From: The American Legion
To: Library Division
Subject: Stay the course
Date: Wednesday, September 10, 2014 8:41:28 AM

To view an online version of this email, click **here**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

The mission to help veterans and their families was at the heart of our organization's birth nearly 100 years ago. Service above self still guides The American Legion today.

Consider that during the recent American Legion Legacy Run, **a record $1 million was raised** . These funds provide scholarship money for the children of servicemembers who lost their lives on active duty since 9/11. This is one example of how The American Legion demonstrates its commitment to the families of servicemembers.

Donations to **American Legion Charities** also help fund Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW), Child Welfare Foundation (CWF), Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA), National Emergency Fund (NEF) and other important programs.

When I became national commander a couple of weeks ago, **I announced my 4 x 4 program** . One "4" stands for raising $4 million among The American Legion Family – the Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and Legion Riders. The other "4" also represents 4 million – that's 4 million members of the Legion Family.

The goals are well within our reach. The rewards will represent significant progress for our organization.

I devised the 4 x 4 program so that all of our charitable outreach initiatives would benefit. You may have a passion to help our wounded servicemen and women, so a donation to OCW would be appropriate. Or you may want to send a contribution to a program that assists children, such as CWF, TFA or the Legacy Scholarship Fund. In any case, I am asking **for your kind donations** to whichever program or programs you wish to support.

These programs are effective because of our volunteers. These are men and women who deliver checks to victims in disaster zones, hold fundraising events and purchase comfort items for recovering troops in warrior transition units. Without these volunteers in the Legion, Auxiliary and SAL on the front lines, our organizations would all cease to exist.

To keep these programs viable, we must **keep our membership strong**. I am asking you to recruit all eligible

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

veterans you meet. Invite their sons and grandsons to join the SAL. Encourage wives and daughters to join the Auxiliary.

On behalf of the nation's largest and most influential veterans service organization, thank you for what you do every day on behalf of veterans, their families and young people.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

Click **here** to forward this mailing with your personal message.

This email was sent to: **library@legion.org**
This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
700 North Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204

Subscriber Preferences

From: The American Legion
To: Library Division
Subject: Help is available for veterans in crisis
Date: Friday, September 26, 2014 8:10:10 AM

To view an online version of this email, click **here**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

The most recent data for veteran suicides – 22 a day – is heartbreaking. These are men and women who vowed with their lives to protect our great nation. They slept on battlefields, spent weeks at sea, flew over hostile territory and faced enemy fire so that we might sleep without fear at home in America.

Somewhere along the line, sometime after discharge, something happened to them. It may have been caused by post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury. It may have been depression brought about by unemployment, under-employment or homelessness.

No matter the reason, mental health of veterans is an issue in need of resolve. The American Legion knows that the high suicide rate does not need to exist.

VA has broadened its ability to help veterans in crisis. In fact, family members and friends can contact VA through its suicide prevention hotline, texting service or online chat if there are concerns. Here is how you or someone you care for can reach VA during a crisis:

- Chat phone number: 800-273-8255, press 1.
- Texting service: 838255
- Online chat service: **www.veteranscrisisline.net**

VA responders have participated in more than 1.25 million crisis center calls, 175,000 online chats and 24,000 texting conversations. There are many success stories and happy endings in those conversations. Still, more needs to be done to reverse the increasing number of suicides.

September is National Suicide Prevention Month. But once the calendar turns to October, the threat remains. Be on the lookout for veterans who need help. Listen to them. Talk with them. Direct them to their local coordinators at **www.veteranscrisisline.net**. Or, if necessary, contact a counselor on their behalf.

A simple phone call, a willingness to listen or to step up with a referral for a fellow veteran can save lives. Please be on the lookout.

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

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For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

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THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

Did you know that more than 3,000 veterans and their families received assistance with VA benefits, medical appointment times, mental health concerns and other issues, thanks to The American Legion's Veterans Crisis Command Centers in recent months?

Some veterans had been waiting years, even decades, for help.

In the wake of the VA scandal that erupted last spring, the Legion set up week-long Veterans Crisis Command Centers in 11 communities. Each event began with a town hall meeting where veterans could share their VA experiences openly, with American Legion staff moderating and VA listening.

Many veterans who spoke were like Grenada-era veteran Michael Saffold. Before the town hall meeting in St. Louis, he didn't know what The American Legion was all about. "I thought (the Legion) was a place where old veterans sit around and talk," Mr. Saffold said. "But now I know I have another resource that I can reach out and touch. And that gives me a glimmer of hope."

The Legion did not simply create hope during the town hall meetings and crisis centers. The Legion delivered on its promise to help and support all veterans.

This work helped turn a crisis into an opportunity for a better future between veterans and VA. To keep the success of these events moving forward, **the Legion will continue to conduct them,** under a new name: Veterans Outreach Centers (VOC).

The mission remains the same. The first of these VOCs was held at the Washington VA Medical Center, starting Sept. 30. **During the three-day VOC** , the Legion helped no fewer than 363 veterans get the care and access to benefits they sought.

To some, the name change may be insignificant. To me, it represents The American Legion's ground-breaking work on behalf of our veterans. Getting them the care they deserve has been the No. 1 goal during this entire process.

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

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Later this month, the Legion will offer a VOC in Los Angeles. Throughout 2015, monthly American Legion VOCs will be conducted at communities where needs are critical. The American Legion will never stop working on behalf of our nation's veterans to improve VA and rebuild trust among those who are served by it.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

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This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
700 North Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204

Subscriber Preferences

From: The American Legion
To: Library Division
Subject: Help us preserve the history of The American Legion
Date: Tuesday, October 21, 2014 1:19:28 PM

To view an online version of this email, click **here**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

Inside every American Legion post, legacies are shared and passed from generation to generation. Stories about courageous veterans, bravery in battle, patriotism at home, community services and humorous anecdotes that only get better with time.

The Legion has a proud history. It is a history written in the annals of local posts.

Did you know, for example, that George Washington, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were visitors of Gadsby's Tavern, now the home of **Post 24 in Alexandria, Va**?

Posts across America have withstood natural disasters and rebuilt in order to keep serving their communities. Post 138 in Port Tampa City, Fla., is one such survivor. **It was a two-story building** until 1960 when Hurricane Donna tore the upper level away. No matter. Now, the post's large back deck offers beautiful views of the sunset.

Every generation of Legionnaires has a knack for getting things done. Members of Post 11 (Wagner, S.D.) **worked together to finance and construct** their building in 1929. In fact, they dug the basement themselves by hand.

These are just three of dozens of entertaining stories **on the Legion's Centennial web page**. Nearly every department is represented. Even though the centennial anniversary period is still four years away, now is a good time to show your pride and make sure your post is represented.

I understand that the Internet may be intimidating to some of our members. So to help you get started, Bob Ferrebee of Lloyd Williams Post 41 in Berryville, Va., has developed a step-by-step guide. **Download the handy resource** full of tips about how to get started, what to publish on the page and more.

The American Legion has a rich history that needs to be told so future generations will understand the rich legacy they are asked to continue. Visit the Centennial web page - **http://centennial.legion.org/** - to learn about our history and to contribute stories and photos.

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

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VETERANS SERVING VETERANS

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

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This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
700 North Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204

Subscriber Preferences

From: The American Legion
To: Library Division
Subject: Help the Legion Help Veterans
Date: Friday, November 07, 2014 7:34:14 AM

To view an online version of this email, click **here**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

Quinton Diets served our country honorably in the Gulf War. However, like many warriors, his wounds were invisible to many. He suffered from depression, a result of his post-traumatic stress disorder. In his own words, Mr. Diets says he “feels guilty for coming back when others stayed there.”

Mr. Diets received the help he needed from American Legion Service Officer Gary Roach, who immediately recognized the PTSD issues that were troubling Mr. Diets.

His story is one of several you might see on television that will be part of a nationwide American Legion awareness campaign. The Legion has been involved with providing resources to servicemembers returning from war for nearly a century. And that effort continues today as servicemen and women return home from war, often bringing with them PTSD and TBI (traumatic brain injury).

Our hope is for every single veteran to get the treatment he or she requires. These TV spots will help bring awareness to the situation and raise money to help assist those who served with honor.

As part of the campaign, all donors who contribute just $19 a month, or a one-time gift of at least $228, will receive a special commemorative coin (pictured right). Donations can be made easily and securely by visiting **www.supportlegion.org** . You may call (888) 991-1131 with questions.

Your kind donations will help The American Legion provide assistance to our veterans like Mr. Diets. Now, he is doing better, saying he personally has much to look forward to. “I wish all the men and women coming home today would come forward to realize that organizations like The American Legion are there for them.”

While the enemies and war wounds have changed since The American Legion’s founding, our support of veterans and active-duty troops will not waver. Please join me in making a kind contribution to help today’s generation of wounded warriors.

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

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This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
700 North Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204

Subscriber Preferences

From: The American Legion
To: Library Division
Subject: Remembering and honoring POW/MIAs
Date: Wednesday, December 03, 2014 10:56:04 AM

To view an online version of this email, click **here**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

My cousin, Air Force Lt. Danny Thomas, went missing July 6, 1971. On that day, his aircraft disappeared in Vietnam, 15 miles outside Laos.

To this day, he is still listed as a POW/MIA, along with Army Capt. Donald G. "Butch" Carr, who also was aboard the reconnaissance mission. They remain among the more than 1,600 Americans who disappeared in Vietnam, Laos or elsewhere in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War.

Danny's story is close to my heart, of course. His story is similar to tens of thousands of missing American servicemembers. I feel a special bond with their family members, sealed with the tears we shed for our missing loved ones.

My personal connection made **my recent trip to Vietnam and Laos** incredibly moving. I was fortunate to be able to meet with excavation teams and assist them by shoveling the hallowed ground where it is believed a pilot's remains lay. I sincerely hope that the team is able to discover his remains and bring some closure to his loved ones.

The American Legion has long honored and advocated for our comrades who have been unaccounted for or listed as missing. **Legionnaires approved a resolution** during the 67th National Convention that calls for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of The American Legion. These chairs and table settings honor every single one of the 83,000 American servicemembers who are still unaccounted for after serving in World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War, the Vietnam War or the Gulf War.

To their families, their memories will be kept alive for future generations to honor. And to veterans like us, they are comrades whose sacrifice will never be forgotten.

For God and Country,

Michael D Helm

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

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VETERANS SERVING VETERANS

Mike Helm
National Commander

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This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
700 North Pennsylvania Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

From: [redacted]
To: Library Division
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: FW: Look for more American Legion impact in 2015
Date: Friday, March 20, 2015 10:29:37 AM

From: The American Legion [mailto:cs@legion.org]
Sent: Wednesday, December 17, 2014 9:00 AM
To: [redacted]
Subject: Look for more American Legion impact in 2015

The Legion will build on progress made in 2014 to improve VA, help transitioning military families and provide relief for those in need.

To view an online version of this email, click **here**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

As a new year soon dawns, individuals and organizations will look back and reflect on the highlights of the past 12 months. For individuals, those highlights might be the birth of a child or grandchild, a marriage, promotion or career change.

I hope this year has brought you and your family many moments to cherish for years to come. For our organization, it truly has been a remarkable and historic year of advocacy for those who have served our nation in uniform.

Most notably, The American Legion took the lead nationally when the VA crisis erupted last April. We stood up for the veterans we represent, and the values we stand for, when we called for reforms, including leadership changes at the highest levels of VA. We took that bold step in order to improve access to care, help untangle the benefits backlog and restore trust between veterans and VA.

We did not sit on the sidelines as details of VA mismanagement cropped up at facilities across the nation. The American Legion instituted Veterans Crisis Command Centers (VCCCs) in communities hardest hit by VA errors. At these centers, more than 3,000 veterans received personal assistance with their benefits claims, overdue appointments and many other issues. VA staff joined us in these events, seeing firsthand what it means to tackle a national problem at the local level, face to face.

Beyond our leadership on the VA issue, The American Legion has other success stories from 2014. Among them:

- When Congress approved legislation making future cuts to cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for military retirees, The American Legion launched an aggressive campaign to have those cuts repealed. U.S. Sen. **Lindsey Graham said the Legion's efforts** played a significant role in that move.

- The American Legion also focused support on the

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

needs of the post 9/11 generation of veterans. We have helped secure credentialing changes in all 50 states, which will assist new veterans as they transition into careers ranging from emergency medicine to truck driving.

- Legionnaires provided comfort, relief and aid to thousands of veterans, military families and communities through our various programs. Your donations helped provide financial boosts to those in need, rehabilitation equipment for wounded servicemembers and scholarship funds for children who lost active-duty military parents in the war on terrorism. Among the success stories: the **Legion Riders raised $1 million** for the Legacy Scholarship Fund.

There are many reasons to look ahead to 2015 with an expectation of continued progress and impact. Our organization will conduct Veterans Benefit Centers next year on a monthly basis to continue providing boots on the ground, active engagement with VA staff and others, in communities where veterans are still having trouble receiving the assistance they earned through honorable military service.

We will continue to comfort injured servicemembers, provide assistance to families in need, and distribute aid to those recovering from natural disasters. Please consider a tax-deductible donation to support of the Legion program of your choice **at this web page**.

I wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

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This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
700 North Pennsylvania Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

Because of its dedicated members, The American Legion is the nation's largest and most powerful veterans service organization.

Strength in numbers allows us to fight for – and win – legislation benefitting veterans on Capitol Hill. Our large membership fulfills vital missions on behalf of veterans and active-duty servicemembers in every community across our great nation. It is the combined strength of the Legion, Auxiliary, Riders and Sons of The American Legion that honor those who served in ways no one else can – from laying flowers at gravesites to raising funds to help military families in need.

Our programs to support veterans, mentor youth and provide for military families facing hardships would not be as successful without strong and vibrant membership. But don't take just my word for it. Consider the impact that The American Legion has:

- Sarah Ball, a disabled Army veteran, lost everything when her home was destroyed by a tornado in Oklahoma. The Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance program helped her and her fellow veterans recover from the disaster. "Without the assistance, I would not have been able to put coats on my kids' backs. I don't know what we would have done for food if the Temporary Financial Assistance wasn't there."

- For the past 32 years, the Department of Idaho American Legion Family has provided three state veterans homes with nearly $1.5 million in food and funds. Around Veterans Day every year, a convoy of trucks and cars delivers a bounty of food to all the state veterans homes. "This has been a Legion Family event since its first year, and it's a tradition that's looked forward to," said Idaho Department Commander Michael Thurlow, who has been involved with the convoy for the past 18 years. "We are very proud of this event; this is how we in Idaho choose to take care of our veterans."

- Army veteran Steve Brauss has been a member of American Legion Post 53 in Buckeye, Ariz., for 14 years. "I knew the Legion did a lot of good things, and so I wanted to join," he said. "They provide us a voice with legislation, and they are great with helping the

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

community. That's one of the reasons I'm still involved because they feed soldiers and their families before a deployment. The Legion is a great benefit to the Arizona National Guard."

These are just some of the success stories that happen every day, thanks to members of The American Legion. If you haven't renewed for this year, I strongly encourage you to do so. Renewing is easy. Simply visit **www.legion.org/renew** to get the process started.

Your membership plays a critical role in sustaining American Legion programs, such as those that provide comfort items for wounded servicemembers, scholarships and programs for young people, as well as immediate financial assistance for veterans coping with the aftermath of natural disaster or economic trouble. Our ability to continue doing what we do – one family and community at a time – depends entirely on you and your continued membership.

Your continued membership is so very important to keep our programs and services strong. If you have not renewed please do so **now**. Thank you if you are a current member. Please help us by reaching out to get your comrades to also renew.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

The story of the Four Chaplains brings a tear to the eye and a sense of hope to the heart.

In the early morning of Feb. 3, 1943, a torpedo struck the USAT Dorchester in the Atlantic Ocean, just 150 miles from its destination. Panic and chaos quickly replaced the calm and quiet aboard Dorchester. The blast killed scores of men, while many more were seriously wounded.

It would only take 20 minutes for the Dorchester to sink into the ocean. But what occurred in those 20 minutes is something we still revere today.

I marvel at the selfless act of courage during the sinking by Rev. George Fox (Methodist), Jewish Rabbi Alexander Goode, Rev. Clark Poling (Dutch Reformed) and Father John Washington (Roman Catholic). Each man demonstrated service before self in a time of crisis. The chaplains calmed the crewmen, comforted the injured, directed others to safety and distributed life jackets. When there were no more life jackets, the four chaplains removed theirs and gave them to four crewmen.

Pvt. William Bednar recalled floating in oil-laden water surrounded by dead bodies and debris. “I could hear men crying, pleading, praying,” Bednar said. “I could also hear the chaplains preaching courage. Their voices were the only thing that kept me going.”

As the Dorchester disappeared under the waves, the Four Chaplains stood praying arm-in-arm.

Feb. 3 will mark 72 years since the sinking and the display of bravery. The American Legion encourages post, district and department chaplains to commemorate the anniversary on the first Sunday in February, Four Chaplains Sunday.

In these ceremonies, we honor the Four Chaplains and ensure their legacy of brotherhood and selfless service. May they be remembered for generations to come.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

Mike Helm
National Commander

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

Did you know that The American Legion issued its first report on licensing and credentialing for military veterans in 1997? For nearly two decades, we have been making the case that those who are trained and experienced through the U.S. Armed Forces should not have to start their training completely over to meet the licensing and credentialing requirements of many career fields.

American Legion advocacy is now making a difference across the U.S. map. States and agencies are making changes on a frequent and continuing basis to ease the transition to civilian careers for our well-trained military men and women. We still have work to do, but we are definitely heading in the right direction.

That's just one aspect of the work our National Veterans Employment and Education Commission is accomplishing. The commission's vital mission – and all the Veterans Employment and Education Division (VEED) is doing to fulfill it – will be on full display this month as veterans and Legionnaires gather in our nation's capital for the annual Washington Conference.

Here are some of the VEED Washington Conference events scheduled to help military personnel, veterans and their families find rewarding careers, from first responders to business owners:

- The American Legion hosts its National Credentialing Summit Feb. 17-18, bringing together more than 200 experts, decision-makers and veterans from across the country. This invitation-only event will help various industry leaders, officials and Legionnaires in their collaborative efforts to improve the licensing, certification and credentialing of veterans in the private sector.

- The Employment and Empowerment Summit on Feb. 19 is a full day of workshops and educational sessions, including opportunities for one-on-one career coaching and résumé review and benefits discussions. **Register here**

- The Feb. 20 Résumé Writing Workshop will provide one-on-one tutoring and counseling sessions that will focus on interviewing skills. **Register here**

- A Hiring Our Heroes job fair is from 1 to 4 p.m. on Feb. 20. Employers will accept résumés from

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

attendees, conduct onsite interviews and in some cases extend job offers. **Register here**

• Servicemembers, veterans and spouses who own their own businesses or are interested in becoming entrepreneurs should consider the two-day Veterans Small Business Workshop. After completing this free course, participants will have the tools and knowledge to identify business opportunities, avoid common pitfalls and maximize earning potentials. The Feb. 24-25 workshop will include networking opportunities and more. **Register here**

For more information on the events, email ***econ@legion.org***.

Even after the Washington Conference is over, the Legion will always remain dedicated to assisting transitioning servicemembers. We will not pause in our efforts to make sure that they have access to all the opportunities they served our nation to protect.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

In 2014, The American Legion conducted a survey of more than 3,000 veterans struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury. The results were shocking.

Nearly 60 percent of respondents felt no improvement as a result of their VA treatment plans. Another 30 percent said they terminated their plans because they did not work.

This is not effective treatment. Through countless interactions with veterans and families who deal with PTSD and TBI every day, The American Legion knows that no two cases are the same. No magic pill is going to heal these wounds. Different treatments, some of which are not recognized by VA, have to be provided. Not just pills.

Alternative therapies provide more than hope. They provide real solutions for veterans and their families. Right now, however, the dominant treatment program is drug-based. In the next few years, 1.5 million servicemembers will discharge, up to a third of whom will deal with PTSD. Our nation must prepare for them with something more, and more effective, than another prescription.

Improved treatment for PTSD, TBI and Military Sexual Trauma are among the key issues identified in The American Legion's **Legislative Priorities for the 114th Congress**. I testified this week before a joint session of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs, and lawmakers are in full agreement that we all must do better on this front.

I add this issue as one category under the bigger challenge for all of us: transition assistance. Those who are about to leave the service and new veterans alike report that they are poorly prepared for the jump to civilian life. Education, training, employment counseling, business opportunities are all among my highest priorities for the 114th Congress. Other concerns for veterans in transition, of course, are the continuing backlog of VA benefits and inconsistent ability to access VA health-care facilities.

I ask you to look over the **Legislative Priorities for the 114th Congress** and take time to contact your

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

elected representative and push for improvements. It's the least we can do for this generation of new veterans who have done such a phenomenal job of keeping foreign terror from our shores since 9/11.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

The American Legion is the nation's largest and most influential veterans service organization. An interesting fact about our longevity is that among the more than 13,500 American Legion posts operating today, some 5,400 were chartered in the first year of our existence. It's hard to think of a more successful franchise.

The key to such longevity is that our values – support for veterans, young people, the military and patriotism – are so timeless they have resonated with former military men and women from World War I to the Global War on Terrorism.

That is why it is so important to engage and **recruit today's generation of veterans to join us as members of The American Legion**. Tens of thousands have already done so, and they are making differences in their communities. Among the examples:

- Younger veterans are seeing the value of Legion membership and are not only joining, but becoming leaders at their posts. Take, for example, **Krista Mette, a 28-year-old post commander** whose infant son is a member of the Sons of The American Legion. The Army veteran understands and promotes the Legion's values of giving back, helping others and continuing to serve.

- In states such as Ohio, North Dakota, Florida and Indiana, Legion posts are working extremely effectively with college students to form campus posts. Other departments should look toward these shining examples of how to not only recruit eligible members but to help form the next generation of American Legion leaders.

- Other Legionnaires are bonding through common interests such as music. **Operation Encore is one music project** that brings together singers and songwriters who share their military experience through music and lyrics. Erik Brine, Operation Encore's co-founder and a member of American Legion Post 272 in Norwood, N.J., says the project represents a way to showcase the

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

talent of today's veterans. "We want to give people who have this kind of talent a chance to use it. And we want to show other people that these aren't just soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines; they are sisters, brothers, fathers and mothers."

These examples and many more illustrate how our organization exemplifies "veterans serving veterans." The common bond of military service knows no age limit. It will continue to matter for generations of Legionnaires not yet born.

Many posts throughout the country are having major success and growth by offering post-9/11 generation veterans the opportunity to lead and succeed, so they fully understand the value of their organization.

As I have mentioned in my 4x4 program, my goal for membership is to reach 4 million members combined in the Legion, Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion.

It's reachable. But it won't be achieved without active outreach, engagement and welcome to today's young veterans, who are the future of The American Legion.

I encourage you to share your post's story of American Legion connection with the post-9/11 generation and their families at **www.legion.org/legiontown** and, moreover, **ask them to join us**, offer their ideas and help lead us into our second century

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

From: The American Legion
To: Library Division
Subject: An overdue welcome home
Date: Monday, March 23, 2015 8:52:43 AM

To view an online version of this email, click **here**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, servicemembers returning home from duty in Southeast Asia were often greeted with protest signs, defamatory chants, spit and worse – a stark contrast to the way veterans returned home from battle after World Wars I and II. Thankfully, post 9/11 generation veterans do not have to duck into airport restrooms to change from their uniforms to civilian clothes as some Vietnam veterans were forced to do.

To this day, I don't understand why my fellow Vietnam veterans were ever treated like they were the enemies. But I am grateful that times have changed, that we welcome home with open arms our men and women who serve in harm's way and now, belatedly, offer thanks to those of my era, as well. Specifically, the annual celebration, Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day, recognizes this remarkable group.

Officially, the date of the observance is March 30 – as decreed by the U.S. Senate –a time to honor all who served honorably and bravely in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and elsewhere in the Southeast Asia war zone.

American Legion posts throughout the country have scheduled their own services to welcome and honor Vietnam veterans on or around March 30. Please help spread the word and share your post's event with a story, photo and/or video at **www.legiontown.org**.

Among the commemorations last year was **one held at American Legion Walter AkeleyPost 29** in Port Angeles, Wash. Post member Norman Goodin presided over the event that drew more than 100 veterans, family members and supporters.

"To all of the Vietnam veterans attending this ceremony today, I say to you something that all of your countrymen should have said to you a long time ago," Goodin said at the event. "Thank you for serving your country and 'Welcome Home.' Always remember where you came from, who you are, and stand proud."

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

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Welcome home, indeed, to every Vietnam veteran who served with honor, especially those who did not receive the gratitude they deserved.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

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This email was sent to: **library@legion.org**

This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
700 North Pennsylvania Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

From: The American Legion
To: Library Division
Subject: Take time to celebrate today's youth
Date: Friday, April 10, 2015 7:55:11 AM

To view an online version of this email, click **here**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

April is a time when spring signals a rebirth from the bitter winter in many parts of our nation.

April is also when our national pastime returns in full to ballparks across the United States featuring elite athletes, some of whom played American Legion Baseball.

For many members of The American Legion Family, April also signals a time to demonstrate the importance of our nation's youth. The Legion has dedicated the past 77 Aprils to Children & Youth Month.

It's a time when Legion posts can host activities specially geared to young people. For example, American Legion Post 371 in Valparaiso, Neb., **annually hosts a day for military kids and other children**. Activities include firetruck and hay rides, a petting zoo, magic show and visits with police officers.

Legion posts regularly work with children's organizations to create community projects. Others sponsor carnivals or similar events geared toward children with the proceeds going toward community projects or fundraisers. Some other ideas include organizing speakers or panels to discuss key issues related to youth. For more ideas on how to support and promote Children & Youth Month in your community, download a copy of the **April is Children & Youth Month** brochure.

For events that include a fundraising component, I suggest **considering donations to the Child Welfare Foundation** (CWF). Last October, CWF awarded more than $560,000 to 18 nonprofit organizations.

After your successful event, be sure to share it with others. Please visit **www.legiontown.org** and upload a story and photo showing how your post, squadron or unit supported Children & Youth Month.

While we make a special effort this month to honor and connect with today's youth, it is important to

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

connect throughout the year with America's young people. I know first-hand that these events not only bring about strong community goodwill but they also energize post members, as well as Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion members.

And best of all, these efforts serve as a way that our military veterans can continue to serve, by helping to mentor today's children.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

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This email was sent to: **library@legion.org**

This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
700 North Pennsylvania Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

From: The American Legion <cs@legion.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2015 8:07 AM
To: Library Division
Subject: Working tirelessly for veterans

To view an online version of this email, click **here**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

A little over a year has passed since CNN broadcast the first report on "secret wait lists" at the Phoenix VA. I am still haunted by revelations that as many as 40 veterans were kept off the books and left to die waiting for appointments.

In the days that followed, more problems were aired about veterans in other cities who were also being denied treatment.

Amid the outrage, The American Legion stood above the fray. This organization set out to help and heal veterans dissatisfied with VA. This organization took charge. This organization extended an invitation to VA to work hand-in-hand to solve the problems, one veteran at a time, one location at a time.

That leadership was noted by Kevin Boyer , an Operation Iraqi Freedom vet, who received help at the Legion-coordinated Veterans Crisis Command Center (VCCC) last July in St. Louis. "The American Legion has seemed to bring some people together so we can move forward," said Boyer, who received help on his VA claims decision.

Since June of last year, The American Legion has conducted **Veterans Benefits Centers (VBC) or their predecessor, VCCCs** , in large cities like Phoenix and St. Louis. The Legion has also conducted these centers in smaller communities such as Shinnston, W.Va., and Harlingen, Texas. Regardless of the name or location, VA staff members have been working alongside Legion experts to make appointments for veterans, track down benefits claims, provide grief counseling, provide education about GI Bill benefits and provide other services.

Oswald Nance, a Korea War veteran, emerged from **the VBC in Philadelphia with a new outlook** . "I've managed to find some hope here today," he said after a day of productive discussions following 50 years of frustrations with his disability claims and benefits.

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Nearly 4,000 veterans have received similar assistance at the 16 VBCs or VCCCs. The VBCs will continue this year at cities across the country.

I'm sure our forefathers would be proud of our actions during these last 12 months. Nearly a century ago, they set out to protect and help their comrades who desperately needed assistance after World War I. The last year has shown that we remain committed to ensuring that our military brothers and sisters are taken care of, no matter what it takes.

And The American Legion will keep that promise to the next century of veterans.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

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This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
700 North Pennsylvania Street
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From: The American Legion <cs@legion.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2015 4:16 PM
To: Library Division
Subject: Let's make a bigger Legion Family

To view an online version of this email, click **here**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

I am delighted – but not completely surprised – by your kind generosity and support. Last week, during the Spring National Executive Committee Meetings in Indianapolis, your contributions helped meet my fundraising goal of $4 million this year to assist Legion Family programs. In fact, the actual amount is $4.26 million and growing.

Your donations will help deliver **National Emergency Fund (NEF) grants** and relief to veterans displaced by this spring's storms. These contributions will also help provide adaptive sports therapy equipment and recreational opportunities through our **Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) program** for recovering warriors. There are countless other ways in which this money will be used to help The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary fulfill their missions to serve our nation's veterans, troops, families and communities everywhere.

My **4x4 fundraising and membership goal** encompasses all the Legion organizations – the Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and Legion Riders. In fact, it was a donation from SAL that boosted the total above the $4 million mark last week.

This significant achievement does not mean that we should slow our fundraising efforts now. These contributions play an important role in the success of our programs. In fact, I encourage everyone to help the Legion Riders have another successful Legacy Run in support of The American Legion Legacy Scholarship.

At the start of the 4x4 campaign, I described the milestones - $4 million and 4 million members – as "lofty." But, thanks to you, we are within reach of meeting the membership goal as well as the fundraising goal. I would like to see every post, unit, chapter and squadron rev up their membership engines right now and help us get there.

If you know of veterans in your community who have let their memberships lapse, reach out to

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them. **Sometimes all a non-member needs to join is to be asked.** You can find potential new members for the Legion, Auxiliary and Sons throughout your community. Churches. Boy Scouts. Farmers markets. Civic organizations. Youth sports teams. If they are veterans, or if they support veterans, chances are they are eligible to join an American Legion Family organization.

As I wind up my year of travels as national commander, I recall success story after success story of posts improving their membership. I look forward to hearing more membership success stories in the next three months.

I know that by working together we can achieve great things for the Legion and all the communities we serve. You've demonstrated that by exceeding the fundraising goal. Now, I have full confidence that you will help us reach the membership goal and make our family bigger and even more effective.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

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This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
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From: The American Legion <cs@legion.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2015 2:26 PM
To: Library Division
Subject: In honor of those we can never forget

To view an online version of this email, click **here**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

Throughout the year, we reflect back to the brothers and sisters we have lost while they served our nation in uniform. For many of us, especially at this time of the year, the memories come flooding back.

Perhaps our thoughts turn to a buddy with whom we served. Or a parent we only saw in photographs. For the Post-9/11 generation, Memorial Day may represent a friend who made the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation in the war on terrorism.

No matter our relationships to these heroes, we are indebted to them and their families every day of the year. With Memorial Day just around the corner, these individuals fill our hearts and minds. As Legionnaires, we serve our fellow veterans, military personnel, families and communities in tribute to our fallen.

We do this every day, but Memorial Day represents a time when all patriotic Americans join us in solemn tribute. Amid the somber services and tearful remembrances, we share our sense of pride, under the flag of our nation, signaling to the world the lengths to which we will go for the causes of freedom, liberty and democracy.

To The American Legion Family, it is up to us to remind all Americans that freedom is not free. There is a price for the liberties we enjoy. It is indeed more than a time for barbecues, picnics and mattress sales. It is like no other three-day weekend.

No matter your plans, or those of your friends and neighbors, I encourage you to lead or participate in remembrance and ceremonies in your communities at this time. Help your Legion post, Auxiliary unit or Sons squadron honor the fallen.

We can never, ever forget them.

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

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This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
700 North Pennsylvania Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

From: The American Legion <cs@legion.org>
Sent: Wednesday, June 03, 2015 8:07 AM
To: Library Division
Subject: New video series focuses on 9/11 generation

To view an online version of this email, click **here**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

Our organization has achieved numerous successes in the past several years. The notable achievements include helping thousands of veterans receive their VA benefits and securing credentialing legislation in dozens of states that have assisted veterans.

Make no mistake about these efforts: They are a direct result of our passionate members, who make up the largest and most influential veterans service organization.

In order to continue to lead and improve the lives of veterans, The American Legion must be able to attract and retain members of the Post-9/11 generation of veterans. These dedicated, hard-working individuals can be great assets to our organization as we turn our attention to our centennial anniversary – and well beyond.

In an effort to connect with this generation of veterans, The American Legion is working with We Are The Mighty (WATM), the first media and lifestyle brand for, by and about the military community. WATM honors and celebrates military life with entertaining and informative content aimed at empowering the community and broadening awareness.

The American Legion and WATM have coordinated to launch "Our Post," **a series of video stories that document various posts** across the United States. These videos are a good way to raise awareness about the Legion and engage with younger veterans about joining our organization.

The series is hosted by Johnny Jenkinson, a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 43 in Hollywood, Calif. In the initial series of videos, Jenkinson takes viewers on a tour of his post, from the Hollywood glamour of yesteryear to the active, vibrant nightspot of today.

Future WATM videos will showcase other interesting and influential posts across the country. Please join me in viewing these videos and sharing them with

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Legionnaires and prospective members.

It is with these videos that we can not only capture the attention of younger veterans, but illustrate how they can write the next chapters of our successful organization.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

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This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
700 North Pennsylvania Street
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From: The American Legion <cs@legion.org>
Sent: Friday, June 12, 2015 6:44 AM
To: Library Division
Subject: Help the Legion Family honor the U.S. flag

To view an online version of this email, click **here**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

We are all bonded by love of country, service to nation and reverence for the American flag.

There is no organization more passionate or more knowledgeable about our flag than The American Legion. It was the Legion that convened a forum with dozens of other organizations in 1923, which set the stage for the **U.S. Flag Code** – the authority on everything from the proper way to fold the flag to its correct positioning.

Today, countless patriotic Americans and organizations follow those guidelines to honor the flag and all it stands for.

As the nation's foremost authority on the Stars and Stripes, The American Legion Family is preparing a special collector's edition flag bookazine, "Indivisible: The Story of Our Flag." This full-color bookazine, scheduled to be 112 pages, will include stories on the flag's meaning and the special place it occupies in our minds, hearts and conscience. The $9.95 bookazine will be available on newsstands in November 2015, but **you can pre-order your copy today**.

The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary are working together – as both organizations are approaching their 100th anniversaries – on this patriotic project. You, too, can participate – and maybe even see your photo published in the bookazine.

As your post, unit, squadron or community commemorates Flag Day this weekend, this is a great opportunity to show your support for this project. Social media users can post photos of Old Glory on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by using the hashtag #MyUSFlag. Users of Pinterest, can pin photos of the flag to **the Legion's Pinterest page**.

For those who do not use social media, you may share your photos and stories on the Legiontown website, **www.legiontown.org/share.**

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

Share this e-mail:

Thank you for all that you do – and have done – to keep the red, white and blue flowing freely for all Americans.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

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This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
700 North Pennsylvania Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

From: The American Legion <cs@legion.org>
Sent: Wednesday, July 08, 2015 9:50 AM
To: Library Division
Subject: Youth programs take center stage

To view an online version of this email, click **here**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

Quite often the first connection people make with The American Legion relates to our strong collection of youth programs.

During the summer, **American Legion Baseball** teams participate in our nation's pastime on ballfields from coast to coast. The next generation of America's leaders learn about government, leadership and teamwork at **Boys State and Boys Nation**. And elite youth marksmen show off their skills during the annual **Junior Shooting Sports championship** in Colorado Springs, Colo.

For these young people, summer does not mean goofing off with friends, hanging around at the mall or vacationing at the beach.

Through all of these popular American Legion activities, the youths learn the skills necessary to excel as adults. Boys Nation, for example, counts former President Bill Clinton and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker among its alumni.

Scott Scarborough, president of the University of Akron, attended Boys State in his home state of Texas in 1980 before serving as a delegate at Boys Nation. **Scarborough credits Boys Nation** with helping him develop leadership abilities, public-speaking skills and confidence.

"I hadn't thought about (Boys Nation experiences) in years," he said recently. "I think the one thing that I would like to do is to speak directly to The American Legion and say thank you for this program because this program made a big difference in my life and I appreciate what they've done."

Just as Boys Nation has developed leaders in government, education and business, American Legion Baseball has groomed participants into major-league stars.

Alex Gordon, the 2015 American Legion Baseball Graduate of the Year, played four years of Legion

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Baseball with J.C. Brager Post 3 in Nebraska. Gordon has been on quite a roll lately. Last fall, his Kansas City Royals played in the World Series. And next week, he will be a starting outfielder in the MLB All-Star Game.

"Getting to play with the older guys, you get to develop some of the characteristics of some of the leaders," **Gordon says of his time as a Legion Baseball player**. "As a young kid, you may not know how to do everything right and they show you the way. And later when you're the older guy, you try to pass those along to the younger players that come along. There's give and take. It was a great experience overall."

Jamie (Beyerle) Corkish, the 2002 American Legion Junior 3-Position Air Rifle National Champion, won Olympic gold in 2012. Corkish encourages young people in her sport and others to follow their passions

"One thing I always tell young people when they are involved in the shooting sports, and any sport in that matter, is to enjoy what they are doing," she says. "Remember that one reason you are participating in this sport is because you enjoy the sport and have a passion for it. It is very difficult to be great at something that you do not enjoy doing."

These talented and passionate young people can only go so far. They require mentors, coaches and others to help groom them into the leaders of tomorrow.

If you already participate in the Legion's programs that benefit America's youths, thank you for what you do. If you don't already, please consider volunteering. We've all benefitted from mentors who had a tremendous impact on our lives. Now is an excellent time to pay it forward to youths who need our help.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
National Commander

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This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
700 North Pennsylvania Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

From: The American Legion <cs@legion.org>
Sent: Wednesday, August 05, 2015 8:10 AM
To: Library Division
Subject: Working hard to put veterans to work

To view an online version of this email, click **here**.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

When servicemembers discharge from the military, they are faced with numerous questions as they transition back to civilian life.

Among the most pressing questions is: What will I do to support myself and my family? Once veterans secure an answer to that question they are usually well on their way to a successful transition.

Today's servicemembers often face the difficult challenge of finding that first civilian job, or attaining the education necessary to eventually choose a rewarding career. For those struggling to find post-military employment or education, The American Legion is helping to make the transition smoother.

American Legion departments, districts and posts participate in hundreds of job fairs annually. At these job fairs, veterans, servicemembers and their spouses connect with recruiters, get assistance on their resumes and often receive job offers.

In fact, the Legion will continue participating and leading these events in the future, including **at this year's national convention** in Baltimore. Highlights include a job fair, employment workshop and entrepreneurial course. **Register for the job fair by clicking here**.

Additionally, the Legion is enacting change in credentialing laws and practices. Already, numerous states have passed legislation that requires recognition of military training and experience for state licensure purposes – an effort pushed by The American Legion. While there have been gains made in fields such as truck driving, more work needs to be done. That is why the Legion continues to lead efforts for change.

This past April, **the Legion held a summit for key stakeholders** in the licensing and credentialing of veterans. Retired Col. Patricia Ross, military affairs director for the Technical College System of

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

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Georgia was among those impressed.

"I think The American Legion doing this is absolutely phenomenal," said Ross. "I've taken away so many notes (at the summit) on what others are doing to hopefully help my own state."

And, just a few weeks ago, Department of California Legionnaires and headquarters staff helped veteran job-seekers at a **Department of Defense Hiring Heroes Program at Camp Pendleton** in San Diego County, Calif. Verna Jones, an Army veteran and executive director of the Legion's office in Washington, D.C., illustrated just why it is so important for Legionnaires and their posts to help connect veterans to careers.

"We are veterans, too, so we know what these men and women are going through," Jones said. "That's why we're here working individually with these servicemembers who gave so much for our country. It's our turn to help them."

For God and Country

Mike Helm
National Commander

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This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
700 North Pennsylvania Street
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From: The American Legion
Sent: Friday, August 14, 2015 10:07:59 AM
To: Library Division
Cc:
Subject: Why a dues increase, and why now?

View as a Web page

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

Why a dues increase, and why now?

The American Legion National Executive Committee passed a resolution in May 2015 to bring before this year's National Convention a $5 dues increase to take effect next January. Nearly a decade will have passed since the last national dues increase. Such a recommendation did not come easily, but history shows the call must be made from time to time in an organization like ours, where the need for services and programs grows, the cost to provide them rises, and the primary revenue stream – membership dues – remains the same or declines over time.

Specific economic realities led to the recommendation. They include:

- A 16-percent reduction in overall membership since the last dues increase in 2007.
- U.S. cost-of-living growth of 13 percent since 2007.
- Reduced income from American Legion investments due to the recession and the general economic downturn.
- Employee health-insurance benefits having climbed 13.2 percent since the last dues increase.
- The erosion of the value of each dollar, at a rate of 1.44 percent per year, resulting in more than $1 million of additional annual cost.

National Headquarters has worked to offset the need for a dues increase and is making progress in the areas of fundraising, corporate relationships and cost reduction through online transactions. Those efforts, however, are just getting off the ground.

For instance, if we use the five-year-old non-member fundraising program as a model, we can expect two and a half years to pass before new fundraising initiatives start netting positive and begin growing – as the non-member fundraising program now does. Also, by investing in new technology to ease automatic renewal and

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

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improve online joining, the cost per member transaction falls from 85 cents to 11 cents. So far, about 230,000 members (and growing) use the online joining and renewing services, but that's still only a little over 10 percent.

New revenue streams and cost reductions based on improved efficiency are heading in the right direction, but they need time to grow and gain traction.

More importantly, as a wave of new veterans re-enters civilian life, The American Legion cannot reduce its commitment or capacity to help them and their families. The need for trained service officers has rarely been so profound in U.S. history. Career events for veterans, homeless advocacy, benefits assistance, help with medical appointments, wholesome programs for young people, protection of our flag and support for America's troops are just some of the reasons now is not the time to divest from our time-honored commitment.

For God and Country

Mike Helm
National Commander

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This email was sent by: **The American Legion National Headquarters**
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From: The American Legion
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2015 11:06:59 AM
To: Library Division
Cc:
Subject: Legion helps immigrants become Americans

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THE AMERICAN LEGION

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

The Americanism pillar of The American Legion represents many things. The flag we cherish. Pride in country. Mentoring children through wholesome activities. Serving our communities.

The pillar also covers legal immigration, and the Legion supports those who go through the process.

In fact, since I became commander, I have been encouraging posts to work with their local branches of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Just last week, American Legion Post 383 in LaPlace, La., put together **a successful naturalization ceremony in conjunction with the New Orleans CIS office**.

(And last winter, the **Department of Florida helped U.S. Army veteran Stephen Holota** navigate the maze of bureaucracy.)

About 150 people from 45 countries including Iraq, Pakistan, Cuba and Vietnam all completed their journey by taking the oath of citizenship at the LaPlace ceremony attended by around 400 people. The 150 new citizens are more than twice the number the New Orleans CIS office usually handles at one time — a credit to Post 383 and the 2nd District of Louisiana that coordinated the event.

Legion Family members escorted each citizenship applicant to his or her seat before the event. "A special touch for these special people," Post 383 Commander Dave Gatt said. After the moving ceremony, the new citizens were given desserts and offered voter registration forms.

Any post near a CIS office can help organize a similar event. A good starting point would be to **review the Citizenship Outreach Guide**.

These citizenship ceremonies are truly life-fulfilling days not only for the new citizens, but for their family members too. I know this from experience as my sister-in-law went through the process to become an American citizen.

Mike Helm
National Commander
The American Legion

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Her experience was joyous, as were those of the 150 new citizens I saw leave the auditorium with ear-to-ear smiles. They also departed with a sense of purpose and undeniable devotion to America — very similar to what we experience as we fulfill our calling to "foster and perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism."

For God and Country

Mike Helm
National Commander

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