

Americanism and Children & Youth
Weekly Report to the National Commander
September 27, 2007
Marty Justis, Director – (317) 630-1203

Immigration. The Government Accountability Office has just issued a report stating the Visa Lottery Program, a U.S. admissions program operated by the U.S. State Department, is rife with fraud and could be exploited by terrorists or criminals to gain residency in the United States. Hundreds of recipients every year come from countries designated as state sponsors of terrorism, including Syria, Iran, Sudan, North Korea and Cuba. The American Legion has a position that the Diversity Visa Lottery Program should be abolished and included in its comprehensive plan outlined in Resolution 113, Strategy to Address Illegal Immigration, NEC May 2007.

Inaugural Children & Youth Conference. The first national Children & Youth Conference was held on September 21 - 23, 2007 at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel. The conference had 135 registered participants representing 52 Departments from The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and the Sons of The American Legion. A conference evaluation form was developed to measure participant satisfaction and solicit ideas for future conferences. Of the 111 returned evaluation forms, 100% reported that based on their total experience at the conference, they would attend or recommend someone else attend next year's conference.

Education. The Legion's National Committee on Education will meet September 29-30th in Washington, DC for its fall meeting. The main focus of the meeting will be the selection of the 2007 Samsung American Legion Scholarship recipients. This year ten (10) students will each receive a \$20,000 scholarship for their undergraduate studies. The remaining 88 national finalists will each receive a \$1,000 scholarship. Since 1996, over \$3 million has been awarded to over 1,100 deserving students to further their college education.

Country Tribute to The American Legion. Country music singer Michael Peterson's DVD collaboration with The American Legion - featuring the song "It's Who We Are," a tribute to The American Legion - was released at the 2007 National Convention in Reno, Nevada. The "It's Who We Are" DVD includes interviews with celebrities and Legionnaires, along with public service announcements about The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. It is available for purchase on The American Legion's website, www.legion.org, and by calling 1-866 539-2509. They can also be purchased by sending a check for \$12.00 each, which includes shipping and handling, to: Michael Peterson DVD, The American Legion, PO Box 1055, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46206.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS WEEKLY STATUS INPUT

Jack Querfeld, Director, Internal Affairs

(317) 630-1330

September 27, 2007

Membership

Current 2008 membership is 1,495,527 without DMS. The current DMS total is 113,874. Current membership total including DMS is 1,609,401. Next target date is 55% on October 11th.

PUBLIC RELATIONS DIVISION

September 28, 2007

Weekly Report to National Commander

Joe March, Director

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1. **Veterans Day**

A guest editorial for use on Veterans Day is in development for distribution to daily and weekly newspapers during the last week of October. The piece will emphasize the need to stand united in support of all veterans carrying the Resolution 169 theme. The suggested Veterans Day speech is in final editing for early October distribution and website posting.

2. **Message Points**

PR is updating The American Legion Message Points with inputs from commission directors for distribution during the fall meetings. The new package will include talking points on new resolutions passed at the 89th National Convention in Reno.

3. **Operation Landstuhl**

Nearly \$300,000 has been raised by The American Legion family to provide comfort items for the men and women recovering at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. Last week, Emblem Sales shipped hundreds of sweatshirts, t-shirts, hoodies and pants to the facility. Officials at Landstuhl discussed other needs with Legion headquarters staff members during a conference call in PR on Wednesday. The American Legion will explore purchasing options for iPod shuffles, nanopods, pool tables, ping pong tables, web cams, DVD players, CDs, and large screen televisions for patients at the facility to enjoy.

4. **Legion Riders Video**

Highlighting the Legacy Run, the video is in post-production for debut and distribution to leadership at the meetings in October.

Breaking Stories During the Week:

- The ***Des Moines Register*** carried a column today about baseball great Rick Monday, known for saving the U.S. Flag from desecration on the baseball field in 1976, joining the Woodward American Legion Post 211 at the 89th National American Legion Convention in Reno.
- Hope Yen of the ***Associated Press*** wrote in a national wire story that a GAO report finds progress lacking in veterans care. "Delayed decisions, confusing policies and the perception that DOD and VA disability ratings result in inequitable outcomes have eroded the credibility of the system," the GAO investigators said. "It is imperative that DOD and VA take prompt steps to address fundamental system weaknesses."
- **National Guard (In Federal Status) and Reserve Mobilized as of Sept. 26, 2007** -- This week, the Army announced a decrease, while the Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard announced an increase. The net collective result is 1,718 fewer reservists mobilized than last week. The total number currently on active duty in support of the partial mobilization of the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 74,574; Navy Reserve, 5,758; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 7,954; Marine Corps Reserve, 6,807; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 312. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel who have been mobilized to 95,405, including both units and individual augmentees.