THE AMERICAN LEGION

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MEMBERSHIP -- THE MEASURING STICK: Whether you like it or not -- membership is usually the yardstick used to measure a post commander's year of stewardship ... And now is the time to make sure your post has enrolled every possible member for 1958 ... Nat'l. Comdr. John S. Gleason, Jr., has a personal letter in the mail to every American Legion leader urging an all-out effort to wind up this Legion year with increased membership strength ... Gleason suggests:

"Get more mileage out of your lists of delinquent members ... Dig through those lists and the lists of eligible vets in your community -- then get your membership 'galvanizers' on the job ... Teamwork at this time will result in a record your successor will have a hard time to top ... We all have a moral obligation to back up our convention mandates with membership."

Security: URGE NEC BACK IKE'S PLAN

Just before The American Legion Security Commission met in Washington, D.C., April 9-11, President Eisenhower outlined his plan to reorganize U.S. defenses to Congress ... It was a prime topic of discussion at our Security sessions and was recommended for approval to the Legion Nat'l. Executive Committee meeting in Indianapolis, April 30 - May 2. Ike's original defense package would give the Secretary of Defense:

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More direct charge of military operations; power to appoint and fire top officers of three services; authority to shift funds between services; Joint Chiefs of Staff as his own staff; control and supervision of military research and development of new weapons.

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Col. Bryce N. Harlow, presidential aide, told the commission: "The plan is needed to clear away the debris that prevents application of concentrated military power by the U.S.... Present system places a premium on delay and dissension ... Nub of President's plan: unified forces under a unified command -- not under a commander whose first responsibility is to one of the three armed forces."

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Army, Navy and Air Force departments would yield direct control of actual military operations to the Joint Chiefs ... Departments would perform training, supply and administrative jobs.

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A previous speaker, Past Nat'l. Comdr. Erle Cocke, Jr., termed the plan: "a first step toward economy and efficiency in the Defense Department ... Interservice rivalry and duplication are costing U.S. taxpayers $10 billion annually," he said ... "Present JCS set-up is nothing more than a trading and debating society."

The President's plan would set up unified command of striking forces with orders going direct to them from the commander-in-chief through the Secretary of Defense, retired Air Force Gen. Carl (Tooey) Spaatz told The American Legion Nat'l. Security Commission ... Under today's conditions, orders must trickle down through various services and then back to commanders in the field ... "Ike and I learned from personal experience in WWII that field commanders must have power to reward and punish" ... He disagreed with some Congressional objections that the plan would take control of funds away from Congress and make the Defense Secretary a "czar."

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Spaatz, making an unscheduled appearance before the commission, said that Congress will have more control over defense spending ... Since they would deal with the defense budget as a whole and not piecemeal -- as is now the case ... "Our present military command is no better prepared for a new 'Pearl Harbor' than we were in 1941," he said ... "The reshuffle of power at the Pentagon, proposed by Ike, would do much to correct the situation."

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Some other reactions: Air Force Association moderated pledge of support -- claim plan in some respects doesn't go far enough ... Navy League opposed strengthening Secretary of Defense military authority ... Congressman Carl D. Vinson (D-Ga.) denounced it as "Prussian-type supreme high command." ... The President sent later details on the plan to Congress, April 16 -- left out part giving Secretary of Defense "greater flexibility" in money matters.

(Continued on page 4)

Americanism: MUSTS FOR MAY

"Flag display -- like charity -- begins at home" ... The best way to encourage community-wide flag display is by our own example, says Nat'l. Americanism Chrmn. James F. Daniel, Greenville, S.C. ... Plan appropriate local observances on Memorial Day, Flag Day, and Independence Day -- and all patriotic holidays ... "Show YOUR colors -- and your neighbor will get the message," says Jimmy.

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School Awards and American Legion Junior Baseball have top priority during the month of May ... Early planning and attention to details are key factors in the success of these programs.

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Lou Brissie suggests this check list for Post Baseball Chrmn.: 1. Purchase team insurance; 2. Check uniforms and equipment; 3. Make final arrangements for use of ball-park; 4. Announce date and time for 1958 "try-outs."

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"Stars and Stripes on Display," flag education film mentioned in January Newsletter, was selected as one of seven top films (grades 3-6) for the annual SCHOLASTIC TEACHER Film Award ... The 16mm sound movie produced by Indiana U. and The American Legion, is sold in color or black and white through Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

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American Legion Nat'l. High School Oratorical fans, youthful orators and speech coaches, will be interested in this bargain offer ... The new 1958 Orations Booklet, published by the Nat'l. Americanism Commission, may be purchased for only $1.00 ... Last year's book was twice that much and sold out ... Booklet contains all winning state orations, contest information, pictures and biog sketches of winners ... Delivery will be made by the end of May -- Write Americanism Division, Box 1055, Indianapolis 6, Ind.

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A 1957 Hoosier American Legion Boys State Governor is the nation's best young speaker -- Reed M. Stewart, 18, Brazil, Ind., high school senior, won top honors in The American Legion's National High School Oratorical Contest, April 21, at Portales, N. M. ... He has plans for the ministry, radio or TV -- and will use the $4000 scholarship money to attend DePauw U., Greencastle, Ind. ... Nat'l. Comdr. John S. Gleason, Jr., presented Stewart with his check on the Dave Garroway Show (NBC) April 23 ... Contest is based on U.S. Constitution -- more than 350,000 students participate annually ... Other finalists were: Ronald Yakaitis, 16, Baltimore, Md., ($2500); Thomas Gomperz, 17, Merced, Cal., ($1000); Sydney H. Nathans, 17, Houston, Tex., ($500).

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Block This Bill

James F. O'Neil, publisher of The American Legion Magazine -- in a statement before the U.S. Senate Interstate and Foreign Commerce -- voiced the Legion's opposition to S. 582, a bill to prohibit advertisements of all alcoholic beverages ... O'Neil pointed out since most newspapers and magazines are distributed in interstate commerce -- many publications -- including The American Legion Magazine -- would be affected ... He said the bill violates a historic principle -- that any product that has a legal right to be sold in the USA -- has a right to advertise, if it conforms with the laws of advertising ... O'Neil attacked the bill as an attempt by its backers to foster a return of national prohibition.

Rehab: APPLIED HUMANITIES

The American Legion's stand on rehabilitation was made crystal clear recently -- in a statement to Congress by Nat'l. Rehab. Chrmn. Robert M. McCurdy, Pasadena, Cal. ... Read it and remember it:

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"I don't believe in veteran benefits and welfare based on economics only. We have groups in the United States whose every approach is based on economics. We also have some fine people whose approach is based on the humanities. Certainly, there is a place where we can reconcile these two and coordinate our humanities with the economics of the situation, to come out reasonably at a point where our veterans, who are sick and in need, can be sustained."

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This especially applies to the Legion's 1958 rehab. legislative program ... Bills to liberalize existing disability pension laws are stuck on dead center in Congress ... Post commanders can boost the Nat'l. Legislative Commission efforts in this field by acquainting their Congressmen and Senators with the equity and justice of having the following bills passed now:

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WW I vets will appreciate your support of H.R. 9714 -- introduced by Mrs. Rogers (R-Mass.) ... Bill conforms with '57 Nat'l. Convention Resolution 452 -- eliminates disability requirement at age 65 and declares such war veterans permanently and totally disabled for pension purposes -- Another section increases existing monthly awards to $75, $90 and $150.

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Mrs. Rogers and others have introduced bills (H.R. 9867 is one) to raise annual income limitation to $1800 if single and $3000 for those with certain dependents ... This is an important requirement for securing disability pensions for war vets -- and death pensions for widows ... Conforms with Res. 13, '57 Nat'l. Convention.

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Here's one the American Legion Auxiliary will work with you on ... H.R. 11783, introduced by Rep. Christopher (D-Mo.), matches our Atlantic City Res. 153 -- granting same eligibility for death pensions to widows and children of veterans of WW I, II and Korean Conflict.

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Demonstrate your dedication to rehabilitation as a community service ... Make an active effort to secure approval of these and other American Legion bills pending in the 2nd Session of 85th Congress ... Time is now ... Congress wants out for fall campaign ... May adjourn by July 1.

Foreign Relations: URGES

Any American Legion resolution on disarmament should "recognize Russia's unbroken record of broken promises" ... This was one of the recommendations coming from the Nat'l. Foreign Relations Commission meeting, April 9-11, to the NEC meeting at Indianapolis ... Other resolution highlights to the Legion's policy-making body between conventions were:

Re-affirm our unalterable opposition to Red China's entry into UN; reiterate demand for immediate release of American prisoners held by Red China; renew support of People-to-People program; improve relations with Latin America; step up U.S. information efforts abroad -- and take new look at internal situation in Russia.

Economics: ART WON'T WORK

Many war vets -- especially disabled vets -- cannot qualify for enrollment in the Air Force Reserve ... One good reason why The American Legion opposed the Air Reserve Technician plan inaugurated by the Air Force ... Res. 612 at Atlantic City stated our opposition ... A recent test to put ART to work proved a flop at Andrews Air Force Base and elsewhere, bolstering the Legion's convention stand ... Despite previous promises that no vet employees would lose out under the plan -- about a third were served notice ... After a storm of protest layoffs were cancelled out.

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Favorable reaction from a great many departments and posts to 13-point employment program endorsed by Nat'l. Comdr. Gleason on March 28 ... Write for a copy if you haven't received one.

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Congressional action may revive GI loan program ... President's signature on P.L. 85-364, April 1, may give veterans' housing boost ... Extends program for two years -- ups direct loan to $13,500 and raises interest rate to 4-3/4%.

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Junior Baseball: CLIPSHEET

A special 1958 American Legion Junior Baseball news clipsheet was in the mail this week from Nat'l. Hdqtrs. ... The clipsheet was to be given about a 26,000 circulation to post adjutants, department and post publications, sports writers and department junior baseball chairmen ... It is jam-packed with pertinent information on how to promote one of The American Legion's finest programs ... This is a practical public relations and publicity package produced by Lou Brissie, A. L. Junior Baseball Commissioner ... It contains suggested editorials and news stories that will be welcomed by your home town sports editors, after the all-important local angle has been added by your post publicity officer.

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Insurance: GRASS ROOTS NOD

Applications for The American Legion's low-cost group life insurance plan, announced April 1, were reaching flood tide at Nat'l. Hdqtrs. -- as the month ended ... Thousands of applications and checks had been processed and a volume of correspondence handled by the brand new insurance section ... Early returns showed grass rooters were giving the Legion's newest benefit a hearty nod of acceptance.

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The big job of mailing out more than 2,749,778 applications for insurance was completed ... Which means, when you read this, every member should have received an application ... Extras were mailed to posts, plus bulletin board posters and an informative Q. & A. sheet ... Dept. Hdqtrs. have additional supplies ... The American Legion Magazine -- going to every member -- carried complete insurance information in the April and May editions.

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High on the list of early applicants were insurance men, doctors, lawyers, teachers and a host of veterans in professional life ... Indicating that the Legion's insurance plan, which costs only $1.00 a month in most states, was a bargain appreciated by people who knew insurance best.

Child Welfare: HELP WANTED

Today 1 out of 10 American children is a victim of divorce, desertion, or mental illness ... Almost 2-1/2 million children have parents away from home, separated or divorced ... Close to 2 million require public assistance to stay with their remaining families ... 175,000 are in foster homes and 87,000 in institutions ... Community family counseling can reduce this tragic toll ... If your community does not have such services -- contact other groups -- survey your needs -- and plan development of such services now.

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Disabled and dependent children may benefit from this item ... Amendments to the Social Security Act provided that social security survivors insurance payments could be continued to disabled dependent children -- over 18 -- providing the child was disabled before reaching 18 ... Social Security estimates 60,000 are getting such benefits, but thousands are unaware of their rights to them ... Contact all eligibles immediately since benefits are retroactive for only 12 months.

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You can help stop a polio epidemic in your town ... Salk polio vaccine is now available for everyone who should have it ... Answer the call of The National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis for help in wiping out polio ... Your post can spearhead this campaign in your community by furnishing volunteers to staff clinics -- and other ways to promote a program of immunity ... NFIP and Public Health Service say a polio epidemic is possible unless the unvaccinated -- 60% of our 172 million population -- begin their innoculations now.

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Late Bulletins: OTHER NOTES

One-fourth of The American Legion's 17,000 posts sponsored Scout units during the past year, Arthur A. Schuck, chief Scout Executive, has informed National Commander John S. Gleason, Jr. ... The 4244 Scout units sponsored by American Legion posts and Auxiliary units included 1132 Cub packs, 2357 Boy Scout troops and 755 Explorer units with a total membership of 178,000 boys. There was a net increase of 52 Scout units under Legion sponsorship during the year ... Percentagewise, the Department of the Panama Canal Zone stood at the top of the list, with its six posts sponsoring five Scout units. Among the continental departments, Washington State was first with 53.2 per cent -- 120 Scout units and 226 posts.

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Reservists drawing non-disability retired pay for military service may receive VA compensation or pension benefits provided they waive an equal amount of retired pay, under the terms of Public Law 85-376, which became effective May 1 ... Under previous laws, the waiver privilege was open to all retired members of the Regular Armed Forces, but to Reservists only if they were retired for physical disability. The new law gives equal waiver privileges to all veterans receiving retired pay for either Regular or Reserve military service.

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Rehabilitation Director John J. Corcoran appeared before the Subcommittee on Insurance of the House Veterans Affairs Committee recently and advocated early enactment of HR 196, 919, 2208, 920, 2210, 2209, and 2207. All of these bills relate to insurance protection for veterans of World War II and Korea. All of them are covered by mandates adopted by American Legion national conventions.

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THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Security: (*Continued from page 1*)

Other Security Commission recommendations to The American Legion's National Executive Committee meeting at Indianapolis, April 30 to May 2, are:

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Oppose reductions in Army Reserve and National Guard; recommend policy of retired military pay on active duty pay be continued; re-affirm Legion mandate on single military supply catalog system -- calling for full implementation of P.L. 436 (1952); urge Legion posts to organize light duty rescue squads to assist Civil Defense program; urge full increase for retired personnel, instead of 6% recommended by H.R. 11470 now before Senate; backed military aid for nations of free world only; re-affirm Legion's disaster-relief agreement with Red Cross.

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The Commission heard top gov't., industrial and military experts discuss defense problems ... Military writer James J. Haggerty, Jr., of Radio Station WGMS "Defense Desk" scored with: "I am not concerned with too much taxes -- as long as we pay them in dollars, not rubles." ... The fast man with a buck for defense said many Americans are preoccupied with the monetary aspects of defense -- but lack "a sense of urgency." ... Consensus among experts -- $50 billion defense budget -- in not too distant future.

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Convention

James P. Ringley of Chicago was named president and chairman of the board of The American Legion 1958 Convention Corporation -- filling the vacancy created by death of Phil W. Collins ... C. E. (Bump) Cross was named vice chairman ... Maynard K. (Red) Hillstrom, treasurer, states that space has been reserved at the Morrison Hotel for all commission and committee meetings (standing and convention) ... Since staff headquarters will also be at the Morrison, this should make for a most convenient convention set-up ... "Chicago! Chicago! That Wonderful Town!" is the theme of The American Legion's 40th National Convention, Sept. 1-4 ... At 10 a.m. Labor Day the Big Parade begins ... On your mark, get set, let's go!

DATES TO REMEMBER

April 30-May 1-2	National Executive Committee Meeting, Indianapolis, Ind.
1	"May Day, U.S. Way" (See Resolution No. 72, approved by the 1954 National Convention)
11	Mother's Day*
17	Armed Forces Day*
30	Memorial Day*
June	(June & July) Most Boys State programs held.
14	Flag Day*
30	Deadline for Junior Baseball Team Certifications to Departments
July	
4	Independence Day*
4	"National Baseball Polio Day
18-25	13th Annual Boys Nation, Washington, D.C.
Sept.	
1-4	40th Nat'l. Convention, The American Legion, Chicago, Illinois

* Flag Display

Headliners: HARRY & IKE

Former President Harry S. Truman informally indicated he will accept an invitation to address the 1958 Nat'l. Convention in September ... Speaking at a district meeting of The American Legion in Independence, Mo., as he was about to introduce Nat'l. Legislative Chrmn. Jerome Duggan of St. Louis, Mo., Truman said, "I have just been invited to speak at your next national convention -- and I will be happy to accept" ... The invitation was extended to Mr. Truman by Jerry Duggan, according to the May edition of The American Legion Magazine. Truman is a life member of Post 21 at Independence ... He has addressed national conventions in 1948 and 1949.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, another life member, is also expected to headline the national convention ... The White House replied to a formal invitation that Ike would be there, circumstances permitting ... Other top speakers expected include Vice President Richard Nixon and former Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson.