million, to address the looming appeals backlog.
- **Construction** – Major construction funding totaled $528 million, $728 million below the 2016 amount. Funds will be used for correcting critical seismic deficiencies, new hospital and clinic construction, and repairing crumbling infrastructure in some of VA’s oldest structures. Minor construction was set at $372 million.
- **Construction Grants** – The state extended care facilities account received $90 million (a decrease of $30 million), with the state cemeteries programs receiving $45 million ($1 million below FY16). Both of these programs have been essentially flat-lined by Congress for a number of years; The American Legion continues to urge Congress to make substantial increases in both grant accounts to allow states to construct state cemeteries and states veterans’ homes.
President Obama on September 29, 2016 enacted P.L. 114-226, the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016. This bill authorizes VA to enter into Veterans Care Agreements with certain eligible providers to furnish hospital care, medical services, or extended care to eligible veterans if:

- Furnishing such care and services at VA facilities or under otherwise authorized contracts or sharing agreements with non-VA facilities is impracticable or inadvisable because of the veteran's medical condition, the travel involved, or the nature of the care or services required; and
- VA determines that the hospital care or medical services to be furnished are not available from a non-VA health care provider under a contract or sharing agreement other than an agreement under this bill.

The new law sets forth provider eligibility criteria and requires VA to establish a process for provider certification. VA may carry out leases at the VA West Los Angeles Campus in Los Angeles, CA:

- For supportive housing for veterans and their families;
- For third party services to veterans and their families for health and wellness promotion, education, employment-related training, peer activities and physical recreation, legal and federal benefits assistance, family support services including child care, and transportation; and,
- To The Regents of the University of California for additional services for veterans and their families.

VA shall establish a Community Veterans Engagement Board for the Campus to coordinate locally with VA to identify community goals and advise the department on improving services and outcomes for veterans, members of the Armed Forces, and their families. Finally, the law amends provisions regarding VA's enhanced-use lease authority, including to prohibit VA from waiving or postponing the obligation of a lessee to pay any consideration, including rent, under an enhanced-use lease.

On October 19, 2016 the Social Security Administration announced a small raise in the cost living index, the third consecutive year the benefits adjustment will be under 0.5 percent. Since 2009, the cost-of-living increase has been more than 2 percent only once, when it reached 3.6 percent in 2011. Military retirees and individuals receiving veterans benefits, including service-connected disability compensation, will see a 0.3 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increase in their federal benefits next year. The adjustment went into effect December 30.

The Social Security COLA is calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Consumer Price Index, a statistical estimate of the anticipated price of a variety of household goods and services. Social Security, military retiree, and veterans benefits changes affect more than 70 million Americans, about 22 percent of the country’s population.

According to the Associated Press, the 0.3 percent adjustment will translate into less than $4 more a month for a Social Security recipient who receives the average monthly benefit of $1,238. However, veterans using Medicare for health coverage may not see any increase at all, once those medical costs come into play. The AP reported Medicare Part B premiums, which are usually deducted from Social Security payments before the recipient receives their money, are increasing in 2017, thus effectively wiping out the COLA hike.

On November 28, 2016, President Obama signed P.L. 114-247, the No Veterans Crisis Line Call Should Go Unanswered Act. It was developed in response to inspector general and media reports that VA crisis line calls were going to voice mail because of mismanagement and lazy employees. It would require VA to develop a plan to ensure each telephone call and text message is answered in a timely manner by an appropriately qualified live person.
On December 14, 2016, the President signed P.L. 114-273, the Charles Duncan Buried with Honor Act of 2016. This measure authorizes VA to furnish a casket or urn for a deceased veteran laid to rest in a national, state, or tribal cemetery if their family cannot afford it.

On December 16, President Obama enacted P.L. 114-315, the Jeff Miller and Richard Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2016. This measure would make a number of improvements to VA health care, the disability compensation process, and other veterans’ services. It would:

- Clarify VA’s responsibility to provide treatment to individuals seeking emergency care;
- Expand the amount of time that certain widows and widowers may receive and utilize Post-9/11 G.I. Bill educational assistance benefits under the Fry Scholarship;
- Require the VA Secretary to notify Congress if an employee is placed on administrative leave for more than 14 days in a single year; and,
- Expand eligibility for medallions to mark the graves of our nation’s veterans and Medal of Honor recipients who are buried in private cemeteries.

The House on March 16 by a vote of 237-178 passed H.R. 1259, the VA Accountability First Act of 2017. This legislation will provide VA Secretary Shulkin the tools he needs to swiftly discipline employees who fail in their mission to provide world-class health care and services to the men and women who served. This legislation doesn’t just build back the trust of America’s veterans; it gives VA employees the trust to know that bad actors within the department will no longer have the power to taint their good name. The measure now goes to the Senate for consideration.

On March 17 the House by a 412-0 recorded vote approved H.R. 1367, legislation to improve VA’s ability to recruit and retain high-quality health care providers and other professionals. H.R. 1367 would improve VA’s ability to recruit and retain the very best providers to treat our nation’s heroes. The measure contains a number of provisions that would strengthen VA’s ability to identify staffing shortages, recruit employees to fill vacant positions, quickly on-board new hires, and retain high-performing workers across the country. It also contains provisions that would improve leadership and accountability throughout VA and increase the number of veterans in the federal workforce. This bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

President Trump on April 19 signed P.L. 115-26, a measure to amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to modify the termination date for the Veterans Choice Program. On April 3, the legislation passed the Senate by a voice vote. The House followed suit two days later, approving the measure by a voice vote. The new law eliminates the sunset date of the Veterans Choice Program. Without this measure, the Choice Program would have ended on August 7; now the Choice Program will continue until the money to fund the program is expended.

As a result of enactment of P.L. 115-31, the final appropriations measure for FY 17, the Department of Veterans Affairs received an addition $50 million in the “Medical Services” account. These funds are earmarked for opioid substance abuse prevention and treatment programs.

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

The final appropriations bill for FY17 – P.L. 115-31 – included funding for the Department of Labor, specifically for the Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS). Spending for VETS totaled $279 million. Funding for individual VETS accounts included:
• Jobs for Veterans state grants received $175 million, which fund DVOP and LVER personnel;
• Federal administrative costs were funded at $41 million;
• Homeless Veterans Reintegration Programs received $45 million;
• Transition Assistance Program (TAP) was funded at $14.6 million; and,
• National Veterans’ Employment and Training Services Institute (NVTI) received $3.4 million for its operations, including the training of DVOPs and LVERs.

On March 21, with minor amendments, the U.S. Senate approved by unanimous consent the bill H.R. 244, the Honoring Investments in Recruiting and Employing American Military Veterans Act of 2017, or more simply the HIRE Vets Act. The measure originally passed the House on February 13 by a recorded vote of 409-1.

This legislation would require the Department of Labor (DOL) to establish a HIRE Vets Medallion Program to recognize companies for their efforts to employ veterans. Under the program, DOL would annually give HIRE Vets Medallion Awards to private and public sector businesses that recruit, employ and retain veterans and businesses that provide supportive services to the veteran community.

In early May, House leadership and appropriators used H.R. 244 as the funding vehicle for FY 17 continuing appropriations. Language to fund the federal government for the remainder of the fiscal year – until September 30 – was attached to the original legislation. The measure passed both congressional chambers, and was signed by President Trump on May 5 as P.L. 115-31.

This concludes The American Legion National Legislative Commission’s Report to the National Executive Committee.

Addendum I
Report: Legislative Commission
May 10 – 11, 2017

The National Legislative Commission is required, under Rule 8-b of the National Executive Committee, to compile a list of resolutions with legislative intent adopted during meetings of The American Legion National Convention and The American Legion National Executive Committee. The following resolutions constitute an ongoing list of all resolutions that are legislative in nature. This list of resolutions will constitute part of The American Legion’s legislative program through the 115th Congress.

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED IN THE SPRING MEETINGS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MAY 8-9, 2017

FINANCE
Res. No. 3 100th Anniversary Commemorative American Legion Coin

INTERNAL AFFAIRS
Res. No. 16 National Global War On Terrorism Memorial

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION
Res. No. 20 GI Bill Fairness for Wounded Servicemembers and Activated National Guard and Reservists
Res. No. 21 Support State and National Funding for Troops to Teachers Program
VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION
Res. No. 23 Department of Veterans Affairs Provide Mental Health Services for Veterans with other than Honorable and General Discharges
Res. No. 25 Department of Veterans Affairs Maintain Medical and Dental School
Res. No. 27 Amend Title 38, United States Code, To Clarify The Treatment of A Veteran as Adjudicated Mentally Incompetent for Certain Purposes
Res. No. 29 Department of Veterans Affairs Establish An Opioid Treatment Program to include An Opioid Detox Unit at every VA Medical Center


AMERICANISM
Res. No. 19 Flag Code Amendment

INTERNAL AFFAIRS
Res. No. 9 Transfer Custodianship of Pershing Hall Building and Artifacts to the American Battle Monuments Commission
Res. No. 11 Support and Defend Veteran and Military Memorials

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION
Res. No. 22 Surviving Families Benefits
Res. No. 23 Add Agent Orange Component to Code of Federal Regulations 4.16
Res. No. 24 Improve Special Monthly Compensation (K) Award

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION
Res. No. 20 Oppose Efforts to Downgrade Low-Level Wage Positions within the Department of Veterans Affairs
Res. No. 21 Education Benefit Forgiveness and Relief for Displaced Student-Veterans

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED AT THE 98TH NATIONAL CONVENTION IN CINCINNATI, OH AUGUST 30-SEPTEMBER 1, 2016

AMERICANISM
Res. No. 278 Financially Assist Families Faced by Catastrophic Illness of Their Children
Res. No. 279 Support Funding Comprehensive Health Care for Children & Youth
Res. No. 280 Funding For Drug Trafficking Prevention Programs
Res. No. 281 Prevention of Child Sexual Exploitation
Res. No. 282 Oppose any Attempt to Weaken Present Laws Governing Penalties for the Production, Sale and Distribution of Pornographic or Obscene Materials to Minors
Res. No. 283 Establish “National Family Week”
Res. No. 284 Locate Missing Children and Prevent Child Victimization
Res. No. 285 National School Lunch Program
Res. No. 286 Prevent Child Maltreatment
Res. No. 287 Programs and Organizations that Promote Child Safety
Res. No. 288 Reducing or Preventing Teenage Pregnancy
Res. No. 289 Support for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Res. No. 290 Honoring the Anniversary of “In God We Trust”
Proceedings of Thursday, May 11, 2017

Res. No. 291 School Prayer
Res. No. 292 Return Patriotic Holidays to Traditional Dates
Res. No. 293 Oppose Importation of Foreign Manufactured American Flags
Res. No. 294 Boy Scouts of America and The Department Of Defense
Res. No. 295 Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance
Res. No. 296 Support Fairness for Immigrant Spouses
Res. No. 297 Conscientious Objectors Tax Diversion
Res. No. 298 English Language be Declared as the Official United States Language
Res. No. 299 Pledge of Allegiance
Res. No. 300 Star Spangled Banner
Res. No. 301 Eliminate Damages and Attorney Fees in Establishment Clause Lawsuits
Res. No. 302 Oppose Flag Code Changes for Hoisting, Lowering or Passing of The Flag, The National Anthem, and The Pledge of Allegiance
Res. No. 303 Constitutional Amendment to Protect The Flag of The United States

INTERNAL AFFAIRS
Res. No. 270 Increase Income Tax Deduction for Volunteer Mileage

NATIONAL SECURITY
Res. No. 15 Support Veteran Status for National Guard and Reserve Servicemembers
Res. No. 16 Second Amendment
Res. No. 17 Position on the Operational Reserve
Res. No. 18 Support Research and Funding for Alternative Energy Resources
Res. No. 19 Develop Defense against Electromagnetic Pulse Attack
Res. No. 20 Fully Enforce Immigration Laws
Res. No. 21 Support for Financial Anti-Terrorism
Res. No. 22 Guard and Reserve Space-A Travel
Res. No. 23 Support for the Department of Homeland Security and Coast Guard
Res. No. 24 Illegal Immigration Policy
Res. No. 25 Support for the Non-Federal Roles of the National Guard
Res. No. 26 Pipeline Construction and Energy Independence
Res. No. 28 Reserves and National Guard Retirement Benefit Fairness
Res. No. 29 Commercial Shipbuilding for Defense
Res. No. 31 Buy American
Res. No. 32 Support Domestic Energy Production
Res. No. 33 Rare Earth Elements
Res. No. 34 Support Unmanned Vehicles
Res. No. 45 Policy on the Arctic Region
Res. No. 56 Protection, Preservation and Retention of Federal and Military Monuments in the United States
Res. No. 85 Support for Military Quality of Life Standards
Res. No. 86 National Defense Budget
Res. No. 88 POW/MIA Policies
Res. No. 89 Taiwan Defense Arms Sales
Res. No. 90 South China Sea Island Building
Res. No. 91 Cybersecurity and Identity Theft
Res. No. 92 Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission Positions
Res. No. 93 Codify Burial Eligibility for Arlington National Cemetery
Res. No. 94 Earned Military Benefits
Res. No. 95 Flexible Savings Accounts
Res. No. 96 Support Full Funding and Resourcing for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps
Res. No. 98 Support for the Global War on Terrorism
Res. No. 99 Support for the Jones Maritime Act and Related Cabotage Laws
Res. No. 100 Military Commissaries
Res. No. 101 Support for the Reformation of the Military Voting System
Res. No. 102 Oppose Tricare Fee Increases
Res. No. 103 Correction of Military Records
Res. No. 104 Rebuild America’s Defense Industrial Base
Res. No. 105 Reference Veterans Service Organizations at Discharge
Res. No. 106 Establish a Strategic Plan for the Internal Security within the United States
Res. No. 107 Support Armed Services Retirement Homes
Res. No. 108 Support for Legislation Prohibiting Hate Speech at Military Funerals
Res. No. 109 Support for Pain Management Research, Treatments and Therapies at DOD, VA and NIH
Res. No. 110 Support for Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
Res. No. 111 Taiwan Straits Dialogue
Res. No. 171 Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC)
Res. No. 172 Support for World Press Freedom
Res. No. 173 Secure National Borders Against Illegal Drugs
Res. No. 174 Security of Overseas Embassies
Res. No. 175 Oppose Iran Nuclear Deal
Res. No. 176 Authorize and Fund Tricare for Reserve Components and Dependents
Res. No. 200 Extended Care Health Option (ECHO)
Res. No. 201 Enhanced Funding for USAID
Res. No. 202 Military Retiree Mail at Overseas Embassies
Res. No. 203 Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance
Res. No. 204 Policy on Latin and Central America
Res. No. 205 Foreign Policy Objectives
Res. No. 206 Middle East/Gulf States Foreign Policies
Res. No. 208 Prohibit Foreign Investments in U.S. Defense Industry
Res. No. 209 Space-A Travel for Unemployed and Disabled Veterans and Dependents
Res. No. 210 Support for the American Battle Monuments Commission
Res. No. 211 Securing Pakistan’s Nuclear Arsenal
Res. No. 212 Vietnam Human Rights
Res. No. 213 Support for Foreign Exchange Education Program
Res. No. 214 Global Trade Policies
Res. No. 215 Long-Range Strike Capabilities
Res. No. 216 Support for the United States Air Force
Res. No. 217 Identifying National Interests before Committing Military Forces and Assets
Res. No. 218 Support for the Selective Service Registration Program
Res. No. 219 Support Full Funding for the Department of the Army Budget
Res. No. 220 Support for National Missile Defense System
Res. No. 221 Military Occupational Specialty Standards
Res. No. 222 Policy on Africa
Res. No. 223 Policy on Cuba
Res. No. 224 Support for Concurrent Receipt of Military Retirement Pay and VA Disability
Res. No. 225 Fully Fund NASA

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

Res. No. 1 Department of Veterans Quadrennial Plan for Budget
Res. No. 2 Reinstate Enrollment of Priority Group 8g Veterans into The Department of Veterans Affairs' Patient Enrollment System
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<td>Exempt certain Income from VA Pension Rate Determination</td>
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Res. No. 130  Radiation Exposure
Res. No. 131  Recognize Operations in Lebanon (1958), Grenada (1983), and Panama (1989-1990) as Periods of War for Department of Veterans Affairs Pension Purposes
Res. No. 132  Request Congress Provide the Department of Veterans Affairs Adequate Funding for Medical and Prosthetic Research
Res. No. 133  Revision of Work-Rate Standards for Department of Veterans Affairs Adjudicators
Res. No. 134  Service Dogs for Injured Service Personnel and Veterans with Mental Health Conditions
Res. No. 136  Strategic Capital Investment Planning Program
Res. No. 137  Support Legislation to Place Mariner Medal Recipients in Priority Group 3 for the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care
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Res. No. 161  Agent Orange Presumption for Service in Southeast Asia since 1975
Res. No. 162  In Vitro Fertilization
Res. No. 163  Legislation to provide Reporting, Tracking, and Action Dealing with Sexual Assaults at Department of Veterans Affairs Facilities
Res. No. 165  Traumatic Brain Injury and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Programs
Res. No. 166  Department of Veterans Affairs Involvement in the Department of Homeland Security
Res. No. 178  Assured Funding for VA Medical Care
Res. No. 179  Extend the Filing Period of An Appeal Notice to the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
Res. No. 180  Designate Hypertension as a Presumptive Condition for Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange
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Res. No. 246 Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans
Res. No. 249 Amend the Eligibility Requirements and Extend the Eligibility Time Period for Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance
Res. No. 250 Increase Maximum Coverage under the Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance
Res. No. 251 Grant a 10% Rating for Veterans who must Take Daily Medication for Hypertension
Res. No. 252 Support Legislation to Pay Interest on Claims Granted by the Board of Veterans’ Appeals
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Res. No. 263 Include World War II Veterans in Priority Group 6 for Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care
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RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Commander, motion to receive and file the Legislative Commission report with the exception of Addendum I. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and a second regarding the Legislative Commission report. Are there any discussions? I do have a question, Mr. Chairman. You mentioned that yesterday we participated in a hearing in Washington, D.C., and I believe that hearing was about the Choice Program?

LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION CHAIRMAN OXFORD: That's correct, sir.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: As you know, Choice Program, extending that deadline was one of our legislative priorities. I would just like to ask, is there an update on how that's going?

LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION CHAIRMAN OXFORD: There was some congressional finagling, and I'm not exactly sure whether that hearing has been rescheduled or not. As soon as we know, we'll get back to you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: That's something we all want to watch, and also the appeals modernization bill, that was also one of our legislative priorities. After our testimony, we went up and visited the chairman of the House VA Committee, Congressman
Roe. We also visited Speaker Ryan and also Senator Tester, to work together and get the appeals modernization bill passed. It's incumbent on us to pay attention because we owe it to our veterans not only about the appeals modernization, but also that Choice Program, to get that to work to take care of veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION CHAIRMAN OXFORD: Yes, sir, I think both of those outlooks are fine.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You bet. Any other discussion, comments? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? The ayes have it.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Commander, pursuant to Rule 8-b of the National Executive Committee, I would move the resolutions on Addendum I be ratified for distribution as part of the legislative program through the 115th Congress. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and second. Are there any discussions? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? The ayes have it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now we call on G. Michael Schlee of Maryland, chairman of the National Security Commission, for purpose of a report.

Oral Report: National Security Commission
G. Michael Schlee, Maryland, Chairman

Thank you, commander, members of the NEC. It's a pleasure to be with you today. You have been provided a copy of our advance report, which is the extensive discussion of our meetings in Washington during the Washington Conference. I won't go over that, it's fairly obvious. We are guided on a continuing basis by the 80-plus resolutions adopted at the 98th National Convention. A second report has been provided, which is an overview of some of the key issues, and I'd like to just bullet-point several of those.

First and foremost, during our Washington Conference, Brigadier General Jim Dawkins briefed us on the national military strategy. In the national military strategy, he outlined the threats to this nation which they term "four plus one." We all know what they are: China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, ISIS/ISIL, and terrorism. Now, how do we address those? And that's by the structuring of our forces.

The second issue I'd like to provide a couple of bullet points is the current health of our force and readiness of our military force. In a recent article by Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution entitled, "America's Awesome Military," he stated, "We still have the greatest military in the world, but it is worn thin," the important words being "worn thin."

Let me throw a couple more bullets at you, too. As you're well aware, it's been reported in the press, the president is considering sending 3,000 to 5,000 more troops to Afghanistan. Another bullet point. I go back to Vietnam era, and ironically, this month, in May of 1967 is when I got my orders to Vietnam, so this is kind of an important month for me. When I harken back to that day, when I think in terms of our troops, meaning our men and women in uniform, including our Guard and reserve forces, have spent three, four, and five tours in a combat zone, it just is actually awesome to me, just absolutely amazing. O'Hanlon's statement of 'worn thin' is quite accurate. How do we address the worn-thin issue? By two things, we used to call it "rest and recuperation," but I call it R and R, "rest and resourcing."

One of the good news is the omnibus budget that was passed last week, which will run us through the end of the fiscal year which runs 1 October, the new one does, fiscal year '18, provided $25.7 billion additional funding for defense, so that's certainly a start. But my guidance, my bullet on the defense resourcing is two things. Number one, it needs to be increased, certainly; but number two, it has to be sustained.
One issue I'd like to spend a minute on is to give you brief update on where we are on the POW/MIA issue. We open every meeting with an appropriate ceremony. Just to give you a fast update, first of all, most of you recall that in January of 2015, then Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel consolidated and reorganized the nation's agencies to provide the fullest possible accounting for our men who are missing in action.

A little update on that agency. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, DPAA, they are tasked by the Congress in an informal way to provide 200 identifications per year. Thus far in 2017, they provided 59. They've been without a leader since May 3 of last year. Lieutenant General Mike Linnington, who we thought was going to last for a while to be a, quote, lifer, decided to take a job with the Wounded Warriors, to try to straighten that operation out. So they've been leaderless for over a year at DPAA.

Additionally, they've been saddled by our entire defense resourcing by two things: The vagaries of number one, sequestration, which is still somewhere in the background; and number two, funding by continuing resolutions. This is not the way to account for POWs and MIAs, and this is not the responsible way to provide for defense resourcing.

In closing, I'd like to thank a few folks. I look through this august audience, I see some longtime members, current and past, of the National Security Commission, our seven committees and council. I thank each one of you for the support you've given me over the years, both when I was on staff and as commission chairman. Additionally, our work is supported and cannot go on without a staff in Washington. We have Rhonda Powell, staff director with us today. (Applause)

And while Rhonda is with us, I certainly want to have you take back my thanks to Freddy Gessner, our deputy, and Eric Goepel, who is our new assistant director, who are back in Washington doing the work.

Additionally, National Commander Schmidt, I want to thank you, our National Executive Committee liaison committee, and all members of our National Executive Committee for your continuing support of your commission's efforts to take care of the troops and to provide for the common defense. Thank you. (Applause)

Advance Report: National Security Commission
February 27 – March 1, 2017
G. Michael Schlee, Maryland, Chairman

The National Security Commission convened on February 27th during the 57th Annual Washington Conference at the Washington Hilton, Washington, D.C. The following report is a summary of this session:

The commission was honored to welcome National Commander Charles Schmidt. The National Security Commission was honored by his attendance and very appreciative of his participation. National Commander Schmidt addressed some key policy areas that the National Security Commission covers, particularly the importance of the Defense POW/MIA Accountability Agency (DPAA), which is charged with the recovery and identification of U.S. POW/MIA service members, as well as the need to defend the sanctity of the American flag and protect it from desecration.

The program proceeded in the following five sections: 1) state of the Army Reserves; 2) national military strategy; 3) Air Force recruiting; 4) POW/MIA update; and 5) National Security Commission business.

1. State of the Army Reserves

The Commission’s first guest speaker was Brigadier General William Way, Director, Government Relations for the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR). BG Way is responsible for Congressional relations, as well as state and local government relations for the USAR, and
briefed the Commission on the goals and some of the activities of the reserve component. BG Way began his presentation with a video clip of the commanding general of the USAR, Lieutenant General Charles Luckey, who expounded on his vision of the force: leadership, energy, and execution. Following the clip, BG Way spoke about the recent USAR and National Guard deployment to Poland in support of a NATO joint force, as well as a deployment to Puerto Rico and a war exercise dealing with a chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) response. In the question and answer segment, BG Way identified the need for equipment and readiness funding.

2. National military strategy

The Commission’s next speaker was Brigadier General James (Jim) Dawkins Jr., the Deputy Director for Nuclear, Homeland Defense and Current Operations, J-33 Joint Staff. He is responsible for advising the Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff Director of Operations regarding nuclear, reconnaissance, space, homeland and missile defense operations as well as all aspects of the National Military Command System.

BG Dawkins described the on-going effort within the Department of Defense (DoD) to refocus, after 15 years of counterinsurgency and stabilization operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, on the ‘4+1’ set of threats: Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and global terror networks. The DoD is intent on maintaining a qualitative edge over near-peer competitors like Russia and China while also developing multi-domain and multi-functional weapons and strategies, to include space, cyber, conventional strike/fires with smart munitions, and special operations. BG Dawkins described the manner in which each of the 4+1 threats manifests themselves. Russia continues to destabilize Ukraine while conducting cyber and information operations against western allied nations. Chinese actions in the South China Sea, particularly the terraforming and militarizing of islands they claim, remains a threat to free passage through important waterway. North Korean missile testing and overall belligerence is a persistent threat, one the U.S. is countering through the installation of the THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) system which promises South Korea protection against any potential North Korean ballistic missile strike. Iran also poses a threat based on its continued support of terrorist organizations like Hezbollah and testing medium range ballistic missiles. Finally, BG Dawkins turned to the counter-ISIL coalition campaign, and the ongoing efforts to finally unseat ISIL from its capitals in Raqqa and Mosul.

3. Air Force recruiting

The Commission’s last military speaker was Colonel Robert W. Trayers Jr., Vice Commander of Air Force Recruiting Service at Headquarters Air Education and Training Command. As Vice Commander, COL Trayers is responsible for obtaining sufficient numbers of qualified men and women to meet the personnel procurement requirements of today's and tomorrow's highly technological Air Force. The Air Force Recruiting Service comprises more than 2,350 Airmen and civilians in more than 1,170 recruiting offices across the United States and abroad.

COL Trayers spoke about some of the challenges present in military recruitment, and the need for recruiters to make themselves a part of the communities they draw from, summed up in the command’s motto: inspire, engage, recruit. COL Trayers discussed the propensity of military service, how many recruits are drawn from families with members who had served in the military, and how many young people are discouraged from serving based on the input of influential people in their respective lives. COL Trayers identified a key theme in ongoing civil-military relations: the lack of understanding, knowledge, or experience with the military and veteran communities. COL Trayers also addressed the
niche requirements of the Air Force, such as the need for diversity of personnel, individuals with STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) backgrounds, pilots, linguists, and special operators. Finally, COL Trayers called on the American Legion volunteers to engage with their local recruiting stations and assist the Air Force with communicating the content of military service to the public.

4. POW/MIA Update

The National Security Commission welcomed Mrs. Fern Sumpter Winbush, Principal Director for the Defense Personnel Accounting Agency (DPAA), and Mrs. Ann Mills-Griffiths, Chairman of the Board for the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia. Mrs. Winbush works in support of the DPAA Director and is responsible for leading the Washington D.C. office in formulating policy, overseeing business development, and increasing outreach initiatives to achieve the agency’s goal of providing families and the nation with the fullest possible accounting of missing personnel from past conflicts. Mrs. Mills-Griffiths served over 30 years as Executive Director and CEO of the National League of Families, and currently focuses on policy, operations and sustaining the League’s financial ability to achieve accounting objectives. At the request of the Secretary of Defense, she also serves on the Advisory Committee of the Defense Department’s 50th Anniversary Vietnam War Commemoration.

The speakers provided very informative updates regarding overcoming successive budget crises, the remaining obstacle to increasing the pace and scope of accounting efforts while ensuring the safety of field recovery teams. Mrs. Winbush addressed the balance between budgeting for disinterment of existing, known remains and conducting field operations to identify some of the 26,000 recoverable POW and MIA service members. Mrs. Mills-Griffiths, a regular participant in the National Security Commission’s work on POW/MIA accountability, gave an overview of the continuing work of the National League of Families and that organizations support for both the American Legion and the DPAA.

5. Business Session

The business session commenced by Chairman Schlee leading the Commission in reviewing two resolutions that were referred by the 2016 National Security Convention Committee, Resolution 232: Pause/Hold Syrian Refugees Importation/Immigration to the United States of America, and Resolution 234: U.S./China Relations. After discussion the Commission unanimously voted to recommend to the National Executive Committee that Resolution 232 be received and recorded and Resolution 234 be disposed of administratively.

To conclude the meeting, Chairman Schlee introduced and expressed his appreciation for the Washington D.C. Headquarter’s Staff, to include introducing the new Assistant Director of National Security, Mr. Eric Goepel, and highlighting the 15 years of service of Mrs. Roshawn Hyde, Secretary for the National Security Division. Chairman Schlee provided the Commission with a quick overview of the upcoming plans for this year’s 99th National Convention which will be held in Reno, Nevada, to include announcing the National Security Commission Pre-Convention trip to U.S. Coast Guard Station Lake Tahoe.

Report: National Security Commission
G. Michael Schlee, Maryland, Chairman

You have received a copy of the report of the meeting of the National security Commission during the 57th Washington Conference which took place on February 27,
During this business session, two resolutions were considered and our recommended action is in the addendum to this report.

The National Security Commission and its seven committees along with the council continue to review developments in the national security and foreign relations arenas. The National Security Commission has not met since the Washington Conference. The 98th National Convention adopted more than 80 resolutions which comprise the Commission’s policy and legislative agendas for the year ahead.

The following are brief updates on several critical areas for your information and review:

**Current Threat Environment**

**Counter-ISIL coalition/counter-terrorism**

The counter-ISIL coalition has significantly reduced the territory that ISIL controlled in Iraq and Syria, with U.S. and allied forces engaged in campaigns against its two major strongholds in Mosul and Raqqa. It is unclear what impact ISIL’s eventual defeat will have on the larger Syrian civil war and sectarian conflict in Iraq. Additionally, there is concern in that foreign fighter outflows back to their countries of origin will exacerbate the number of terrorist incidents by spreading their knowledge and network. Both countries have been devastated economically and socially, and it remains to be seen if the international community will step up to rebuild or whether these weakened states descend into another round of chaos and armed conflict.

Other U.S. counter-terrorism efforts are underway in Libya, against an ISIL affiliate, in Somalia against al-Shabab, in Nigeria against Boko Haram, in Yemen against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and against the Taliban and ISIL and al-Qaeda affiliates in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The longest war in American history - Afghanistan - continues and the President indicated this week his intention to increase U.S. forces there by 3,000 – 5,000.

**North Korea**

With a string of successful missile tests, experts claiming that North Korea’s nuclear weapons program could conceivably develop a missile capable of reaching Seattle, and threats against the U.S., Japan, and South Korea, North Korea under Kim Jong Un represents another clear challenger to the international order. As it stands, the U.S. has settled into using a mix of sanctions, military exercises, and troop and naval presence in response. The recent deployment of a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in South Korea to guard against North Korean ballistic missiles has increased tensions in South Korea domestically, and brought on condemnation from China. But China has grown increasingly weary of dealing with the liability that North Korea represents, though it is loath to see a unified, democratic Korea allied with the United States. China will be an essential partner in securing a positive diplomatic or political outcome in North Korea, though it is unclear just how much leverage China can bring to bear on Kim Jong Un, and what approach will be most effective.

**Russia**

Vladimir Putin continues to try to revise the outcome of the Cold War by challenging the international order of law and norms that have arisen under decades of U.S. leadership. In Ukraine, Russian-backed separatists continue to fight government forces in the Donbass. In Syria, Putin’s support for the Assad regime ensures there will be political settlement in the near term, and hinders counter-ISIL efforts by targeting fighters hostile to both Assad and ISIL. Putin also protects Assad by vetoing any UN Security Council resolutions
targeting his government. Recent reports also indicate that Russia has also begun providing arms to the Taliban, who in late April conducted a surprise attack on Afghan security forces, killing 140. Russia’s violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the still unresolved depth of its interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, and its behavior elsewhere in the world all pose serious challenges to U.S. and allied security interests.

**China**

Despite continuing tensions in the South China Sea between the United States, China, and other claimants like Philippines and Vietnam, current discussions between the White House and President Xi Jinping have been focused on North Korea. China remains a persistent cyber threat, however, and like Russia is interested in shifting the balance of power in what it sees as its sphere of influence. China is undergoing a concerted modernization and expansion of its maritime presence and power projection, with plans to add 100,000 Marines and the recent launching its first indigenously built aircraft carrier as current examples. Whether this buildup of capability and capacity will worsen relations between China and its neighbors remains to be seen. China’s critical role in the global economy, and the desire of the Chinese Communist Party leadership to continue high economic growth, constrains China’s ability to act too aggressively, though it continues to test the United States.

**Iran**

Along with Russia, Iran is the chief supporter of Assad through the use of Hezbollah and Revolutionary Guard forces, and the provision of money and weapons. It was the Russian and Iranian intervention that rescued Assad’s regime from collapse; as a result, the Syrian conflict has stalled as multiple ethnic and religious factions continue to fight with few clear winners. While monitors have reported that Iran is in compliance with Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) restricting its ability to develop a nuclear weapon, Iran’s testing of ballistic missiles and support for the Houthis in Yemen display a desire to continue to provoke and challenge Saudi Arabia, the U.S., and Israel in efforts to increase its influence within the region.

**Readiness and the “Health” of the Force**

In February, the Vice Chiefs of Staff for Army, Navy, and Air Force, and the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, testified about the poor readiness levels across their services. The vice chiefs of America’s armed forces said their personnel and aging equipment are stretched thin amid years of war, statutory budget caps and temporary workarounds, end-strength cuts, and Congress passing nine consecutive continuing resolutions.

The equipment, manning, and training issues facing the services are largely a result of the nearly 17 years of sustained ground and air combat in multiple countries. As General David Petraeus and Brookings Institution senior fellow Michael O’Hanlon pointed out in their widely read op-ed “America’s Awesome Military” the U.S. military has been worn thin, but still boasts military capability and capacity far above and beyond every other near-peer competitor. The need for recapitalization of the force from top to bottom is apparent, as is steady funding and multi-year budgeting—but even it a weakened state, the U.S. still fields the most dominant military in the world. But there are real concerns as the “long war” continues.
Budgeting and Resourcing

Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Omnibus Appropriations Bill - Defense

The Defense Appropriations bill was combined with 10 other appropriations bill to become a Fiscal Year 2017 Omnibus Appropriations Bill. The measure provides funding through the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2017. The total funding in the bill is $1.163 trillion, including $1.07 trillion for base discretionary funding subject to budget caps and a total of $93.5 billion for the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) budget that serves to evade the budget caps.

The total funding for the Department of Defense in FY 17 is $598.5 billion, an increase of $25.7 billion from FY 16. That total includes the $593 billion in this bill ($516.1 billion in base discretionary funding and $76 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations) plus an additional $5.8 billion in supplementary defense funding approved when Congress passed a Continuing Resolution in December 2016.

FY18 Proposed Defense & State Department Budgets

President Trump’s FY18 ‘skinny’ budget includes an expected $54 billion defense increase, offset by domestic-side cuts, including a 28 percent cut for the State Department. The broad-brushstrokes plan signaled the White House’s intent to restore a “depleted” military. The request includes $639 billion for the Defense Department, including $574 billion in the base budget and $65 billion in the emergency Overseas Contingency Operations account. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and his House counterpart Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, have said a $640 billion defense budget is needed and that the administration's numbers mask a less robust increase than they would like. Congressional leaders like Lindsey Graham and Ben Cardin have rejected the idea of a 28% cut to State, with Graham calling the proposal “dead on arrival.” Retired diplomats, academics, and military officers have also come out against the cuts.

POW/MIA Update

The Fiscal Year 2010 National Defense Authorization Act mandated the establishment of a single accounting agency to search for and repatriate our missing. On January 1, 2015 the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency was established and was announced fully operational on 1 January 2016. The mandate also required that DPAA identify 200 remains each year.

Since the beginning of 2017 the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) has accounted for 59 service members from past conflicts. As of May 3, 2017, the DPAA Director position has not been filled. The job announcement closed on April 6th. The Office of the Under Secretary for Policy or Secretary of Defense will announce when a selection is made.

Full funding of DPAA is something we continue to be concerned about. The effects of continuing resolutions and threats of government shutdowns are crippling to DPAA efforts. Without guaranteed funding recovery teams are threatened with having to end their mission and return stateside short of mission dates. Mission planning is impacted as well. The difficult mountains of Vietnam can only be excavated during the warm months and without guaranteed funding opportunities may be missed.

The National Security Commission thanks National Commander Charles Schmidt, our NEC Liaison and the distinguished members of the National Executive Committee for their continuing support for Commission efforts to take care of troops and "provide for the common defense"
Addendum A

Received and Recorded


Disposed of Administratively

Resolution No. 234 (FL) (2016 Nat’l. Conv.): U. S. and China Relations

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Commander, motion to receive and file the report of the National Security Commission with the exception of one addendum. …Second.


RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Commander, attached to the National Security Commission report is Addendum A. I move the actions of the National Security Commission become the actions of the National Executive Committee. …Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second regarding the addendum. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Motion passed. Confirmation of Interim Appointments.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Commander, may I address the national adjutant?

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You may.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Adjutant, do you certify the list of interim appointments is a true and correct list?

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: I so certify.

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Commander, I move that the list of interim appointments be approved without being read. …Second.


Confirmation of Interim Appointments
National Executive Committee Meeting
Indianapolis, Indiana
May 10 – 11, 2017

Wayne L. Fischer (Illinois), Committee on Youth Education, 2017 Member (Replaces Arthur E. Rawers – deceased)
Delmar R. Buske (Illinois), Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee, Consultant (New appointment)
Lawrence White (Florida), Americanism Council, Member (Replaces Joseph R. Magee – resigned)
Jack A. Youngs (Idaho), Americanism Council, Member (Replaces Matthew Wrobel – resigned)
Ron Hoaks (Indiana), Americanism Council, Member (New appointment)
Stan Adler (Kentucky), Americanism Council, Member (Replaces Patricia Richmond – resigned)
Robert G. Maddox (Missouri), Americanism Council, Member (Replaces James S. Whitfield – deceased)
Richard F. Calbo (New York), Americanism Council, Member (Replaces John Lanci – resigned)
John E. Murphy (New York), Americanism Council, Member (Replaces Mary A. O’Coin, Media & Communications Council, Member – resigned)
James W. Campbell (Ohio), Americanism Council, Member (Replaces James F. Welsh – deceased)
Paul Maurer (Ohio), Americanism Council, Member (Replaces Jeff Kauffman – deceased)
Richard J. MacDonald (South Dakota), Americanism Council, Member (Replaces Gerald Goetzinger – resigned)
Milton K. Lashus (Massachusetts), Convention Commission Advisory Board, Member (Replaces W. Frank Stancil (North Carolina) – retired)
Eric V. Warthen (Maryland), Internal Affairs Commission, 2018 Member (Replaces Philip J. Suprenant – deceased)
David K. Rehbein (Iowa), 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, Chairman (Replaces Robert W. Spanogle (Michigan) – resigned)
David O. Warnken (Kansas), 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, Vice Chairman (Replaces David K. Rehbein (Iowa) – appointed chairman)
Michael Hjelmstad (California), 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, Member (New appointment)
Jay Conti, Sr. (Florida), 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, Member (New appointment)
Joshua T. Clement (Montana), 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, Member (Replaces Joseph J. Hovish (Indiana) – resigned)
Kimberly Ann Biggerstaff (Texas), 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, Member (New appointment)
Matthew Wrobel (Idaho), Membership & Post Activities Committee, Consultant (Replaces Charles T. Abrahamson – resigned)
Kenneth A. Nadeau (New Mexico), Marketing Commission, National Commander’s Representative (Replaces Horacio S. Baca – resigned)
Berley Hanna, Jr. (New Jersey), Marketing Commission, 2019 Member (Replaces James H. Hall – deceased)
Luis A. Ayala (Puerto Rico), Marketing Commission Liaison Committee, Member (New appointment)
Ron Ordelheide (Indiana), Media & Communications Council, Member (Replaces James P. Hagler, Jr. – resigned)
Alexander J. Whitney, Sr. (Maryland), Media & Communications Council, Member (Replaces Patrick M. Rossi – resigned)
Robert E. Keister, Sr. (Oklahoma), National Security Commission, 2017 Member (Replaces Donna K. Kendall – resigned)
George H. Bolling (Maryland), Military Benefits & Quality of Life Committee, Chairman (Replaces Melvin B. Smullen – resigned)
James H. Holland (South Carolina), Military Benefits & Quality of Life Committee, 2018 Member (Replaces Dennis Belue – resigned)
Ralph W. Rounds, (Illinois), National Security Council, Member (Replaces Wayne L. Fischer – resigned)
Robert Dalton (Kentucky), National Security Council, Member (Replaces Raymond Murphy – resigned)
Adrian G. Gamboa (Maryland), National Security Council, Member (Replaces Robert L. Snoeberger, Sr. – resigned)
   James P. Mayock (Maryland), National Security Council, Member (Replaces George H. Bolling – resigned)
   Lisa A. McPhee (Massachusetts), National Security Council, Member (Replaces Arthur L. Strafuss – resigned)
   George L. Shepherd (Missouri), National Security Council, Member (Replaces Rev. Jerome D. Fortenberry – deceased)
   Douglas Frahm (Nebraska), National Security Council, Member (Replaces Jerry Landkamer – resigned)
   Clarence S. Ortega (New Mexico), National Security Council, Member (Replaces Kenneth A. Nadeau – resigned)
   W. Frank Stancil (North Carolina), National Security Council, Member (Replaces Tierian Cash – resigned)
   Robert Weiler (Ohio), National Security Council, Member (Replaces James Kammer – resigned)
   John W. Fritz (Pennsylvania), National Security Council, Member (Replaces Earle W. McCarney – resigned)
   William D. Whitmyer, Jr. (Pennsylvania), National Security Council, Member (Replaces Sharon E. Lowe – resigned)
   Joseph F. Shottek, Jr. (Rhode Island), National Security Council, Member (Replaces Richard R. Cartwright – resigned)
   James E. Kent, Jr. (Georgia), Health Administration Committee, 2019 Member (Replaces Pat Phillips – resigned)
   Kenneth Starks (Massachusetts), Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Council, Member (Replaces James E. Brehio – resigned)
   Jose J. Pastor (Puerto Rico), Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Council, Member (Replaces Luis A. Ayala – resigned)
   Jerry Landkamer (Nebraska), Employment & Veterans Preference Committee, 2018 Member (Replaces Jim Sidel – deceased)
   James E. Brehio (Massachusetts), Employment & Veterans Preference Committee, 2019 Member (Replaces Alfred G. Canale – deceased)
   George Mussi (Ohio), Veterans Employment & Education Council, Member (Replaces Phyllis Fitzgerald – resigned)
   Gary Tarvin (Ohio), Veterans Employment & Education Council, Member (Replaces David Jackson – deceased)

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Confirmation and cancellation of post and/or squadron charters.
RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Commander, may I address the national adjutant again?
NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You may.
RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Adjutant, do you certify the list of cancellation of post and/or squadron charters is a true and correct list and that everything has been done to try to revitalize these posts and squadrons?
NATIONAL ADJUTANT WHEELER: I so certify.
RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Commander, I move that the list be approved without being read. ...Second.
NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and second. Is there any discussions? I would just ask each and every National Executive Committee person,
on this list is 77 posts. This is your last chance to say that you would like to take one off
the list and go back home and work. Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Passed.

Post Charters of The American Legion Presented to
the National Executive Committee for Cancellation
May 11, 2017

On October 13, 2016, at the Fall Meetings in Indianapolis, Indiana the National
Executive Committee approved the cancellation of fifty-six (56) posts. The research done
on each post prior to any recommendation made as an attempt to see whether these posts
could be revitalized is based on the following criteria:

Community Size
Veteran Population

Seventy-seven (77) posts have been submitted and recommended for cancellation
consideration during the 2017 Spring National Executive Committee Meetings in
Indianapolis, Indiana.

*See Merging Post Information Below

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<th>Department</th>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<td>Tamarac</td>
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<td>0370</td>
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<td>Hicks-Olson (to merge with La Harpe Post 0301)</td>
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<td>Flynn + Brown (to merge with Sarver-Guthrie Post 0839)</td>
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<td>McNabb (to merge with Illini Post 0254)</td>
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<td>0116*</td>
<td>Zearing (to merge with Samuel Reid Post 0334)</td>
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KENTUCKY
0027  Stephen B. Whalen  Cynthiana
0146  Hargan-Viers  Vine Grove
0247* Springfield  Springfield
(to merge with Department Headquarters Post 0200)
0268  Womack-Smith-Jaggers  Sonora

LOUISIANA
0096  Atchafalaya  Morgan City

MARYLAND
0028*  Kennedy-Latimer, Inc.  Beltsville
(to merge with College Park Post 0217)

MASSACHUSETTS
0027  Cambridge  Cambridge

MISSOURI
0071*  R. C. Connie Burns  Kansas City
(to merge with Hickman Mills Memorial Post 0598)
0076*  Rogerson-Harvey  Kansas City
(to merge with Hickman Mills Memorial Post 0598)
0148  Liebman-Rosenbloom  Kansas City
0225  Madden-Cover-Carney  Anderson
0519  Meta Memorial  Meta

NEVADA
0017  Alamo  Alamo
0055  J. Edgar Hoover Police  Las Vegas

NEW YORK
0018  Greenwich Village  New York City
0060  Harry H. Clifton  Blasdell
0472  Johnstown  Johnstown
0517  Frederick Staats, Inc.  Staten Island
0543  Schoolmens  New York City
1099  Colonel John R. Slattery, N.Y. City
1217  Wall Street  New York City
1222  Department of Public Works  New York City
1242  Robert L. Hague-Merchant  Marine Industry
1284  Franklin Delano Roosevelt  New York City
1347  Veterans Administration  New York City
1470  Clapp-Novak  Kinderhook
1630  John Eugene Wallace, Inc.  Long Island City

NORTH CAROLINA
0377  Rose Hill, Inc.  Rose Hill

OHIO
0289*  Dale L. Binkley Memorial  Brookville
(to merge with James E. Ryan Post 0322)
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<td>Purcell</td>
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<td>Noble</td>
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<td>(to merge with Arnall-Sampson-Walker, Inc. Post 0021)</td>
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</table>
On October 13, 2016, at the Fall Meetings in Indianapolis, Indiana the National Executive Committee approved the cancellation of ten (10) squadrons.

Twenty-two (22) squadrons have been submitted and recommended for cancellation consideration during the 2017 Spring National Executive Committee Meetings in Indianapolis, Indiana.

* See Merging Squadron Information Below

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NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Confirmation of dates for future meetings.
RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Commander, before I ask for approval of the list, I need to make a motion, and that concerns the 2020 fall meetings. 2020 fall meeting, formerly October 5 through 8. Commission Committee, Commanders and Adjutants Conference are both to be scheduled for October 12 through 13, the National Executive Committee meetings to October 14 through 15. Commander, that's my motion. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and second. Are there any discussions? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Motion passed.
## Confirmation of Dates for Future Meetings

Previously Approved by NEC

**2017 WASHINGTON CONFERENCE**  
February 26-March 1

**2017 SPRING MEETINGS**

- Commissions and Committees  
  May 8-9
- National Executive Committee  
  May 10-11

**2017 FALL MEETINGS**

- Commissions and Committees  
  October 9-10
- Commanders and Adjutants Conference  
  October 9-10
- National Executive Committee  
  October 11-12

**2018 WASHINGTON CONFERENCE**  
February 25-28

**2018 SPRING MEETINGS**

- Commissions and Committees  
  May 7-8
- National Executive Committee  
  May 9-10

**2018 FALL MEETINGS**

- Commissions and Committees  
  October 15-16
- Commanders and Adjutants Conference  
  October 15-16
- National Executive Committee  
  October 17-18

**2019 WASHINGTON CONFERENCE**  
February 24-27

**2019 SPRING MEETINGS**

- Commissions and Committees  
  May 6-7
- National Executive Committee  
  May 8-9

**2019 FALL MEETINGS**

- Commissions and Committees  
  October 14-15
- Commanders and Adjutants Conference  
  October 14-15
- National Executive Committee  
  October 16-17

**2020 WASHINGTON CONFERENCE**  
March 8-11

**2020 SPRING MEETINGS**

- Commissions and Committees  
  May 4-5
- National Executive Committee  
  May 6-7

**2020 FALL MEETINGS**

- Commissions and Committees  
  October 12-13
- Commanders and Adjutants Conference  
  October 12-13
- National Executive Committee  
  October 14-15

**2021 WASHINGTON CONFERENCE**  
February 28-March 3

**2021 SPRING MEETINGS**

- Commissions and Committees  
  May 3-4
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE May 5-6

2021 FALL MEETINGS

Commissions and Committees October 4-5
Commanders and Adjutants Conference October 4-5
National Executive Committee October 6-7

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Next we have the final report from our chairman of our Resolutions Subcommittee, our David Warnken of Kansas.

Final Report of the Subcommittee on Resolutions
David O. Warnken, Kansas, Chairman

Thank you, commander. Your Subcommittee on Resolutions has been in session since May 8. We've considered all resolutions that have come before the committee and considered and acted on 29 resolutions. I would like to take this time to thank the members of the committee who have done such an outstanding job and who have attended every session and participated in discussion on all of these resolutions.

I will ask them to stand as I read their name, and please remain standing. My special thanks goes to Vice Chairman Bill Kile, West Virginia; Dennis Boland, Florida; Jim Pisa, Alaska; Marland Ronning of Minnesota; Paul Steward of Indiana; and Dennis Haas from Pennsylvania. I thank you, thank you very much for your services to the committee. (Applause) Appreciation is also extended to Howard Trace and his staff who served our committee. (Applause)

I also want to thank the document center directors and chairmen of the commissions and committees who have been most cooperative and helpful to the subcommittee in this week's work in order to bring the reports to you. I'm going to go off script for a moment. Commissions directors and chairmen did an outstanding job on the resolutions, and they need to be commended for that. (Applause) Of course, during our deliberation, we have met with a number of chairmen and staff who have been most cooperative and helpful in explaining the questions that we had about resolutions. I would ask again that the commission chairmen handle resolutions as early in their deliberations as possible, in order to expedite the work of the subcommittee, and allow time for any revisions or corrections to be made to those resolutions.

Please remember that all active resolutions back to 1969 are available on the Digital Archive at archive.legion.org. Resolutions from this meeting will be available early next week. If you have any questions about the Digital Archive, please contact Library and Museum Director Howard Trace.

Mr. Commander, it is a pleasure to serve as chairman of this subcommittee on these resolutions. We would like to thank the National Executive Committee in reporting out of these various resolutions. You have been most cooperative. Mr. Commander, I move that this report be received and filed. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and second. Are there any discussions? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. All opposed? The ayes have it, the motion passed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Miscellaneous Business and Technical Motions

RESOLUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WARNKEN: Mr. Commander, I have a technical motion to make. I would like to make a technical motion and move that the national adjutant be instructed to review the minutes of the NEC meeting and make any
necessary corrections without changing the intent of the NEC meetings, and to proceed to edit and distribute these minutes. ...Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: You heard the motion and the second. Are there any discussions? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. All opposed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the work you and your subcommittee does. (Applause)

...National Vice Commander Martel assumed the chair.

Closing Remarks
Charles E. Schmidt, Oregon, National Commander

Well, good morning, national officers, past national commanders, members of the NEC, and all of our guests. I'm going to be much briefer today than I was yesterday.

I'd just like to say that I ask all of your commanders to meet me on the stage in Reno, Nevada, not once, but twice. First time, that they are a 100 percent department in membership. Secondly, the second time, that they're 100 percent in the consolidated post reporting. There is no excuse for a department or a post not to have a 100 percent consolidated post reporting.

I ask each and every one of you to go home to your departments and work with your department leadership and all the way down to your posts. Consolidated post report is a lot easier than membership, I know, and it's easy to fill in the blanks, report it. Those folks out in those posts do the work and they should get the credit, and they should get their credit all the way up to Congress and our report of all the things that we do. I ask you, please bird-dog that and make it happen. I told every commander, I would like to see all 55 of you up on that stage not once, but twice. But please help facilitate that.

During our opening yesterday, I asked who's going to fill their shoes? And just as importantly, who is going to fill yours and my shoes? You know, I felt, I don't know about you, a renewed enthusiasm in this room yesterday, a recharging, if you will, of the energy that we need to make in the final membership push that we need to make in our 2017 membership campaign. I think Resolution No. 1 will help us out in 2018. But let's not give up on this year yet; it's not over. Getting that DMS information early is certainly not the answer to all of our problems, if we do not engage in personal contact and involvement with those members.

Later this month, we're going to go and visit the Department of France and those countries within that department, and we're going to do something new. We're going to pave new ground, if you will, along with the national president of the American Legion Auxiliary and national commander of the Sons of The American Legion, we're going to have town hall meetings with the American military community over there, to enlighten and inform the thousands of Americans representing us and serving us in that theater, about The American Legion Family.

I spent 11 consecutive years in my military career overseas, and not once did I ever see or hear anybody from The American Legion come and tell me your story. Well, we're going to change that, and we're going to go out, because there are potential members in those areas, there are families that have young folks that can benefit from our programs. I believe that's our obligation. I believe we've got about seven town hall meetings scheduled. If that works out well, we're going to also take that to the Pacific. It's our obligation to take care of those that are still wearing the uniform and their families, and we're going to do that.

On this coming Tuesday, I'll be doing another radio tour which will consist of at least 18 interviews on syndicated shows in major markets throughout the country. The shows, some are going to be live and some are going to be taped. I know we're starting very early in the morning because I'm going to be in Washington state and, of course, they operate on
Eastern time. But in those broadcasts, the total audience, we hope to reach more than 22 million, many in the major cities and during the coveted morning driving time. So hopefully, they all have their radios on. The audio of these appearances will, of course, be posted on the American Legion website. But more importantly, millions of people will hear about The American Legion and what we do in the communities, what you do in the communities across our great nation.

You know, you can do the same, folks in your department, and make yourself known to the media and markets in the area, invite you and your post and department commanders to be on local talk shows. You may not be able to get on a major network right away, but local stations, sometimes they beg for news. So pursue that and share our story. We need to magnify our messages in the media, and the best way to do that is get involved.

As I said, I've got a lot of membership pins yet to give out. I'd like to get rid of all of them. This summer, it's going to be an exciting time. We've got a lot of things going on, our organization does: Boys State and Nation, of course; American Legion Baseball World Series; The American Legion Legacy Run; the Junior Shooting Sports Competition; of course the Boy Scout Jamboree, this is the year for that, and it's a great opportunity for The American Legion to shine on all those places. Of course, there's a lot of things happening in your departments and in your communities. Let's be visible.

I look forward to hearing from each and every one of you through your national vice commander from your region, on your work on membership, and also encouraging those posts within your department in filling out that consolidated post report.

I think we've had a great week of meetings. Hopefully we've got some new initiatives going, and move this organization, this legacy forward. I appreciate each and every one of you not only for your service to our country, but your service to this great organization. Do not let anybody tell you any different. You and I belong to a great organization, so let's carry the legacy forward. It's our responsibility.

I wish you journey's blessings. May God bless each and every one of you. May God bless the United States, the greatest country in the world. Thank you. *(Standing applause)*

National Commander Schmidt resumed the chair.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: I now call on the national chaplain, Harry Klee of Texas, once again, for our benediction.

Benediction

Harvey H. Klee, Texas, National Chaplain

Almighty God, may we comrades-in-arms go forth into the world, in peace and renewed dedication to be in Your service. May we hold fast to that which is good, render to no person evil for evil, strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak, help the needy and the afflicted, and respect the rights of all.

Lord, hear the prayers that continue to go out to those who are POWs or MIAs; those servicemen and women suffering serious injuries and now recovering; those members who are undergoing serious trials and tribulations in their lives; and those departed from our ranks who have been transferred to the Post Everlasting, may they rest in peace. May we take leave of one another in the spirit of camaraderie and respect, respect for one another and for those who have served and those who are now serving in the Armed Forces of the United States.

With a deep humility and desire for Your love and care, we ask You keep us safe as we travel home to our family, friends, and loved ones, and give thanks for watching over them in our absence. May we be joined together in the common goal of service to God and our beloved country. May His blessings be upon us and remain with us always. This we pray in the name of that is holy. Amen.
NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHMIDT: Cover. Colors of our country in place. By the numbers: One, two. This meeting is adjourned.

...At 9:42 a.m., Thursday, May 11, 2017, the National Executive Committee meeting of The American Legion was adjourned. Sine die.
### Abbreviations

**A**
- ABCA ................................................................. American Baseball Coaches Association
- AFB ................................................................. air force base
- ALEI ................................................. American Legion Education Institute, American Legion Extension Institute
- ALWS ............................................................. American Legion World Series
- AMVETS ............................................................. American Veterans
- ANAVICUS ........................................... Army, Navy, Air Force Veterans in Canada – United States

**B**
- BVA ................................................................. Board of Veteran Appeals

**C**
- CAVC ............................................................. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
- CBOC ............................................................. Community-Based Outpatient Clinic
- CCRA ............................................................. Commemorative Coin Reform Act
- CEO ................................................................. chief executive officer
- CHAMPVA . Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs
- COL ................................................................. colonel
- COLA ............................................................. cost of living adjustment
- CPL ................................................................. corporal
- CWF ................................................................. Child Welfare Foundation

**D**
- DEC ................................................................. Department Executive Committee
- DMS ................................................................. Direct Membership Solicitation
- DOD ................................................................. Department of Defense
- DOL ................................................................. Department of Labor
- DPAA ............................................................. Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency
- DRB ................................................................. Discharge Review Board
- DSO ................................................................. Department Service Officer
- DVOP ............................................................. Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist

**E**
- EEG ................................................................. electroencephalogram
- EFC ....................................................... Expected Family Contribution, American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation
- EKG ................................................................. electrocardiogram

**F**
- FBI ................................................................. Federal Bureau of Investigation
- FDR ................................................................. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- FY ................................................................. fiscal year

**G**
- GOC ................................................................. Geiger Operations Center
- GSA ................................................................. General Services Administration
R
RBI ................................................................. runs batted in
RFP ............................................................ request for proposal
ROAR .......................................................... Regional Office Action Review
ROTC .......................................................... Reserve Officer Training Corps

S
SAL ............................................................ Sons of The American Legion
SCVA ........................................................ Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs
SME ........................................................... subject-matter expert
SPPADS ...................................................... State and Provincial Police Academy Directors
SSgt ............................................................ staff sergeant
SWOT ........................................................ Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats
SWS ........................................................... System Worth Saving

T
TAL ............................................................ The American Legion
TAP ............................................................ Transition Assistance Program
TBD ............................................................ to be determined
TBI ............................................................ traumatic brain injury
TFA ............................................................ Temporary Financial Assistance
TRS ........................................................... Transition Readiness Seminar

U
USAA ........................................................ United Services Automobile Association
USAID ......................................................... United States Agency for International Development
USAR ........................................................ U.S. Army Reserve
USC .......................................................... United States Code

V
VA .............................................................. Department of Veterans Affairs
VA&R ........................................................ Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
VAMC ........................................................ VA Medical Center
VAVS ........................................................ Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services
VBA ............................................................ Veteran Benefits Administration
VECI ........................................................ Veterans Economic Communities Initiative
VETS ........................................................ Veterans Employment Training Service
VHA ............................................................ Veterans Health Administration
VSO ............................................................ Veterans Service Organizations
V-WISE ...................................................... Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship

W
WWI ............................................................ World War I
WWII .......................................................... World War II
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