THE AMERICAN LEGION
# Dispatch
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VETERANS DAY

# Honoring America's veterans

*Legion stays busy across the country on Veterans Day.*

By Steve B. Brooks

National Commander Jimmie Foster waves to the crowd during the National Veterans Day Parade in Birmingham, Ala. The parade is part of the oldest National Veterans Day celebration in the country. *Gary Tramontina*

Blanca Shipman had relatives who served in World War II. One of her sons served in Iraq, while another is currently a student at West Point. So for Shipman, standing along the route of the National Veterans Day Parade in Birmingham, Ala., has become a tradition.

"Our boys were in private school, so they didn't get off for Veterans Day," said Shipman, who was part of a contingent of parade viewers that lined 19th Street at least three deep on a beautiful fall day. "But we brought them to the parade anyway. We've always come to this parade, and now we bring our grandkids. We're very proud of this."

The parade, now in its 63rd year, featured military and high-school bands, clowns, vintage military vehicles, horses, floats, ROTC squads and veterans service organizations. One of those, The American Legion, was the host for this year's event. National Commander Jimmie Foster rode in the parade, as did Alabama National Executive Committeeman F. Wayne Turner, Department Commander Rico Hall and other Legion family members.

Ninety-four-year-old Andrew Tsimpides, Alabama's last horse soldier, along with the country's oldest living veteran of the Army's 1st Cavalry Division, 100-year-old Walter Westman, served as the parade's grand marshals.

"It's an honor to be here and to represent the largest veterans organization, and come and see and be a part of something that's 63 years in the making … and to make sure we continue recognizing our veterans and not take anything for granted," Foster said. "There are people fighting wars … and we need to make sure we protect them and unite as a country and give them everything we need to accomplish the mission and then get them back home."

Foster also was a special guest at the World Peace Luncheon earlier in the day, where Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz – commanding general of the U.S. Army Reserve Command – was the guest speaker.

"When we recognize veterans across America today, we celebrate what you've done for us and what you've done for this nation," Stultz said. "You're still a part of the military. It's special to be a veteran. It's something you've got to earn."

During the luncheon, six members of various veterans service organizations were honored as "Veterans of the Year." One was Legionnaire Becky Burney, a member of Post 15 in Decatur, Ala. Burney was praised for assisting in building a home for a paralyzed veteran, and for starting an American Legion Riders charter at Post 15.

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NATIONAL SECURITY

## Legion: Don't cut military retirement benefits

American Legion National Commander Jimmie Foster is criticizing the recommendations of two debt-reduction commissions that would decrease military retirement benefits. One panel, chaired by former Sen. Pete Domenici and Clinton-administration Budget Director Alice Rivlin, calls for changing the formula to calculate military retirement pay and delaying payments until eligible veterans reach age 57. Another panel, chaired by former Sen. Alan Simpson and retired Clinton White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles, recommends that military retirement checks be delayed until age 60.

"There they go again," Foster said. "Every time Washington wakes up with a deficit hangover after decades of spending binges, those who study the serious problems of our national debt can't resist the easy but unfair route of trying to balance the budget on the backs of veterans. It is unfair, and if these ridiculous proposals are passed into law, it will hurt America's ability to defend itself from our enemies.

"Tell it to the Marines. I want these commissions to look a 22-year-old Marine in the eye and say that if you retire at age 40, after 20 years of service and three, four or even more tours of being shot at in Afghanistan, that you still have not done enough to receive your retirement. I want these commissions to tell the soldiers in Iraq that the benefits they are receiving are too much. America has a huge debt all right. And it is owed to these men and women who protect our freedoms every day. It is a debt that must be repaid."

The panels have also recommended cuts to military weapons systems that could hurt American efforts to fight the global war on terrorism. The

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PLANNER

**DECEMBER**

1-31 Holiday Donor Blood Drive

7 Pearl Harbor Day

15 Bill of Rights Day

**JANUARY**

7-8 Membership & Post Activities planning session, Indianapolis

15 Deadline for 2010 Economic employment awards nominations

15 Deadline for Homeless Veteran Task Force reports

17 Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**FEBRUARY**

*Americanism Month*

1 Department submissions for National Law Enforcement and National Firefighter of the Year awards due

6 Four Chaplains Sunday

6-12 Religious Emphasis Week

21 Presidents Day

**MARCH**

1 Eagle Scout of the Year applications due to department headquarters

14 Department certification of Oratorical Contest winners due to National Headquarters

15-17 American Legion Birthday

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

# CWF: 'To better protect our children'

The needs of disadvantaged children weighed heavily on the minds of The American Legion's founders. As they assembled in Paris, St. Louis and Minneapolis that first year after World War I, the earliest Legionnaires fully understood that many of their comrades were not coming home at all. Their wives and children were now widows and orphans. Many newly discharged veterans were permanently changed – shell-shocked, gassed or physically disabled – and unable to care for their loved ones as they once did. America was not equipped to handle the needs of so many disrupted families. It was up to the Legion to provide what the founders called "a square deal for every child."

**Jimmie L. Foster**
*National Commander*

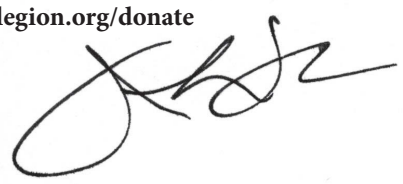
Over the years, the Legion has fulfilled that obligation in uncountable ways. Since 1954, one of the most far-reaching Legion programs to fulfill that core value has been the Legion's Child Welfare Foundation, which has provided more than $11 million in grants to worthy causes over the years. Last fall alone, the foundation awarded $666,670 in grants to 21 different organizations dedicated to improving the lives of young people who have been dealt difficult circumstances. **(For a complete list of recipients and links to their sites, visit *www.legion.org/childwelfare*.)**

Child Welfare Foundation grants are awarded for focused projects that help nonprofit organizations better communicate to those who need assistance. A CWF grant allows an organization to concentrate on the mission at hand – helping kids – by reducing some of the marketing burden. If you think about it, there is no better way to spread a charitable-contribution dollar than by granting it for an effort to spread the word far and wide. It's a real multiplier effect.

I invite you to look at this year's list of CWF grant recipients. These are truly amazing organizations that make real differences in the lives of young people. Among them are the Children's Organ Transplant Association, Father Flanagan's Boys Town, the Make-A-Wish Foundation, the National Autism Association, the National Children's Cancer Society and Young Marines. As just one example, I give you the National Exchange Club of Toledo, Ohio, which received a $25,000 grant to use in 2010 for its Child Abuse Prevention program. CWF funds were used for the 23,000-member organization to produce and distribute child-abuse-prevention kits, along with effective "cheat sheets" that provide advice to help parents get through stressful times. "The Child Welfare Foundation grant is enabling us to better protect our children," says Genevieve Stults, a program specialist who participated in our Children & Youth Conference in September. The organization, she explains, has helped 691,000 parents break the cycle of abuse for 30 years and has created safer homes for more than 1.7 million children in that time.

The holidays are upon us. Our hearts and prayers, as always, are with U.S. troops in harm's way and their families. Many of us will take time to donate items, or fill care boxes to ship overseas, or help veterans in VA facilities send gifts to their families. I would ask that you also consider the Child Welfare Foundation in your giving plans this season. All overhead costs are covered by the Legion, so every donated cent directly helps us to "better protect our children."

**www.legion.org/donate**



## Memoranda

***PROMOTE YOUR EVENT ONLINE:*** American Legion posts, Legion Riders chapters, Sons of The American Legion squadrons and Auxiliary units are encouraged to post their charity events on the National Headquarters website.

***www.legion.org/donate***

There, visitors will find a simple form to fill out to share information. After logging in to the site, click on the "Submit an Event" button and provide a brief summary of the event, including date, place, time and contact information. Submissions will be reviewed before posting.

***FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK:*** Military families who need help can call toll-free to connect to an American Legion post near them.

***(800) 504-4098***
***www.legion.org/fsn***

***DONATE TO LEGION CHARITIES:*** Donating money to American Legion charities and foundations has never been easier. Tax-deductible contributions can be made online. Select the cause, program or fund you wish to support. Donations can be made easily by credit card. A receipt and note of thanks will be e-mailed immediately after the donation is recorded.

***www.legion.org/donate***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STILL SERVING AMERICA

*Does your post have a unique community program, an innovative recruiting method or a creative way of spreading the Legion message that could be implemented at posts across the country? Tell us how your post and its members are **Still Serving America.***

*In submitting your information, include your full name, address and telephone number. Send your items, labeled **Still Serving America**, to the correspondence address at left.*


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ACTIVATION

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

***Americanism/Children and Youth***
(317) 630-1203
acy@legion.org

***Economic***
(202) 861-2700
econ@legion.org

***Finance***
317-630-1222
finance@legion.org

***Internal Affairs***
(317) 630-1330
ia@legion.org

***Legislation***
(202) 263-2981
leg@legion.org

***National Convention***
(317) 630-1292
dholmes@legion.org
bwilliams@legion.org

***National Emblem Sales***
(888) 453-4466
emblem@legion.org
emblem.legion.org/

***National Security/Foreign Relations***
(202) 861-2700
nsfr@legion.org

***Public Relations***
(317) 630-1253
pr@legion.org

***The American Legion Magazine***
(317) 630-1298
magazine@legion.org

***The American Legion Library***
(317) 630-1366
library@legion.org

***Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation***
(202) 861-2700
var@legion.org

***American Legion Baseball***
(317) 630-1249
jquinlan@legion.org
http://legion.org/baseball

***American Legion Child Welfare Foundation***
(317) 630-1202
www.cwf-inc.org

***American Legion Endowment Fund***
(317) 630-1202

***Boys Nation***
(317) 630-1207
acy@legion.org

***Family Support Network***
(317) 630-1395
(800) 504-4098
familysupport@legion.org

***Junior Shooting Sports***
(317) 630-1249
cshort@legion.org

***Legion College***
(317) 630-1265
mherndon@legion.org

***National Emergency Fund***
(317) 630-1321
ia@legion.org

***National Oratorical Contest***
(317) 630-1249
cshort@legion.org

NATIONAL ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

# TFA and the FSN: The Legion at its best

*Programs aimed at helping families, children impact thousands of lives each year.*

By Daniel S. Wheeler

The American Legion has two programs that affect thousands of families each year, whether it's through financial assistance or something simple like help with day-to-day chores around the house. Yet because of who you are, who we are, we rarely publicize what we're doing. We don't do what we do for the acclaim. We do it because, as the song says, it's who we are.

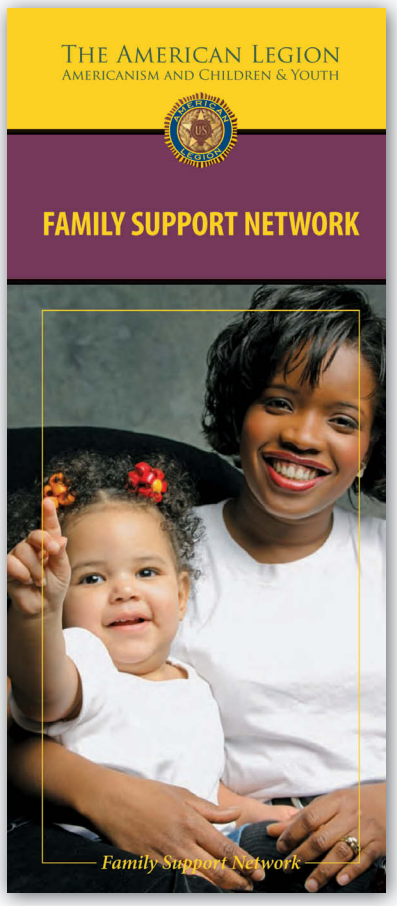
That's why The American Legion established Temporary Financial Assistance in the 1920s and then instituted the Family Support Network during the first Gulf War.

In the 1920s, The American Legion family raised more than $5 million to create the National Endowment Fund; one of the programs of the Endowment Fund is Temporary Financial Assistance. Through TFA, a local post can make a request – through its department to National Headquarters – for cash assistance to give to a veteran who needs help maintaining the basic needs of his or her family.

The family must have minor children living in the home who are either the child of, or legal custodian of, a Legion-eligible veteran. TFA grants can be used for needs such as shelter, food, utilities or health expenses – whatever it takes to make the home a more stable environment for that child.

To date this year, more than 460 families with more than 1,200 children have been helped by Temporary Financial Assistance. In financial terms, its totaled more than $450,000. Heat has been turned back on. Back rent has been paid. Worn-out clothing has been replaced with new items. Lives have been altered and improved because of this program. It's not something you do in order to get your names on TV or in the local newspaper. You help these families because it's the right thing to do.

The Family Support Network was first initiated during Operation Desert Storm to connect the families of deployed servicemembers with local assistance, if needed. It was reactivated following 9/11 as active-duty servicemembers, reservists and National Guardsmen began facing multiple deployments.




The needs met by the Family Support Network are wide ranging. Sometimes it's as simple as finding someone to help with lawn care or getting a babysitter so the mother or father can get time away from the house to shop for groceries. This winter, it might be knowing someone with a plow or snow blower. These needs seem simple – until you take a parent out of the house.

While the Family Support Network has a national 800 phone number, the success of the program happens at the local level, at the post level. National Headquarters doesn't provide any assistance, other than contacting the local post and making them aware of the need for help.

And while thousands of families are helped through the Family Support Network each year, we like to think that thousands more are helped that never need to go through National. The local post is so connected with its community that when a need arises, that need is immediately taken to the post to help. The hope is that local posts have their own Family Support Network in place: a listing of various resources – financial and otherwise – readily available, and its members know who to call for services.

One of The American Legion's Four Pillars is Children and Youth. It was one of our founding principles. Temporary Financial Assistance and the Family Support Network accomplish that mission. But they are only able to do it through a symbiotic relationship between the national organization and the local post. With your continued efforts and achievements in your communities, these programs will continue to thrive, and thousands of families will continue to know they've got friends out there.

**To donate to TFA by mail, send a check or money order made out to:**
***The American Legion Endowment Fund***
***P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206***

**To donate online:**
***http://legion.org/donate/endowment_fund***

**To contact the Family Support Network:**
***(800) 504-4098***
***http://www.legion.org/fsn***

EMBLEM SALES

## 'Flag Rewards' program benefits posts

*Participating posts can receive a 10-cent credit for each dollar spent on the purchase of American flags.*

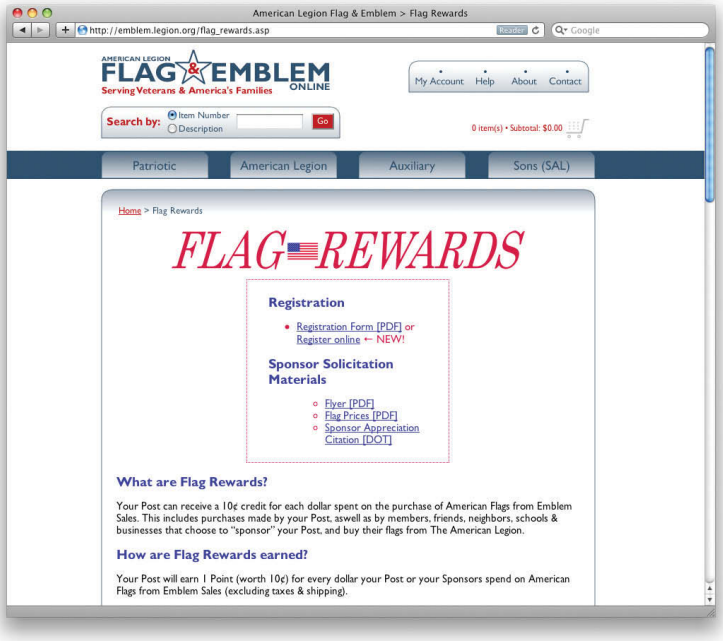
American Legion Emblem Sales has announced a major opportunity for posts to earn money for their programs and activities. Posts are now invited to participate in a new "**Flag Rewards**" program, which is based on American-flag purchases made by a post and its local community.

Participating posts can receive a 10-cent credit for each dollar spent on the purchase of American flags. The credit is good toward the future purchase of any Emblem Sales catalog item. An example would be a post receiving a $2 future credit by purchasing a $20 American flag.

Qualifying purchases include those made by the post as well as by the post's members, friends, neighbors, local schools and businesses that choose to sponsor the post by buying their flags from The American Legion.

The goal is to make The American Legion the primary source for communities to purchase their American flags. Posts are encouraged to spread the message that an American flag purchased from The American Legion will give a direct financial benefit to the local post and help local veterans serve their community.

But the benefits from the "**Flag Rewards**" program do not stop at the financial level. The program is designed to increase the visibility of American Legion members in their local neighborhoods and communities, increase contact with local businesses and civic leaders, and increase membership-recruiting opportunities through contact with patriotic neighbors.




**To register for the program online, visit:**
***http://emblem.legion.org/flag_rewards.asp***

***BENEFITS*** *from Page 1*

Simpson/Bowles Commission suggested slashing $100 billion from the defense budget in 2015, closing one-third of the U.S. bases overseas and freezing non-combat military pay. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates warned that cutting even 10 percent, or $55 billion, from his budget would be "catastrophic" for the military.

"Cutting the military's budget while it is engaged in two wars is unconscionable," Foster said. "When you send American troops to war, you must pay the cost of those wars. Freezing pay and cutting benefits, whether in combat or in garrison, will also make young people think twice before volunteering to serve their country. The United States would not exist if not for the sacrifices of the men and women who have served in our military throughout our history. It is only because of their sacrifice that bean-counters have the freedom to argue about how to balance the budget to begin with."

LEGISLATIVE

## Legislative council nominations needed

The American Legion National Legislative Commission is asking Legion departments to begin preparing nominations for positions on the National Legislative Council.

During the 2010 Fall Meetings in Indianapolis, outgoing Legislative Commission Chairman James E. Kouts stressed the importance of the Legislative Council to members of the National Executive Committee.

"I cannot begin to tell you how important the council is to The American Legion's legislative victories," Kouts said. "I anticipate many changes within Congress, and therefore expect many changes in the National Legislative Council."

Each member of the council is tasked with serving as a liaison between the Legion and a member of Congress. Kouts said the council is most effective "when its members consist of Legionnaires with an personal relationship with their respective lawmakers."

Kouts said the goal is to have the council in place by the start of the new session of Congress in January.

***HONORING*** *from Page 1*

On Nov. 10, Foster was the guest speaker at the National Veterans Award Dinner, also in Birmingham. He said that appreciation for the nation's veterans should go above and beyond a single day.

"We must be there to support not just the families of the fallen, but also the loved ones of those that still are deployed and those who return permanently changed by the wounds of war," Foster said. "While we're happy to be here today to express our appreciation for our veterans, the true expression is expressed through deeds and not words.

"If you're an employer, give extra weight to the experience and the skills of the sailor turned job applicant. Veterans' preference is a requirement for the government jobs, but it's also smart business for the private sector as well.

"When an American Legion Auxiliary member asks for a donation for a poppy, remember the Korean War veteran who's in a hospital bed. When a member of Congress complains about the cost of veterans programs, remind that lawmaker of the cost of being a veteran. And don't underestimate the power of simply saying two words – thank you – to veterans that you encounter."

Foster said that Veterans Day is about every veteran. "Veterans Day is a time to honor not just the heroes … but in fact all the outstanding men and women who served in the nation's armed forces since our founding more than 234 years ago," he said. "Not all veterans have seen war, but a common bond they share is an oath in which they expressed their willingness to die defending this nation.

"Perhaps most significant in preserving our way of life are the battles America does not fight because those who wish us harm slink away in fear of the Coast Guard cutter, the Navy aircraft or the soldier in the Army on patrol."

Foster also said that the Department of Veterans Affairs needs to recognize the unique needs of women veterans. "America is home to 1.2 million women veterans, and they deserve support, and we need to ensure that people in Congress understand that and comply."

Retired Gen. Charles C. Krulak, former commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, received the National Veterans Award during the dinner. "We honor those who have sacrificed and those who continue to sacrifice," Krulak said of Veterans Day. "The common bond of those is selflessness, love of God, love of country …"

National Veterans Day in Birmingham has taken place since 1947, and the Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans rotate hosting the event.

Bridger said being involved in the annual event – which began in 1947 – is a source of pride for the Department of Alabama. "We have a lot of veterans here, and they're all very supportive," Bridger said. "And the city of Birmingham has been very supportive since the parade's inception. It's quite an honor to be involved and be a part of this effort."

**LEFT:** Vice President Joe Biden lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery. *DoD photo*
**Below:** Hundreds gather at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington. *Fred W. Baker III*

**Veterans Day in D.C.** In dramatic contrast to sullen cold, wind and rain last year, this Veterans Day was celebrated in bright sunshine at Arlington National Cemetery. The beauty seemed only fitting for the day of camaraderie and remembrance.

A cannon salute echoing over green Virginia hills began the solemn midmorning ceremonies with William F. Schrier, The American Legion's Western Region Vice Commander, joining fellow dignitaries at the Tomb of the Unknowns. Vice President Joe Biden emerged from the sea of spectators and laid a wreath before the tomb as Schrier and fellow veterans saluted.

The entourage then turned about-face and climbed a flight of stone steps to the cemetery's amphitheater, where an audience of around a thousand witnessed a program of music from "The President's Own" U.S. Marine Corps Band - including patriotic solos from its lead tenor - the procession of colors, a prayer for veterans, the Pledge of Allegiance and a short round of addresses.

VA Secretary Eric Shinseki recounted the accomplishments of the Obama administration and the 111th Congress with regard to veterans benefits. Shinseki recalled the adoption of a record-high VA budget, the expansion of eligibility for medical benefits to include those suffering from certain Gulf War-related ailments, and the enactment of the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Biden delivered this year's Veterans Day keynote address. Speaking for 16 minutes, he began by comparing the day's clement weather with the horrific heat of Pacific islands, Vietnam and Southwest Asia, and with the bitter cold of winters in Korea and Western Europe.

"I look out at all of you who have served our nation," Biden said, "and all of you have stood by their sides and waited as they served. And I see the most tested among us, the most tested of all Americans. I also see the most honorable men and women - citizens who have never feared the future and are determined to build a better future to this day.

**World War II fighter pilot and retired U.S. Army Air Forces Lt. Col. Jack Schofield salutes the crowd during the Las Vegas Veterans Day Parade on Nov. 11. Schofield was a member of the fighter squadron known as the Flying Tigers.** *DoD photo*

"Collectively," Biden continued, "the generation of soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who have served and sacrificed for us are the heart and soul - the very spine - of this nation. And as a nation, we pause today to thank the more than 23 million surviving veterans who have so bravely and faithfully protected our freedoms."

The vice president's sympathies were apparent at times from the emotion in his voice, recalling his time as the concerned father of a servicemember sent into harm's way. Biden's son, Beau, a captain in the Delaware National Guard, returned a little more than a year ago from his deployment in Iraq.

After the vice president finished his remarks, the colors were retired and the audience exited for a long walk out of Arlington. It was a poignant journey as, near the exit gates, graves were being dug for newly fallen warriors. Despite the cheerful blue sky, there was little laughter at Arlington that morning.

That afternoon, a large crowd gathered to hear several Veterans Day speakers at the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington. Vice Commander Schrier, one of many representatives from veterans service organizations, placed a wreath from The American Legion at The Wall, honoring the memories of those who sacrificed their lives during the Vietnam War.

*Editor's Note:* Peter Gaytan, executive director of the Legion's D.C. office, made a Veterans Day appearance on C-SPAN's "Washington Journal."

**Watch his interview here.**
***video.foxnews.com/v/4415577/veterans-day-outrage***

LEGION COLLEGE

# 54 students graduate from Legion College

*National commander: Slowly make best of new knowledge.*

By James V. Carroll

Fifty-four Legionnaires from 31 states graduated Oct. 29 after a week of intensive classroom and small-group activities at the 12th annual National American Legion College in Indianapolis.

The program enhances knowledge and appreciation of The American Legion, and teaches the core values and contributions of the organization, the Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion and many subordinate programs. Knowledge gained during the weeklong classroom and small-group sessions prepares Legionnaires for leadership positions in posts, districts, counties and departments through education, development and motivation. The curriculum challenges student leaders to think critically and creatively about issues confronting the Legion.

"You have gained a great deal of knowledge about The American Legion during your week here," American Legion National Commander Jimmie L. Foster said during graduation ceremonies. "You will be tempted to go back to your post ready to change the world. I caution you to ease into it slowly if you hope to succeed. It's not what you know, but rather how you use your newfound knowledge."

Past National Commander and Legion College Chancellor Butch Miller echoed Foster's words.

"There is no doubt that many of you may become the leaders of tomorrow's American Legion," Miller said. "You may one day become national commander in your own right. Clarence Hill, 2009-2010 national commander, is a graduate of Legion College. But remember, what you learned here does not guarantee success. You have the basic tools to succeed. What you choose to (do) with those tools is up to each of you."

During the program, national and department Legion leaders, staff and Legion College graduates led students through a number of classroom lectures, as well as smaller sessions with emphasis on the programs, management techniques and leadership skills necessary to increase visibility of programs, growth in membership, and public awareness of The American Legion and its corresponding organizations.

Students learned how to write resolutions, interact with the media, write strategic plans and develop public-speaking skills. The objective of the small-group sessions was to give students an opportunity to develop department-level training classes.

For information on how to apply for the 2011 class, contact Matt Herndon, course developer, The American Legion National College, at **(317) 630-1406**.

**Students worked both in small-group sessions and larger settings during the 2010 National Legion College in Indianapolis.** *James V. Carroll*

LEGION RACING

# 76 Freedom wraps up eventful 2010 season

*Driver Jerick Johnson ends the 2010 ARCA race season with success and gratitude.*

By James V. Carroll

The 2010 ARCA racing season for driver Jerick Johnson and The American Legion/David Law Firm 76 Freedom Car ended much the way it started — in frustration, due to a series of brake and mechanical failures. But overall, Johnson is upbeat about his 2010 season results.

"We competed in a little over half of the 20-race season," Johnson said. "We qualified for all the televised races except Daytona, and ran in two or three short-track races. Given those facts, we did pretty well. We finished 18th out of 140 drivers competing in all or part of the races, and we were second to 2010 ARCA Series Champion Patrick Sheltra in the Hard Charger competition. The Hard Charger trophy was ours to take right up to the last race, but we came up a bit short."

Johnson's opportunity to claim the coveted Hard Charger trophy was during the season-ending race on Oct. 9 at Rockingham Speedway in North Carolina. While he only needed to finish 19th or better to claim the trophy, Johnson unfortunately nursed his brakeless car to a 26th-place finish.

"Brakes and tires hurt us a lot this season," Johnson said. "We were in the position to crack the top 10 in a number of races when we blew a tire or lost the ability to brake. Pitting under a green-flag run to change a flat tire pretty much ruins your day, and losing brakes is even a worse situation."

Even though Johnson and his crew faced many challenges throughout the racing season, not all of them stopped Johnson in his tracks from finishing in the top 10. For instance, during a weeklong series of races at the quarter-mile track in New Smyrna near Daytona, Fla., Johnson and his crew faced bitterly cold temperatures, fog delays and an accident that sent the nose of his car bouncing across the track. Despite these obstacles, the 76 Freedom Car managed an overall 9th-place finish for the week.

"I've gone around and around a lot of tracks at a lot of places," Johnson said. "But I have never been in a race halted by fog until New Smyrna. That was a new one. Quite an experience and quite fun though."

Johnson also had a top-10 finish at the Salem Speedway quarter-mile track in Salem, Ind.

"That (Salem) was a race we didn't plan to compete in at the beginning of the season," Johnson said. "We decided at the last moment, and it was a good decision. I'm disappointed we didn't pull out a few more top-10 finishes."

ARCA kicks off its 59th year of competition on Feb. 12, 2011, with the Lucas Oil Slick Mist 200 at Daytona International Speedway. The race is 80 laps on the historic 2.5-mile superspeedway oval, and will air live on SPEED at 4 p.m. EST. Until then, Johnson reflects on his success and prepares for a new season.

"The success we have had this season – and every season – would not have been possible without the support of The American Legion family and the David Law Firm," Johnson said. "We at Team Johnson Motorsports worked hard all season, but the Legion and David Law Firm sponsorship made it possible for us to be competitive and have a legitimate chance at the Hard Charger. For that we are forever grateful and honored."

DATELINE: CAPITOL HILL

# A look at the new faces in the 112th Congress

The following are the new members of the 112th Congress. In cases where a new member is a veteran, that person's period of service is indicated in **boldface**. A new member belonging to The American Legion is indicated with (AL).

In addition, there are races in California, Illinois, Kentucky, New York and Texas still undecided.

**Dan Dellinger**
*Chairman, National Legislative Commission*

## ALABAMA

**2nd – Martha Roby (R)** – city councilwoman, attorney
**5th – Mo Brooks (R)** – county commissioner, former state representative, former district attorney
**7th – Terri Sewell (D)** – attorney, community activist

## ALASKA

**Senate** – Incumbent, Lisa Murkowski launched a write-in campaign despite losing the primary to Joe Miller. Currently, Miller trails by several percentage points.

## ARIZONA

**1st – Paul Gosar (R)** – dentist
**3rd – Ben Quayle (R)** – attorney, businessman, son of former Vice President Dan Quayle
**5th – David Schweikert (R)** – county treasurer, former state representative, real-estate agent

## ARKANSAS

**Senate – John Boozman (R)** – optometrist, rancher, former school-board member, U.S. representative (2001-present)
**1st – Rick Crawford (R)** – broadcaster, radio/TV network president (**Panama**)
**2nd – Tim Griffin (R)** – former U.S. attorney (**Army Reserve/Persian Gulf**) (AL)
**3rd – Steve Womack (R)** – mayor, financial consultant, former radio-station manager (**National Guard/Persian Gulf**)

## CALIFORNIA

**19th – Jeff Denham (R)** – state senator, businessman (**Air Force Reserve/Panama**)
**33rd –Karen Bass (D)** – state assembly speaker, former community organizer

## COLORADO

**3rd – Scott Tipton (R)** – state representative, pottery-company owner
**4th – Cory Gardner (R)** – state house representative, attorney, former congressional aide

## CONNECTICUT

**Senate – Richard Blumenthal (D)** – state attorney general, former U.S. attorney, former journalist, former congressional aide (**Marine Corps Reserve/Vietnam)** (AL)

## DELAWARE

**Senate – Chris Coons (D)** – county executive, former county council president, attorney
**At Large – John Carney (D)** – energy-company executive, former lt. governor, former state finance secretary, former congressional aide

## FLORIDA

**Senate – Marco Rubio (R)** – former state representative, attorney
**2nd – Steve Southerland (R)** – funeral-home owner
**5th – Rich Nugent (R)** – county sheriff (**Air National Guard**) (AL)
**8th –Daniel Webster (R)** – former state senator, former state representative, businessman
**12th – Dennis Ross (R)** – former state representative, attorney
**17th – Frederica Wilson (D)** – state senator, former state representative, nonprofit-group executive director, former elementary-school principal
**21st – Mario Diaz-Balart (R)** – former state senator and representative; U.S. representative in Florida's 25th District (2003-present)
**22nd – Allen West (R)** – retired Army officer, college instructor, high-school teacher, military advisor (**Lebanon-Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf**) (AL)
**24th – Sandy Adams (R)** – state representative, former deputy sheriff (**Vietnam**)
**25th –David Rivera (R)** – state representative, consultant, former congressional aide

## GEORGIA

**7th –Rob Wooddall (R)** – congressional aide, attorney
**8th – Austin Scott (R)** – state representative, insurance-agency owner

## HAWAII

**1st – Colleen Hanabusa (D)** – state senate president, attorney

## IDAHO

**1st – Rául Labrador (R)** – state representative, attorney

## ILLINOIS

**Senate – Mark Kirk (R)** – attorney, former congressional aide, U.S. representative (2001-present) (**Persian Gulf**)
**8th – Joe Walsh (R)** – investment banker
**10th –Bob Dold (R)** – businessman, former congressional and White House aide
**11th – Adam Kinzinger (R)** – former county commissioner (**Air National Guard/Persian Gulf**) (AL)
**14th – Randy Hultgren (R)** – attorney, state senator, former state representative, former county commissioner
**17th – Bobby Schilling (R)** – pizza-restaurant owner, former factory worker

## INDIANA

**Senate – Dan Coats (R)** – attorney, lobbyist, former U.S. senator (1989-99), former U.S. representative (1981-89), former U.S. ambassador to Germany (**Vietnam**)
**3rd – Marlin Stutzman (R)** – state senator, former state representative, farmer
**4th –Todd Rokita (R)** – Indiana secretary of state, attorney
**8th – Larry Bucshon (R)** – cardiologist (**Naval Reserves**)
**9th – Todd Young (R)** – attorney, deputy county prosecutor, political activist (**Persian Gulf**) (AL)

## KANSAS

**Senate – Jerry Moran (R)** – attorney, former state-senate majority leader, U.S. representative (1997-present)
**1st – Tim Huelskamp (R)** – state senator, farmer
**3rd – Kevin Yoder (R)** – state representative, attorney
**4th –Mike Pompeo (R)** – manufacturing executive, attorney (**Panama, Persian Gulf**)

## KENTUCKY

**Senate – Rand Paul (R)** – ophthalmologist, son of U.S. Rep. Ron Paul (Texas-14)

## LOUISIANA

**2nd – Cedric Richmond (D)** – attorney, state representative
**3rd – Jeff Landry (R)** – attorney (**National Guard/Persian Gulf**) (AL)

## MARYLAND

**1st – Andy Harris (R)** – state senator, anesthesiologist (**Naval Reserve/Persian Gulf**) (AL)

## MASSACHUSETTS

**10th –Bill Keating (D)** – county district attorney, former state senator, former state representative

## MICHIGAN

**1st – Dan Benishek (R)** – surgeon, political activist
**2nd –Bill Huizenga (R)** – businessman, former state representative, former congressional aide
**3rd – Justin Amash (R)** – state representative, attorney
**7th – Tim Walberg (R)** – minister, former steelworker, former state representative, former U.S. representative (2007-2009)
**13th – Hansen Clarke (D)** – state senator, attorney, former state representative, former congressional aide

## MINNESOTA

**8th – Chip Cravaack (R)** – airline pilot (**Lebanon-Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf**) (AL)

## MISSISSIPPI

**1st – Alan Nunnelee (R)** – insurance-company executive, state senator
**4th – Steve Palazzo (R)** – certified public accountant (**National Guard/Persian Gulf**) (AL)

## MISSOURI

**Senate – Roy Blunt (R)** – U.S. representative (1997-present)
**4th – Vicky Hartzler (R)** – teacher, business owner, former state representative
**7th – Billy Long (R)** – auctioneer, real-estate agent, radio-talk-show host

## NEVADA

**3rd – Joe Heck (R)** – former state senator, physician (**Army Reserves**) (AL)

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

**Senate – Kelly Ayotte (R)** – former state attorney general, business owner
**1st – Frank Guinta (R)** – mayor, former state representative
**2nd – Charlie Bass (R)** – former U.S. representative (1995-2007), former state senator and state representative, business consultant, former congressional aide

## NEW JERSEY

**3rd – Jon Runyan (R)** – sports analyst, former pro-football player

## NEW MEXICO

**2nd – Steve Pearce (R)** – former U.S. representative (2003-2009), former state representative, businessman (**Vietnam**) (AL)

## NEW YORK

**13th – Michael Grimm (R)** – former FBI special agent, former U.S. marshal (**Persian Gulf**) (AL)
**19th – Nan Hayworth (R)** – ophthalmologist
**20th – Chris Gibson (R)** – former college instructor, retired Army officer (**Panama, Persian Gulf**) (AL)
**24th – Richard Hanna (R)** – construction-company owner
**29th – Tom Reed (R)** – former city mayor, attorney, mortgage broker

## NORTH CAROLINA

**2nd – Renee Ellmers (R)** – nurse, hospital administrator

## NORTH DAKOTA

**Senate – John Hoeven (R)** – governor, former banker
**At Large – Rick Berg (R)** – state representative, real-estate developer

## OHIO

**Senate – Rob Portman (R)** – attorney, former U.S. budget director, former U.S. trade representative, former U.S. representative (1993-2007)
**1st – Steve Chabot – (R)** – attorney, former teacher, former U.S. representative (1995-2009)
**6th – Bill Johnson (R)** – businessman, retired Air Force officer (**Vietnam, Lebanon-Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf**)
**15th – Steve Stivers (R)** – former state senator, lobbyist (**National Guard/Persian Gulf**)
**16th – Jim Renacci (R)** – former city mayor, businessman, former Arena Football League team owner
**18th –Bob Gibbs (R)** – state senator, former state representative, livestock farmer

## OKLAHOMA

**5th – James Lankford (R)** – youth-camp director, college professor

## PENNSYLVANIA

**Senate – Pat Toomey (R)** – investment banker, restaurant owner, former U.S. representative (1999-2005)
**3rd – Mike Kelly (R)** – former city councilman, auto dealer
**7th – Pat Meehan (R)** – former U.S. attorney, former county district attorney, former congressional aide
**8th – Mike Fitzpatrick (R)** – former county commissioner, former U.S. representative (2005-2007)
**10th – Tom Marino (R)** – former U.S. attorney, former county district attorney
**11th – Lou Barletta (R)** – city mayor, businessman

## RHODE ISLAND

**1st – David Cicilline (D)** – city mayor, former state representative, attorney

## SOUTH CAROLINA

**1st – Tim Scott (R)** – state representative, former county council chairman, businessman
**3rd – Jeff Duncan (R)** – state representative, real-estate agent, auctioneer
**4th – Trey Gowdy (R)** – county solicitor, former federal prosecutor
**5th – Mick Mulvaney (R)** – state senator, former state representative, businessman

## SOUTH DAKOTA

**At Large – Kristi Noem (R)** – state representative, businesswoman, rancher

## TENNESSEE

**3rd – Chuck Fleischmann (R)** – attorney, former radio-talk-show host
**4th – Scott DesJarlais (R)** – physician
**6th – Diane Black (R)** – state senator, former state representative, nurse
**8th – Stephen Fincher (R)** – farmer, gospel singer

## TEXAS

**17th – Bill Flores (R)** – businessman, accountant

*See FACES on Page 7*

LEGISLATIVE

# Legion: Vet issues await new Congress

*National Commander Jimmie Foster hopes the 112th Congress moves in the same direction as the Congress before it.*

The American Legion is pressing the prospective leadership of a politically realigned Congress to address several long-standing veterans issues. "The dramatic midterm election that just concluded was a referendum on ideals and policies," American Legion National Commander Jimmie Foster said. "But not on issues related to the care of America's veterans. The 111th Congress was moving in the right direction, and the 112th should continue on this course."

Foster recently praised the current session's Capitol Hill lawmakers for the passage of the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009 (guaranteeing appropriations for VA health care one full year in advance), as well as the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2010 that included substantially increased fiscal 2010 funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"As laudable as these measures were – and others, such as broadening eligibility for relief from certain service-connected health problems, more must be done to provide our nation's heroes with the benefits they deserve," Foster said. "About 20 new representatives are veterans, and 14 of those belong to The American Legion, so we're hoping they will lend their strong support to our legislative priorities."

Of special concern to the Legion is the so-called disabled veteran tax or concurrent-receipt practice, which offsets veterans' retirement pay with the amount of disability pay they are receiving. "Both retirement pay and disability benefits are well and truly earned, and both should be awarded fully. To do otherwise is shameful," Foster said.

While acknowledging the recent, unprecedented increase in VA funding ($125 billion), The American Legion is requesting additional funding for the agency, mostly to support improved medical care, research and facilities. But the Legion is also offering Congress a suggestion that, if enacted, would help to offset any VA budget increase.

Legion leaders point to the fact that more than half the veteran population served by VA is eligible for Medicare benefits. Yet VA is not authorized to collect third-party reimbursement from Medicare (or Medicaid) for health services, provided to veterans, that have no connection to their military service.

"In a society that's trying to improve health care, reduce deficits and serve veterans, allowing VA to bill Medicare for its non-service-connected care is a win-win," said Tim Tetz, legislative director for The American Legion. "Veterans pay into the Medicare system, so why shouldn't they be allowed to take advantage of it?"

**National Commander Jimmie Foster testifies before a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs committees in September.** *Photo by Craig Roberts*

Among other items of concern to The American Legion are deficiencies in the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Improvements can be made, the Legion says, by broadening eligibility for benefits to members of reserve units and the National Guard, as well as expanding the list of VA-approved institutions to include vocational schools and those offering online and distance-learning curricula.

Peter Gaytan, executive director of The American Legion in Washington, sums up the organization's view. "Realistically, the new Congress may be hard-pressed to find a nonpartisan agenda that all its members can agree on. But why not try to bridge that chasm by agreeing to honor our nation's veterans, not only by maintaining their current benefits but improving them as well?"

*FACES* from Page 6

**23rd – Francisco "Quico" Canseco (R)** – attorney, banker

**UTAH**

**Senate – Mike Lee (R)** – lawyer, assistant U.S. attorney

**VIRGINIA**

**2nd – Scott Rigell (R)** – auto dealer (**Marine Corps Reserves**)

**5th – Robert Hurt (R)** – state senator, former state delegate, former town councilman, attorney

**9th – Morgan Griffith (R)** – state delegate, attorney

**WASHINGTON**

**3rd – Jaime Herrera (R)** – state representative, former congressional aide

**WEST VIRGINIA**

**Senate – Joe Manchin (D)** – governor, former state secretary of state, former state senator and state delegate, business owner

**1st – David McKinley (R)** – former state delegate, civil engineer

**WISCONSIN**

**Senate – Ron Johnson (R)** – businessman, accountant

**7th – Sean Duffy (R)** – county district attorney, former lumberjack athlete

**8th – Reid Ribble (R)** – roofing contractor

MEETINGS

# Discount airfare offered for 2011 Legion meetings

The American Legion has obtained airline discounts with American Airlines, Delta Airlines and United Airlines for the organization's 2011 meetings. At right is the meeting schedule, along with destination cities/airports.

Those who want National Headquarters to obtain their travel tickets can contact Marti Wooden, the Legion's in-house travel agent, at (317) 630-1232 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. EST, or at mwooden@legion.org. Otherwise, Legionnaires can go directly through the airlines to obtain discounts. Tickets should be purchased at least 30 days prior to traveling. Discounts vary depending on hub cities, advance ticketing and booking class of service for the reservations. Fees may also apply when reservations are made.

| AIRLINE CONTACTS | |
|---|---|
| **American Airlines** | 1-800-433-1790 Reference Index No. 21442 |
| **Delta Airlines** | 1-800-328-1111 Refer to File No. NM6HC |
| **United Airlines** | 1-800-521-4041 Reference Tour Code No. 564HT |

| 2011 LEGION CALENDAR | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Jan. 7-9** | Membership Planning Meeting | *Indianapolis* |
| **March 16-23** | Department Service Officer School/Washington Conference | *(DCA, BWI, IAD)* |
| **April 15-17** | Oratorical Contest | *Indianapolis* |
| **April 30-May 5** | NEC Spring Meetings | *Indianapolis* |
| **July 20-30** | Boys Nation | *Washington* |
| **July 27-30** | Department Service Officer School/Membership Workshop | *Indianapolis* |
| **Aug. 2-7** | 21st Annual Junior 3-Position Air Rifle National Championship | *Colorado Springs, Colo.* |
| **August 3-9** | American Legion Baseball Regionals | *(PWM, PHL, CAE, SHV, MBS, BIS, BIL, SMF)* |
| **Aug. 11-17** | Legion Baseball World Series | *Charlotte, N.C.* |
| **Aug. 24-Sept. 2** | 93rd National Convention | *Minneapolis* |
| **Sept. 16-18** | Children & Youth Conference | *Indianapolis* |
| **Sept. 23-25** | Americanism Conference | *Indianapolis* |
| **Oct. 8-13** | NEC Fall Meetings | *Indianapolis* |
| **Oct. 22-28** | Legion College | *Indianapolis* |

MEMBERSHIP

# Incentives remain for district commanders

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

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

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

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

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

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

**www.legion.org/commander**
**Click on Post Visitation Award**

**Awards**

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

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

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

Additionally, department commanders whose departments have all districts achieving the 100-percent requirement will receive special recognition at the 93rd National Convention.

MEMBERSHIP

# Post Excellence Award continues

**Purpose**

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

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

**Criteria**

Standards to be achieved in each area include:

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

**www.legion.org/commander**
**Click on Post Awards**

**Certification**

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

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

MEMBERSHIP

# Post start-up/revitalization successes

**Post 93, Charleston, Ill.:** The efforts of the department, district and local Legionnaires led to the creation of a new post in Charleston. There had been two post charters in Charleston previously; the first one was cancelled in 1976 and the second in 1990.

All of the local media – TV, print and social – provided information to the community and veterans. The membership team also sent out more than 400 letters to delinquent and headquarters-post members in advance of the effort. The three-day effort was based at Charleston Carnegie Public Library and included an open house with a service officer in attendance.

Some team members stayed behind at the library, while three teams canvassed the delinquent and headquarters-post members.

New members signed up included four or five father/children combos, as well as one husband/wife combo. Enough members were signed up to charter the post on the first day, and an additional 23 were signed up on Day 2 and 17 more on Day 3. The last two members signed up were a husband and wife, both former Marines, who attend Eastern Illinois University.

Regular monthly meetings begin in December, and the mayor of Charleston has said that the new post can meet as long as it wants at City Hall.

In the end, Post 93 picked up 42 members, including 18 from the global war on terror. It is going to be a new, young post, with the great majority of its members being Vietnam War-era and younger as its leadership. Twenty-one of these veterans previously have never been members of The American Legion.

MEMBERSHIP

# Lucky 7 incentive program

During the 2010-2011 membership year, National Commander Jimmie Foster will award his National Commander pin to any Legion family member who signs up at least two new members and renews five current members into The American Legion.

A "new member" is defined as any eligible person joining for the 2011 membership year who was not a member of The American Legion during the 2010 membership year.

National Commander Foster's goal is to recognize those in the Legion family who actively recruit new members into the world's largest veterans service organization for the 2011 membership year. To maintain the integrity of the National Commander's pin incentive program, only one will be awarded per individual.

**www.legion.org/documents/legion/word/Foster2011IncentivePinForm.doc**

Certification forms for this program can be submitted at any time. Upon receipt, national membership staff will confirm the names and mail the pin directly to the Legionnaire. National Commander Foster's "Lucky 7" pin incentive program will end on June 30, 2011 – or when supplies are exhausted.

## "LUCKY 7" PIN CERTIFICATION FORM

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

Recruiter's Name _____ Date _____

Membership number _____

Street address _____

City/state/ZIP _____

Phone number _____

TO QUALIFY YOU NEED TO LIST AT LEAST TWO (2) NEW MEMBERS AND (5) RENEWALS.
(include full name, post and membership number)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____