100% AMERICANISM

NATIONAL AMERICANISM COMMISSION NEWSLETTER WINTER 2016

Richard Anderson (CT)

From the Chairman's Bunker

The passage of Resolution No. 163 at the 1960 National Convention, in Miami, established February as Americanism Month. During this annual observance, we should all reflect on what it means to be an American and rededicate ourselves and our posts to taking action that will uphold the principle of "a 100 percent Americanism." Americanism, one of the Legion's four pillars, is simply the love of America, loyalty to its ideals and institutions, allegiance to its flag, willingness to defend it against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and a desire to pass on the blessings of liberty to future generations. To safeguard our nation's continuing prosperity, it is vital that we ensure that our youth understand and cherish our ideals and traditions.

No other organization offers such a wide-variety of programs designed to enhance the attributes of good citizenship, discipline, community service, education and patriotism. As we pause during the month of February to reflect on what Americanism means to us, it is the perfect time for us to rededicate ourselves to engaging in meaningful activities and programs that perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism. There is no need for you or your post to "reinvent the wheel" when it comes to promoting Americanism, as The American Legion already has a plethora of established, well-respected programs to achieve this goal. Our proven and respected programs include American Legion Boys State/Boys Nation, Baseball, Boy Scouts, Family Support Network, Flag Education, Get Out the Vote, Operation Comfort Warriors, Oratorical Contest and Youth Cadet Law Enforcement just to name a few! Your imagination is your only limit on how you and your post can help promote Americanism.

Some of the programs listed above are included in this newsletter. An archive of past newsletters, as well as program information and publications, is located at www.legion.org/publications. Additional information can also be obtained on the program pages at www.legion.org or by calling the Americanism Division at 317-630-1203.

A legacy of Americanism is a legacy worth imparting on our youth, to not only honor those men and women that have served and laid down their lives to secure our freedom, but to ensure that our freedoms and way of life are secured for generations to come.

1968 Voting Poster

In This Issue

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- Four Chaplains Sunday
- Children & Youth Month
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American Legion Baseball Registration Now Open

Registration has opened for the 90th season of American Legion Baseball, a national institution for players aged 19 and under. Ahead of the anniversary season, Legion Baseball received an addition to its unparalleled legacy in early January as Mike Piazza became the 68th former Legion player to be named to the Baseball Hall of Fame. Arguably the best hitting catcher in the history of the game, Piazza played Legion Baseball in his hometown of Phoenixville, Pa., before a lengthy career in the Major Leagues, primarily with the Dodgers and Mets. You can read more on Piazza's honor ahead of his induction into the Hall of Fame on July 24 in Cooperstown, N.Y. online at www.legion.org/baseball/230806/68th-legion-baseball-alum-elected-hall-fame.

Another honor was bestowed upon a legendary Legion alum as the late Yogi Berra was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor. The award is "presented to individuals who have made especially meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, to world peace, or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors," according to the White House website. Read more about this award online at m.mlb.com/news/article/157439364/yogi-berra-willie-mays-honored-by-president. In addition to the program's strong history, Legion Baseball continues to thrive by having more than 3,700 teams registered in 2015, with representation in all 50 states.

The Baseball America Foundation rewarded the hard work of the Legion Baseball program in 2015 by awarding a grant of nearly $10,000 for future improvements to the development of players to close the year. "We are thrilled to receive such a generous gift from the Baseball America Foundation," said Mike Buss, deputy director of The American Legion's Americanism Division. "We are excited to have additional funds available to grow our program after one of our most successful years in program history and to continue improving as an organization."

As the program continues to take steps forward, players and coaches alike are welcomed to get involved in the 90th anniversary season, which will culminate in Shelby, N.C., at the Legion Baseball World Series in August. The event has continued to grow and has paid attendance of over 100,000 each year. For more information about the program, including how to join as a player or coach, visit www.legion.org/baseball/participate.

Programs can register their junior or senior-level teams now at www.baseball.legion.org. In anticipation of the 2016 season, Legion Baseball released the new iteration of the program's rule book, which can be found at www.legion.org/publications/160898/baseball-rule-book.

Follow American Legion Baseball

twitter.com/legionbaseball

www.facebook.com/officialamericanlegionbaseball

www.legion.org/baseball

Americanism 2016 Planner

February
Americanism Month

February 7
Four Chaplains Sunday

February 7-13
Religious Emphasis Week

February 15
Presidents Day

February 21-24
Washington Conference

April
Children & Youth Month

March 25
Good Friday

March 27
Easter

April 15-17
National Oratorical Contest Finals

May 2-5
Spring Meetings

May 30
Memorial Day

May 31
2015-2016 Program Year Reporting Ends

June 14
Flag Day

July 4
Independence Day

National Oratorical Contest Finals Volunteers Sought

The American Legion's Americanism Division would like to extend an invitation to you to serve as a volunteer at the 2016 American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest Finals.

This special event showcases 54 our country's best and brightest youth as they present their thoughts on one of our country's most important documents in our nation's history, the Constitution of the United States of America!

The contest will take place at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel. Contests quarter-finals and semi-finals will be held on Saturday, April 16, 2016, with the finals to be held on Sunday, April 17, 2016.

2015 National Champion Geeta P. Minocha of Ocala, FL

Should you accept our invitation, you will be provided with additional contest details, a specific job responsibility description and training, you are also encouraged to visit http://www.legion.org/oratorical for contest background information, videos and helpful resources.

The support of many volunteers are needed to conduct this wonderful event, which in 2015 provided more than $135,000in college scholarships to contest quarter-finalist, semi-finalist and finalist participants.

These positions are non call-In positions and all expenses related to participation would be those of the volunteer.

To volunteer simply contact Shayne Abrahams Sr. or Mishelle Evans at oratorical@legion.org or 317-630-1204, or to ask any questions you may have. We thank you in advance for your volunteer service!

Get Out the Vote!

Another presidential election year is upon us and many posts will be ramping-up their Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts. Participation in a presidential election is important but we should all be reminded that registering and voting in ALL elections at ALL levels is a vital expression and exercise of a free people.

Politics and elections can easily stir the emotions and passions of even the most passive people among us. For this reason, posts must be ever-vigilant in following the rules of nonpartisanship.

The American Legion is nonpartisan and cannot be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of any candidate. Failure to follow these rules jeopardizes the post's nonprofit status. The rules do not apply to individuals; however, Legionaries engaged in partisan activities should do so without wearing the Legion cap or other Legion attire. Furthermore, when posts are using their facilities to host candidates, they should remove the emblem and Legion flag to avoid the impression of endorsement.

To assist individuals and posts with GOTV efforts, The Americanism Commission publishes ***Get Out the Vote*** and ***Vote America*****.** Both are available for free at www.legion.org/publications. More information and samples of news releases and public service announcements or to share your post's GOTV success stories visit www.legion.org/vote.

Children & Youth Committee Seeks Conference Input

Last fall's national Children & Youth Conference was a big hit with everyone in attendance. As in the eight years prior, conference guests came to Indianapolis from all over the country to hear speakers and learn relevant strategies for growing their C&Y programs back home.

In preparation for this September's conference, the Committee on Children & Youth and C&Y staff are gathering information from departments that will educate conference attendees about the successful child health, safety and welfare programs at the local level across the country. These programs may be ones that other departments don't do but could learn from, or even implement themselves. Of special interest are ways that Legionnaires effectively work our C&Y programs into their communities, whether that's through schools, fund-raising events, media relationships or special events.

To contribute, please email a concise paragraph about your local program to Assistant Director Kim Mezger at kmezger@legion.org. Please distribute this call-out liberally to those Legion family members with noteworthy experiences to contribute.

In addition, mark your calendar for the 10th Annual Children & Youth Conference, which will be held in Indianapolis September 16-18, 2016. Those interested can access presentations and materials from the 2015 C&Y Conference at www.legion.org/cyconference for their reference and use. Further Children & Youth information and links are available at www.legion.org/youth.

Marking Four Chaplains Sunday

ALEXANDER D. GOODE GEORGE L. FOX CLARK V. POLING JOHN P. WASHINGTON

They did not stand on her deck, simply paying a final farewell to their lost ship. On February 3, 1943, the four chaplains aboard the USAT Dorchester heroically aided their men both spiritually and physically in the 20 minutes between that fateful torpedo strike and final submergence of the ship. Four U.S. Army Chaplains gave up their life jackets and prayed together when their transport ship, the U.S.A.T Dorchester was torpedoed eighty miles south of Greenland on February 3, 1943. The Chaplains came from different faiths and backgrounds. John P. Washington was a Catholic Priest from Kearny, New Jersey, Rabbi Alexander D. Goode was a native of York, Pennsylvania. Clark V. Poling was a minister in the Reformed Church in America at the First Reformed Church in Schenectady, New York. George L. Fox, a decorated World War One veteran, was a Methodist minister in Gilman, Vermont..

On Sunday, February 7, 2016, we mark the 73rd anniversary of the heroism and faith displayed by The Four Chaplains. These men – their lives and their sacrifice – represent the highest levels of dignity, selflessness and ecumenical spirit expected of a chaplain. They provide an example worthy of emulation by every American Legion and armed forces chaplain. How best can we honor these men and their actions?

On pages 11-22 of The American Legion's *Chaplain's Handbook*, you will find a guide to performing a full, Four Chaplains service. You can download the *Chaplain's Handbook* for free by visiting www.legion.org/publications/220452/chaplains-handbook. Additionally, you may search our website for archived articles and information about the Four Chaplains by using the search bar located at the top-right corner of every page on Legion.org. Simply type the words "four chaplains" into the box and hit enter. The leading organization dedicated to the memory of the Four Chaplains is The Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation, which can be visited online at www.fourchaplains.org. (Please note, The American Legion does not possess or offer a video presentation regarding the Four Chaplains.)

Whatever way you choose, do not allow this 73rd anniversary to pass without taking at least a few moments to reflect on the dedication and sacrifices of these four men. Use the resources listed above to share their story with the Legion Family and other supporters in your community. As the New Year ramps up and those feelings of intimacy and devotion from the holidays wane, remind yourself and others of the reason our motto is "For God and Country." Share with anyone you can the Four Chaplains' lasting legacy of dedication to God, country and their fellow man.

April is Children & Youth Month

It may be hard to believe but spring is just around the corner and it's time to plan for Children & Youth Month. Celebrated since 1938, April is the perfect time of year for Legionnaires to demonstrate that The American Legion Family is committed to its community, especially its children. While April is Children & Youth Month for The American Legion, it is also recognized by the U.S. Department of Defense as "Month of the Military Child." As such, Legion posts near military installations have a natural opportunity to strengthen their local Family Support Network program by developing bridging events between active-duty and veteran families in their community.

Legion posts are encouraged to use "April Is Children & Youth Month" to create meaningful C&Y-themed community events throughout the month. Easter is early this year – March 27th – so Easter egg hunts and similar annual community events that celebrate spring may be wasted on a month that's still too cold to really enjoy them. This may make your community event even more of a local attraction. Take advantage! Host carnivals, parades, festivals, arts & crafts fairs and fishing or kite-flying contests.

Hold a family summit that engages families and key leaders in a meaningful dialog about the challenges impacting children, families and the community, as well as ideas for addressing those issues. Organize a community-wide family festival or information fair. Partner with other local groups to offer positive, family-friendly activities, entertainment, information and resources from local organizations and on-site support for families with questions about services. April is a great time of year for summer camp and day care open houses or college and scholarship fairs – why not host one at your post?

Invite a subject-matter expert – child safety, health, education – to present at a post meeting. Reach out to your local schools, which can always use volunteers; your team of Legionnaires may find themselves in a classroom for an hour or on a landscaping project that lasts all of April. Just ask!

Make any post event in April an opportunity to raise funds for C&Y. Do a pass-the-hat, 50/50 raffle, silent auction or post yard sale and donate all of the proceeds to the American Legion Endowment Fund, which supports our Temporary Financial Assistance program, or to the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

Don't forget to invite local leaders and officials to support your event, and engage the media in publicity and promotion. Communities need to see that American Legion services are available and hear why young people matter so much to Legionnaires. Providing children and families an opportunity to connect with other families, organizations, local leaders and people who can help them thrive is an important contribution to our communities that more of our posts should feel led to make.

For further ideas on how to promote C&Y Month in your community, download or print the "April is Children & Youth Month" brochure at http://www.legion.org/publications/160931/april-children-youth-month.

American Legion Flag Education Program

The American Legion's Flag Education Program increases awareness of proper flag display and disposal and instills patriotism and honor in all Americans. Flag education has been a major activity of The American Legion since its inception.

Here are some tools for your flag education toolbox.

Emblem Sale Flag Rewards Program

What a great way to increase The American Legion's **visibility in your community** by selling American Flags and to your post to make money. Give your post an **easy revenue source** to purchase needed supplies for programs and activities.

Just think, every flag flown in your community can financially benefit your post. Earn ten cents for every $1 spent on American Flags **by your Post or community** from Emblem Sales. It adds up fast! Use your credit to buy supplies from Emblem Sales (think Color Guard uniforms, Boys State awards, baseballs, flags, grave markers, shirts, caps, membership awards, etc.).

In 2015, over 120 Posts earned at least $100 to spend in Emblem Sales in 2016. In 2015, the citizens of Ankeny, Iowa purchased almost **$20,000** in American Flags from Post 42. This earned the post almost $2,000 in free merchandise credit to spend on any American Legion items sold by Emblem Sales.

It is easy to get started.

- Your Post Adjutant must register your post for the program
  - Go to www.emblem.legion.org, click on the Flag Rewards link, and find the link to register.
- Get organized, and talk it over
  - Put together a Flag Rewards committee
  - Designate a Flag Officer to lead the committee
  - Include the Auxiliary & Sons on the committee
  - Decide on a plan to gain customers
  - Discuss how your Flag Rewards credit will be used
  - Open communication is key

- Decide on a method to sell flags
  - Many posts **buy & re-sell flags**
  - Some Posts simply **promote the web site** (AmericanLegionFlags.com), where customers can designate a post to receive credit for their purchase
- Identify potential flag buyers
  - Stores, schools, banks, car dealers, libraries, parks, fire stations, post offices, athletic fields, neighbors

More information of the Flag Rewards Program can be found at www.emblem.legion.org/flag_rewards.asp.

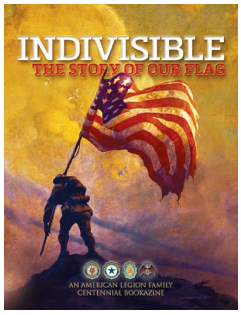
Continued on page 8 Flag Education Program

Flag Education Program continued from page 7

"INDIVISIBLE: The Story of Our Flag"

"INDIVISIBLE: The Story of Our Flag" describes the phenomenal journey of America's colors, from Betsy Ross to the war on terrorism.

Assembled in the 116-page publication are dozens of photos, graphics, illustrations, stories, voices, facts, histories and mysteries about the flag and its place in American, and global, society. The publication includes an illustrated guide to U.S. Flag Code and the story of how The American Legion became the national leader in establishing standards of respect and honor for the colors.



The real story of the "Star-Spangled Banner" – from its origins in the War of 1812 to its 21st century preservation at the Smithsonian Institute – is woven throughout the publication, as are poems, musical lyrics, unique flag-designed products and the National Anthem's various renditions through history at major sporting events.

The bookazine can be ordered online from Emblem Sales - $9.95 plus S/H. "INDIVISIBLE: The Story of Our Flag" would be a great leave behind piece when you are doing your flag education presentations or to leave in your local library.

For Which It Stands DVD

"For Which It Stands" is about the history of the flag of the United States, the significance and meaning of our flag, and respecting and caring for our flag. It is intended primarily for use with students in the upper elementary and middle/junior high school grades. In addition to a 20-minute video, the DVD features instructional enhancements designed to give students a rich and rewarding learning experience:

"George Learns The Pledge" - An animated feature explaining the meaning behind the Pledge of Allegiance.

"Rally 'Round The Flag" - Students ask a flag expert about specific ways to care for and respect the flag and are given the opportunity to play the "Flag Quiz" game.

The "Flag Timeline" activity allows students to learn more about the history of our flag and the rationale behind its design.

Available from Emblem Sales emblem.legion.org/Flag-Education-DVD/productinfo/755.400/ $9.95 plus S/H.

Contact Us

The American Legion
Americanism Division
PO Box 1055
Indianapolis, IN 46206

317-630-1203
americanism@legion.org
c&y@legion.org
www.legion.org

100% AMERICANISM

NATIONAL AMERICANISM COMMISSION NEWSLETTER SPRING 2016

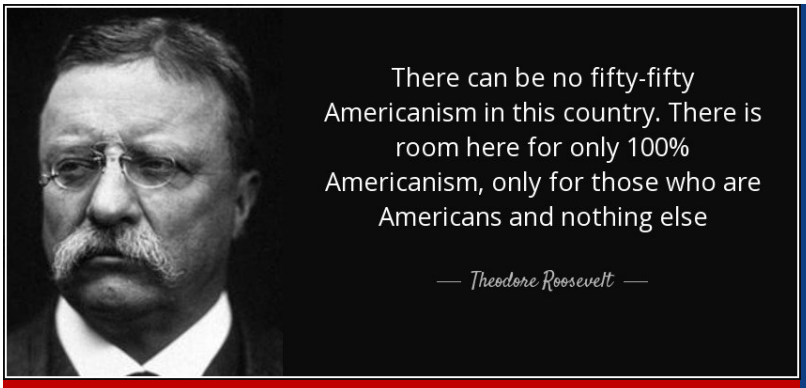
Richard Anderson (CT)

From the Chairman's Bunker

With Memorial Day behind us, the weather is heating up and so are many of our Americanism youth programs. Summer for The American Legion and its youth signifies several weeks filled with patriotism, education, leadership, competition, character development and teamwork. It's during these warm months that our youth programs get underway at the department level and involve tens of thousands of youth each year. Of these department-level youth program participants, many will extend their experience at the national level with Boys Nation, Junior 3-Position Air-Rifle National Championship or American Legion Baseball World Series.

These outstanding American Legion national programs could not exist, however, if not for the dedication of Legionnaires supporting their department programs that ensure a wide-range of opportunities for the youth residing in their communities. The challenges faced by America's youth today are more complex and the competition for their attention is greater than ever. The electronic age has brought many conveniences to our everyday lives but has also created unique challenges. Children have less incentive to form meaningful relationships through live interaction, to pursue interests away from a computer monitor or other screen and learn about American values directly from those that raised their right hands to defend them.

Our challenge remains to grow participation in Americanism programs to ensure we reach the greatest amount of young people possible each year. Youth involved in summer Americanism programs such as the Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program, Boys State, Baseball and Junior Shooting Sports Program participate in world-class competition, dedicated to enhancing their lives and building our nation's future leaders. To find out more about Americanism programs, visit **www.legion.org/programs**.



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- New Alumni Association Formed
- Americanism Conferences
- American Legion Baseball
- Americanism Awards
- American Legion Legacy Scholarship
- Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program
- Flag Etiquette

Samsung American Legion Alumni Association

The American Legion and Samsung have teamed up to establish the Samsung American Legion Alumni Association in order to engage recipients of the Samsung American Legion Scholarship. The mission of the association is to engage alumni while advocating the ideals of continued freedom, learning, and service, while also fostering life-long relationships between recipients and the organizations.

The Samsung American Legion Alumni Association is a developing alumni association in its' beginning phases. The current focus is to locate and engage alumni in order to build excitement and interest in the alumni association. The Samsung American Legion Scholarship started in 1996, and all National Winners and State Finalists are encouraged to join the Samsung American Legion Alumni Association groups on Facebook and LinkedIn. There are approximately 2,000 scholarship alumni that are eligible to join the alumni association. Recruitment of members has been almost entirely online and over social media.

An Executive Committee consisting of representatives from the American Legion family and Samsung has been established to guide the growth and development of the association. This Executive Committee met in Washington D.C. at the beginning of June to plan for the future of the association and to celebrate the 2016 scholarship recipients at a recognition breakfast. Recently, the Executive Committee appointed the first National Alumni Board of Directors, which consists of nine scholarship alumni from across the country. These alumni will work together to lead the organization.

The Samsung American Legion Alumni Association is a brand new organization; it is still growing and developing as new scholars join every week. Samsung American Legion Scholarship recipients wishing to join the association should join the Samsung American Legion Alumni Association LinkedIn group and/or the Samsung American Legion Scholars group at the links below. For more information, contact Brittany Yoder at **byoder@legion.org** or **317-630-1208**.

www.linkedin.comgroups/8466591

www.facebook.com/groups/SamsungScholars

2015 Samsung American Legion Scholars

Americanism 2016 Planner

June 14
Flag Day

July 4
Independence Day

July 15
Child Welfare Foundation grant applications due

August 11-16
American Legion World Series

August 26-September 1
American Legion National Convention

September 16-18
Children & Youth and Junior Shooting Sports Conferences

September 23-25
Combined Americanism Conference

October 9
Child Welfare Foundation 2016 Grant Selection

October 10-13
Fall Meetings

October 27
Scouting Chairmen Tele-Conference

September 2
VJ Day

November 11
Veterans Day

2016 American Legion World Series

Thursday – August 11

ESPN 3

Game 1	Southeast vs. Great Lakes	12:30 pm
Game 2	Central Plains vs. Northwest	4:00 pm
Game 3	Northeast vs. Mid-Atlantic	7:30 pm

Friday – August 12

ESPN 3

Game 4	Mid-South vs. Western	12:30 pm
Game 5	Southeast vs. Central Plains	4:00 pm
Game 6	Great Lakes vs. Northwest	7:30 pm

Saturday – August 13

ESPN 3

Game 7	Mid-Atlantic vs. Western	12:30 pm
Game 8	Northeast vs. Mid-South	4:00 pm
Game 9	Great Lakes vs. Central Plains	7:30 pm

Sunday – August 14

ESPN 3

Game 10	Southeast vs. Northwest	1:00 pm
Game 11	Mid-Atlantic vs. Mid-South	4:00 pm
Game 12	Northeast vs. Western	7:30 pm

Monday – August 15

ESPN U

Game 13	Stars winner vs. Stripes runner-up	4:00 pm
Game 14	Stripes winner vs. Stars runner-up	7:30 pm

Championship Tuesday – August 16

ESPN U

Game 15	Winner Game 13 vs. Winner Game 14	7:00 pm

Upcoming Americanism Conferences

Online registration is now available for the annual Children & Youth, Junior Shooting and Combined Americanism Conferences being held at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel in Indianapolis. Completing the online registration does not reserve overnight accommodations. Hotel reservation links will be provided following conference registration. Additional information on the Scouting Chairman Tele-Conference will be available online in September.

Children & Youth Conference
September 16-18, 2016
www.legion.org/cyconference

Junior Shooting Sports Conference
September 16-18, 2016
www.legion.org/jrshootingconference

Combined Americanism Conferences
September 23-25, 2016
Sessions include Boys and Girls State, Baseball, Chaplains and Oratorical Contest.
www.legion.org/cacregistration

Scouting Chairmen Tele-Conference
October 27, 2016 1:00-4:00 pm EDT
Additional information will be posted on **www.legion.org** when available.

American Legion Baseball

As American Legion Baseball celebrates its 90th World Series, we are especially thankful to our fans, parents, coaches and sponsors who have made the American Legion Baseball program so successful over the decades. Thanks to their loyal dedication and countless volunteer hours and community teamwork, we now have the opportunity to showcase our premier youth baseball program on national television.

The best way to experience the American Legion World Series is by watching from the stands at Keeter Stadium in Shelby, North Carolina, August 11-16, 2016. For those not able to attend, there's no reason to miss any of the action. All the games leading up to the semi-final games will be broadcast online through ESPN3. There's no need to be tied to your computer either; just download the ESPN mobile app and watch on your mobile devices.

The semi-final games and championship game will be covered live on **ESPNU** (check your local cable or satellite provider for availability). Get in the game! Begin planning your post viewing parties now and enjoy our national pastime with your fellow Legionnaires! A viewing party is a great opportunity for the post to open its doors to the public to watch as well! For more information on the tournament, contact the national baseball staff at **baseball@legion.org.**

Americanism Commission Department Awards

O'Connor Americanism Trophy

The Daniel J. O'Connor Americanism Trophy is awarded annually to that department that has conducted the best all-around Americanism activities. The Americanism Commission will determine the three departments achieving the greatest number of percentage points based upon activities reported on the current Consolidated Post Reports. The winner will be selected from the top three departments based on the best narrative statement that shall be no less the 200 words and not more than 500 words.

Submissions must be received, no later than July 15 annually, at:

The American Legion
Attn: Americanism Division
P.O. Box 1055
Indianapolis, IN 46206
americanism@legion.org

Frank N. Belgrano, Jr. Trophy

The Americanism Commission continues to award the Frank N. Belgrano, Jr., Trophy to the most deserving department with an active scouting program. Therefore, it is necessary that departments continue to provide substantiating information as outlined by the Trophies, Awards and Ceremonies Manual, which states:

"The Frank N. Belgrano, Jr., Trophy is to be awarded annually to the department that has rendered the most outstanding service during the period July 31-August 1 to the program of the Boy Scouts of America. The award, to be based on the number of troops organized, strength of existing troops and general welfare of the Scout movement under Legion sponsorship within the department based on written reports with substantiating evidence submitted to National Headquarters 15 days prior to the National Convention.

Departments that want to be considered for the award are required to submit a report with a narrative description of the department's efforts and accomplishments for the period July 31, 2015 through August 1, 2016. The design and length of the narrative is your decision, but we want the selection committee to have something other than statistical information to consider when they determine the winner. The selection committee has placed a very strong emphasis upon the narrative report in determining the winner.

Reports and narratives can be mailed, emailed or faxed no later than August 10, 2016, to:

The American Legion
Attn: Americanism Division—Scouting
P.O. Box 1055
Indianapolis, IN 46206
Fax 317-630-1369
scouting@legion.org

American Legion

Legacy Scholarship Enhancement

For the past 15 years, The American Legion Legacy Scholarship has provided post-secondary education funds for children of fallen Post-9/11 servicemembers. The American Legion has awarded a total of 213 scholarships in the amount of $492,681. This scholarship remains the Legion's way of acknowledging the sacrifice of our heroes by allowing their children to receive quality educational opportunities.

The rising cost of education and changing provisions in the availability of federal and state educational benefits inspired further action – enhancements to The American Legion Legacy Scholarship. At the 2016 Spring Meetings, the National Executive Committee (NEC) approved expansion of scholarship eligibility to include the children of Post-9/11 veterans with a VA-rated disability of 50 percent or higher. The NEC also significantly raised the amount of funds available for award each year. Fifty percent of funds raised for the Legacy Scholarship during a calendar year plus fifty percent of the income from the trust will now be available to award as scholarships the following year.

Additionally, the scholarship was changed to focus on a student's needs over simple merit. Rather than collectively splitting a smaller, fixed amount, individual students may now be eligible for up to $20,000 from a single award. Children of the fallen will receive priority consideration in the granting of scholarships. These changes will go into effect for the 2017 award year.

To make the most of these exciting opportunities, we need your help!

Not only must we engage as many eligible recipients as possible; we must continue to solicit donations for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Trust Fund. All donations to the fund (100%) go to growing the corpus and providing vital educational opportunities to the children of our fallen and disabled Post-9/11 veterans. We must make this information known to our local schools and veteran agencies in order to recruit as many qualified applicants and willing donors as possible. With Legion family members, such as yourself, spreading the word all over the country, we can ensure The American Legion Legacy Scholarship becomes the premiere form of private financial aid for our Post-9/11 families who have sacrificed most for our freedoms.

Additional information can be found by visiting **www.legion.org/scholarships/legacy,** email **scholarships@legion.org** or call **317-630-1212**.

Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program

The Americanism Commission is concerned that, in today's society, law enforcement is not always regarded with the respect it deserves. The Commission further recognizes that The American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement program is an excellent vehicle through which young people are empowered to realize early on that peace officers stand as staunch supporters for moral and legal rights, and that the dedication and impact they have in local communities, state and nation should be regarded with respect and appreciation. The program also serves as an influential stepping stone in life for high school students considering a career in law enforcement as they experience those professional practices and concepts firsthand during their week-long experience at a state police training academy.

To support the efforts of the Americanism Commission a new committee has been formed. The goal of The American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program Committee is to promote, sponsor, coordinate, facilitate and foster activities to ensure the continued development, sustainability, growth and viability of The American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program.

Departments are encouraged to work with their state police or other law enforcement organizations to develop a Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program. A promotional video urging departments to establish a Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program can be found on the Legion website at **www.legion.org/juniorlaw/resources**. Nineteen departments currently sponsor a Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program: Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont and Virginia.

Flag Etiquette

As posts prepare for the Flag Day holiday, of which many will conduct disposal of unserviceable flag ceremonies, we call your attention to the following –

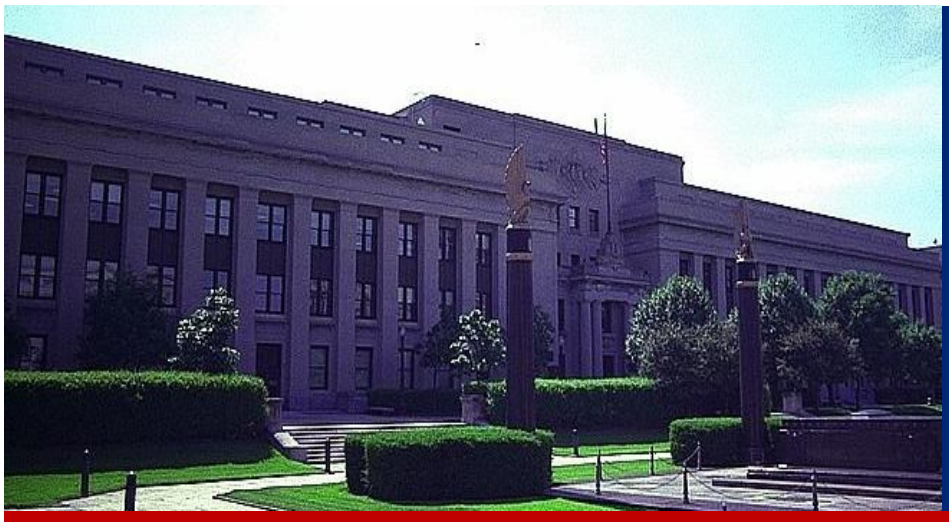
Since 1937, The American Legion has promoted the use of a public flag disposal ceremony as part of a patriotic holiday such as Flag Day. This Disposal of Unserviceable Flags Ceremony is a fitting tribute and an overt expression of patriotism, which enhances the understanding by the public for the honor and respect due the flag of the United States.

American Legion posts are encouraged to conduct the ceremony as yet another part of the flag education program of the Americanism Commission. It is a great community service project that is not difficult to undertake. More information can be found at www.legion.org/flag/ceremony.

Does The American Legion endorse sending flag stars to troops?

The Americanism Commission does not subscribe to the practice of cutting the United States flag into individual pieces prior to its proper disposal no matter what the reason or occasion may be. The Commission is of the opinion that when the flag is no longer a fitting emblem for display it should be disposed in its entirety, preferably by burning. The flag began as a whole; therefore it is to be disposed of as a whole.

We are aware of organizations such as "Stars for Our Troops" that takes in old, tattered and worn-out American Flags, has volunteers cut each embroidered star from the flag, disposes of the stripes properly, and places each star into a tiny plastic bag with a card for members of the Armed Forces at home or overseas. Contrary to what is found on some websites, The American Legion does not endorse the use of the flag in this manner.



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100% AMERICANISM

NATIONAL AMERICANISM COMMISSION NEWSLETTER Fall 2016

Richard Anderson (CT)

From the Chairman's Bunker

The busy summer youth program season is behind us and many of you are already planning next year's programs. If your department does not have a Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program, I strongly urge you to start laying the groundwork needed now to start one.

The American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program serves to introduce youth to the field of law enforcement, law enforcement principles, build discipline, instill ethics, increase physical fitness and develop teamwork and confidence. Programs are conducted in cooperation with local and state law enforcement agencies, and are usually held during the summer at the various law enforcement training facilities. The program is typically made available to high school students who have completed their junior year, are in good academic standing and possess good moral character and the desire to learn more about the law enforcement profession.

Our Youth Cadet Law Enforcement program is an excellent vehicle through which young people are empowered to realize early on that peace officers stand as staunch supporters for legal and moral rights, and that the dedication and impact they have in community, state and nation should be regarded with respect and appreciation. The Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program also serves as an influential stepping stone for those high school students considering a career in law enforcement.

Program content varies from state to state however, most programs include classroom law enforcement training, hands-on police training, and physical fitness training.

Currently only 19 American Legion departments have a Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program: Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota,

Continued on Page 3

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Family Support Network

The Americans Legion's Family Support Network (FSN) has had to change with the times since it was first created in 1990 to aid military families who were experiencing difficulties during the deployment of their family's service members as part of the nation's call-up of forces for Operation Desert Shield/Storm. These deployment support problems were more prevalent in 1990 in the Reserve and National Guard units who had activated members with little notice. Issues such as delayed pay and benefits were compounded with the service member's need to request assistance from the Department of Defense while they were deployed to Southwest Asia. Local posts and Legionnaires stepped into the gap in order to help their local military families when the request for aid came through.

Fast forward more than 15 years to the present where assistance can be requested with the speed of the internet, an email or a phone call from a mobile phone to their service member while they are deployed; however, that still doesn't mean that the mission of The American Legion and FSN is not just as vital as ever—it is! An offer to help a pregnant spouse of a deployed service member in raking leaves or shoveling snow is just as vital as helping them when a pay issue occurs within their life. Legionnaires know their communities and local resources that can often help a military family.

But how does the service member's family know about the assistance that Legion family members or a post can offer? Unless the local Legion family steps forward to provide the local military unit or military family with an opportunity to know what your post can offer in assistance, they may never know unless they happen to run across a reference to our programs on an internet search.

Take the opportunity to knock on the door of the nearest military facility and military families in your community and introduce yourselves. Become the resource for when they have a problem that could be solved by the FSN program. Provide a copy of our Troop & Family Support handout which lists several easy links to providing troop assistance: A copy can be found here (**www.legion.org/publications**). For additional information on assisting servicemembers and their families download *Access Granted* here (**www.legion.org/publications**).

More information on the Family Support Network may be found at **www.legion.org/familysupport**.

To request assistance visit **www.legion.org/fsn** or call toll-free **800-504-4098**.

Americanism Calendar

November 20-26, 2016
National Family Week

November 25, 2016
Thanksgiving Day

February, 2017
Americanism Month

February 5, 2017
Four Chaplains Sunday

February 5-11, 2017
Religious Emphasis Week

February 20, 2017
Presidents Day

April 2017
Children & Youth Month

April 14, , 2017
Good Friday

April 16, 2017
Easter

April 21-23, 2017
National Oratorical Contest Finals

May 8-11, 2017
Spring Meetings

May 29, 2017
Memorial Day

May 31, 2017
2016-2017 Program Year Reporting Ends

June 14, 2017
Flag Day

July 4, 2017
Independence Day

July 18-22, 2017
Junior Shooting Sports National Tournament

July 21-29, 2017
Boys Nation

New Troop & Family Support Resource

A new Troop & Family Support information card is now available for use by posts and departments. The information card replaces the *Troop Support Services (TS2)* and *Operation Outreach* publications and is designed to be a handed out to servicemembers and their families by the local post in conjunction with troop outreach events. The new card has informational web links and toll-free phone numbers that tan be used to request assistance from The American Legion while the servicemember is serving, as well as information that will help them with their post-service lives when they return to their communities and families.

An electronic copy available for download may be found here (**www.legion.org/publications**). Hard copies are available in limited quanties by contacting Bruce Drake, Assistant Director at **317-630-1255** or email **bdrake@legion.org**.

Chairman's Bunker *(continued from page 1)*

Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont and Virginia.

During the 2016 Fall Meetings, the National Executive Committee created the Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee under the Americanism Commission. The committee is charged with helping to grow and guide the program. This new committee is ready to assist your department's efforts in establishing and/or strengthening this program.

For more information and helpful resources, view the "How to Start a Youth Cadet Program" video, and brochure located at **www.legion.org/youthlaw/resource**s or email **youthlaw@legion.org**. In addition, consider contacting one of the departments listed above to discuss their resources, best practices and challenges.

I am pleased to support this Americanism program, and I can personally attest to the success our youth participants, staff volunteers and partnering state law enforcement representatives will experience with it!

Operation Comfort Warriors

The American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) program is dedicated to meeting the needs of wounded, injured or ill military personnel by providing them with comfort items not usually supplied by the government. OCW ensures that patients at U.S. military and Veterans Affairs hospitals and warrior transition units are given items like sweat suits, DVDs, puzzles, electronic devices, books, calling cards and more. OCW also provides larger items such as ping pong tables, entertainment centers, computers, kayaks and other recreational goods for use by wounded warriors in common areas.

Through the generous donations of Legion family members, OCW provided over $295,000 in aid through 34 grants around the United States and Europe, impacting an estimated 7,732 wounded warriors and family members during 2015.

OCW Grant requests can be initiated by anyone online here (**www.legion.org/operationcomfortwarriors/assistance**).

Donate online here (**www.legion.org/donate**). Mail donations to Operation Comfort Warriors, PO Box 361626, Indianapolis, IN 46236.

OCW Online Resources

For more information on how your post or department can get involved OCW booklet here (**www.legion.org/publications**) or email **ocw@legion.org**.

OCW trifold brochure is available for download here **(www.legion.org/publications)**.

Download a customizable event poster here (**www.legion.org/publications**).

The American Legion & Scouting Square Knot Award

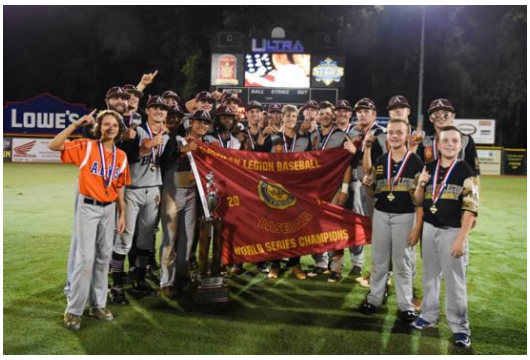
The American Legion & Scouting Square Knot award recognizes American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion members who are actively involved in the Scouting program, their dedication to the Scouting program and work to assist in furthering the Scouting program in The American Legion. This award is not meant to be a selective or limited award, but one that is available to any American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion member who completes the requirements for the award.

At the end of 2015, a total of 588 awards have been issued to Legionnaires, American Legion Auxiliary members and Sons of The American Legion members since the award's inception in 2003.

More information about the Square Knot Award is available here (**www.legion.org/publications/160903/scouting-square-knot-award-brochure**) .

American Legion Baseball

The 90th edition of the American Legion World Series (www.legion.org/baseball/worldseries) was, once again, a tremendous success featuring record-setting attendance numbers, online impressions and television viewership on ESPNU. Breaking a tremendous drought, the team from Post 58 in Texarkana, Arkansas, became the first team from its department to win the American Legion World Series. Members from the Texarkana team were rewarded with a trip to the Major League Baseball World Series games one and two in Cleveland, as has been a tradition for the ALWS champion.



The Texarkana team was able to see former Legion Baseball players Kris Bryant and Jason Kipnis dominate the World Series, while seeing fellow Arkansas Legion alum and All-Star Travis Wood take the mound.

"It was an awesome time," said Texarkana second baseman Nick Myers. "To see guys who were once in my position make it to the biggest stage in baseball shows that if you have the right mindset you can make it anywhere in life. It has been a tremendous experience being able to play Legion Baseball," Myers further added. "It has taught me to appreciate the little things in life that not everyone gets to do. I have learned to appreciate those who are fighting for us overseas even more for allowing us the opportunity to do things like play baseball."

Looking forward, the 2017 American Legion World Series will take place August 10-15, once again in Shelby, North Carolina.

The 2017 and 2018 regional tournament sites were announced (**www.legion.org/baseball/234454/2017-18-legion-baseball-regional-tournament-sites-announced**) with the following cities hosting: Shrewsbury, MA; Leesburg, VA; Asheboro, NC, New Orleans, LA; Napoleon, OH; Dickinson, ND; Missoula, MT; Denver, CO. Regionals take place August 2-6, 2017, and August 8-12, 2018.

Teams may begin registering for the 2017 season on January 1.

New for next year will be a department website network (**www.legion.org/baseball/232671/legion-baseball-create-department-website-network**) which is set to be launched as registration opens for 2017. The network will allow each department to opt in to having a ready-made and powerful website for its baseball program.

Applications for the American Legion Baseball Scholarship, sponsored by Diamond, are available now (**www.legion.org/documents/baseball/baseball_scholarship.pdf**).

Samsung American Legion Alumni Association

The American Legion and Samsung have teamed up to establish the Samsung American Legion Alumni Association in order to engage recipients of the Samsung American Legion Scholarship. The mission of the association is to engage alumni while advocating the ideals of continued freedom, learning, and service, while also fostering life-long relationships between recipients and the organizations.

The Samsung American Legion Alumni Association is in its development phase. The current focus is to locate and engage alumni in order to build excitement and interest in the alumni association. The Samsung American Legion Scholarship started in 1996, and all national winners and state finalists are encouraged to join the Samsung American Legion Alumni Association groups on popular social networking sites Facebook and LinkedIn. There are approximately 2,000 scholarship alumni that are eligible to join the alumni association. Recruitment of members has been almost entirely online and over social media.

An Executive Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from The American Legion family and Samsung and a National Alumni Board of Directors, which consists of nine scholarship alumni from across the country has been established to guide the growth and development of the association. Through the creation and implementation of a strategic plan, the board and committee will work together to lead the organization.

In 2017, alumni will be invited to officially join the alumni association through a dedicated web page. Next year will also bring alumni association programs, including a mentoring program to connect Samsung Scholars who are still in college with scholarship recipients who have established themselves in careers across the globe.

Samsung American Legion Scholarship recipients wishing to keep informed on activities of the association should join the Samsung American Legion Alumni Association LinkedIn group here (www.linkedin.com/groups/8466591) or the Samsung American Legion Scholars group on Facebook here (**www.facebook.com/groups/SamsungScholars**). For more information, contact Brittany Yoder at **byoder@legion.org** or **317-630-1208**.

American Legion Child Welfare Awards $618,606

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, in its 62nd year, has awarded $618,606 to 20 nonprofit organizations. These grants have been awarded to support youth-serving projects that seek to enhance the lives of children by addressing the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of children. The following is a brief summary of select grants awarded for 2017.

Angels & Doves of Indianapolis, Indiana, was awarded $19,900 for their project, "Reduce School Bullying and Youth Violence." This grant will provide live anti-bullying programs f1or high-risk school districts.

Childhood Leukemia Foundation of Brick, New Jersey, was awarded $60,000 for their project, "Hope Binder." This project will offer 12 sections of templates and resources to help families begin to feel a degree of control over their circumstances.

Children's Brain Tumor Foundation of New York, New York, was awarded $20,000 for their project, "Finding Your Way- A Guide for Childhood Brain Tumor Families from Diagnosis & Beyond." This project will help families understand that the emotions they are feeling are not uncommon and assist in alleviating the isolation often felt by families.

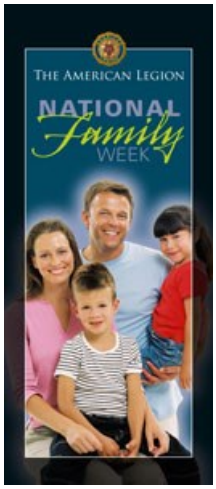
National Autism Association of Portsmouth, Rhode Island, was awarded $59,375 for their project, "Big Red Safety Box." This project will educate, raise awareness and provide tangible tools that may assist in preventing and responding to dangerous wandering-related incidents in the autism community.

Our Military Kids of McLean, Virginia, was awarded $56,055 for their project, " In Their Own Voice: Military Children Tell Their Stories." This grant will enhance outreach and marketing efforts of the organization.

The complete list of approved grants can be found here (**www.cwf-inc.org/news/current**).

Send your tax-deductible donation to: American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, PO Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or donate online here (**www.legion.org/donate**).

National Family Week



The American Legion has long recognized the family as the foundation of this nation. A guiding principle of The American Legion's Children & Youth programs continues to be maintaining the integrity of the family. To demonstrate our resolute belief in the importance of strong families,

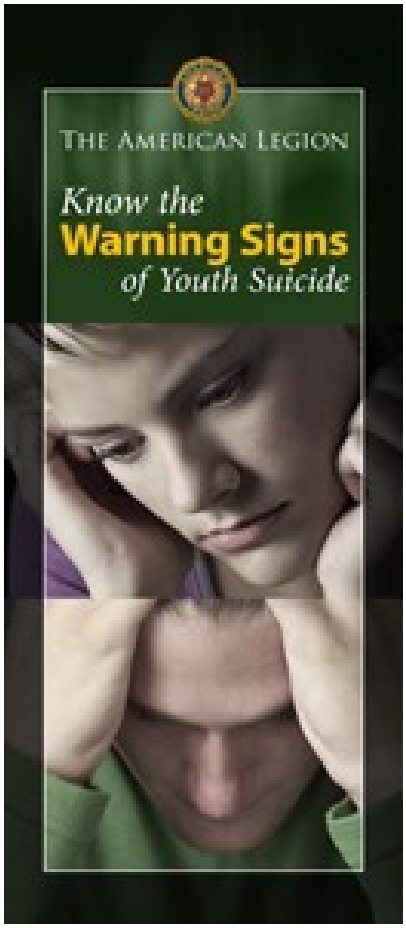
The American Legion's Committee on Children & Youth, by resolution, advocates the passage of federal legislation that would establish the Thanksgiving holiday week as National Family Week. All members of The American Legion Family are encouraged to initiate and engage in local activities during National Family Week that promote, encourage and celebrate healthy families and communities.

Download the National Family Week brochure here (www.legion.org/publications).

Know the Warning Signs of Youth Suicide

The American Legion is concerned about the welfare of our nation's youth. It is difficult for adults to understand what would motivate a young person to take his or her own life. Changes in the behavior of a child are often seen as a phase they are going through and just a part of adolescence. This may or may not be the case. As parents and adults, we need to be able to talk openly with our youth. Some youth in emotional pain see suicide as their only option. It is important that adults are able to recognize signs of concern and know how to react and get professional help if needed.

While youth suicide rates have been down the past several decades, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta has noted that there is a seven-year rise in middle school suicides, from an annual rate of 0.9 to 2.1 per 100,000.



Additionally, the CDC statistics show the following:

- The suicide rate among U.S. middle school students doubled from 2007 to 2014, surpassing for the first time the incidence of youngsters aged 10 to 14 who died in car crashes, a federal report released on November 3, 2016 said.
- Suicide remains the **SECOND** leading cause of death for ages 10-24 and is the **SECOND** leading cause of death for college-age youth and ages 12-18.
- More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza and chronic lung disease, **COMBINED.**
- Each day in our nation, there are an average of over 5,240 attempts by young people grades 7-12.
- **Four** out of five teens who attempt suicide have given clear warning signs

To assist with this combating this problem and educating adults and youth about the warning signs of youth suicide, the Americanism's Committee on Children & Youth publishes Warning Signs (**www.legion.org/publications**) that is free to download.

Scholarships and Education

Though the weather is cooling down, our scholarship and education efforts are warming up. Beginning with the 2017 award year, the Samsung American Legion Scholarship's award structure will change. Ten national scholars (two from each region) will receive $10,000 each. Ten national runners-up (two from each region) will receive $5,000 each. The remaining department finalists will receive a guaranteed $1,250 scholarship. The online application will open no-later-than February 1, 2017 and is available here (**www.legion.org/scholarships/Samsung**).

Also for the 2017 award year, The American Legion Legacy Scholarship application will go completely online. While children of fallen Post-9/11 servicemembers remain the primary beneficiaries of the scholarship, children of Post-9/11 veterans having been assigned a VA-rated disability rating of 50% or greater are now eligible to apply. Awards are completely needs-based, and an applicant may receive up to $20,000 per year for applicable education expenses. Proof of eligibility and financial need will be required as part of the application process. Look for the new application in December 2016 here (**www.legion.org/scholarships/legacy**).

Your help is critical to the success of these scholarships! Encourage the young men and young women attending various American Legion Boys State and American Legion Auxiliary Girls State programs to apply for the Samsung American Legion Scholarship, if they are the direct descendant of a wartime veteran. Seek out the eligible children of Post-9/11 servicemembers and veterans to submit their applications for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship. Keep in mind: all scholarships may now be used for undergraduate or graduate higher education at nonprofit and regionally-accredited institutions!

Volunteer for 2017 National Oratorical Contest

The Americanism Division is looking for volunteers to assist with the 2017 National High School Oratorical Contest Finals in Indianapolis, April 22-23.

The contest is held is at the Wyndham Indianapolis West hotel where more than 50 youth from across the country will deliver speeches on the U.S. Constitution to compete for $48,000 in scholarships: first place $18,000, second place $16,000 and third place $14,000. All department finalists receive a $1,500 scholarship. Contestants advancing out of the first round receive an additional $1,500 scholarship.

Volunteers will be provided with specific contest details, a job responsibility and training. All expenses related to volunteering with the contest, such as travel, housing and food, are paid for by the volunteer.

To volunteer, fill out the form online here (**www.legion.org/oratorical/volunteer/form**).

Flag Respect

The American Legion is concerned about the blatant disrespect for our National Anthem, the flag and everything it stands for. It has become fashionable among professional athletes and we have seen this spill over to college and high school athletics, as well.

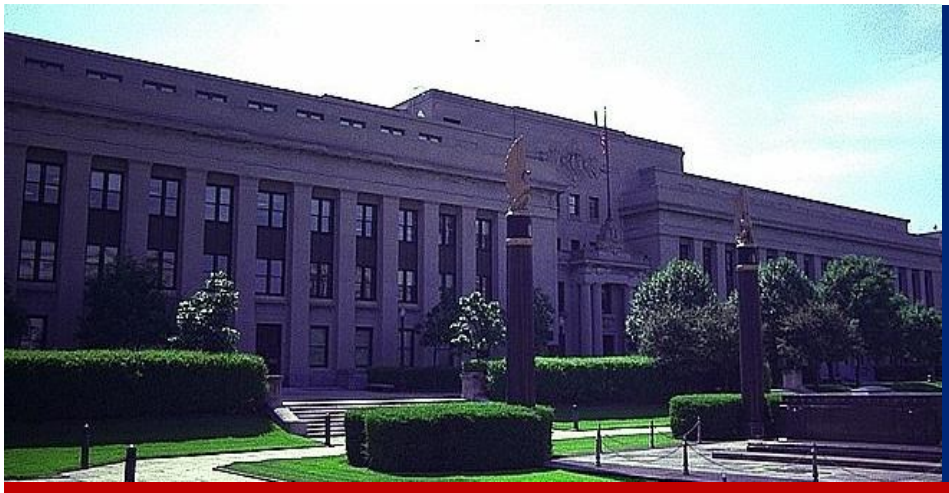
To address this concern during American Legion programs, the National Executive Committee passed Resolution No. 16, ***Expectations for Rendering Proper Respect When Participating in Programs of The American Legion***, brought forth by the Americanism Commission, during the 2016 Fall Meetings. This resolution encourages all post and department program chairmen or directors of any American Legion program to make clear to all participants, in advance of program participation, that The American Legion has the expectation for rendering proper respect to the Flag of the United States, at all times, including during the National Anthem, and that if any participant of any program of The American Legion cannot, or will not, live up to this expectation, the individual should not be a participant in American Legion programs.

For individuals participating in American Legion programs at the national level, the resolution states that those who "cannot or will not" meet the organization's expectations for proper flag respect "will be removed from the program and not be allowed any further participation."

Through our Americanism programs, Legionnaires have an extraordinary opportunity to continue to lead by example and to help raise this, and future, generations to show proper respect for our nation and for all who have fought and died for our way of life.

We can do this by continuing to be steadfast examples of what it means to be proud Americans and to perpetuate 100% Americanism by: teaching youth about American values; encouraging new citizens to assimilate into one American culture; teaching veteran appreciation and flag etiquette in schools; upholding respect for law enforcement and the rule of law; practicing good citizenship by voting and encouraging others to exercise their civic duty; and the list for leading by example could go on and on.

Read the full text of Resolution No. 16 by clicking here (**www.archive.legion.org**).



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