

THE AMERICAN LEGION

# Dispatch

January 2014

A National Headquarters Publication

## NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUND



National Commander Dan Dellinger visits the destruction caused from a tornado in Lebanon, Ind., in late November. *Photo by Henry Howard*

## NEF PROGRAM AIDS DISASTER VICTIMS

*Donations and awareness vital to the continued success of the Legion's National Emergency Fund, which provides immediate financial assistance to veterans.*

By The American Legion

Joe DeLaCruz was unfamiliar with The American Legion's National Emergency Fund (NEF) program last May when tornadoes ravaged Moore, Okla. He soon learned about the program while assisting the Department of Oklahoma with relief efforts, helping hundreds of veterans apply for and receive NEF grants.

Now, as chairman of the Department of Oklahoma's disaster relief program,

DeLaCruz is educating local Legionnaires on how to be prepared when an emergency strikes, how to fill out NEF and Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) applications, and how to help veterans if they are not eligible for either NEF or TFA grants.

"A disaster is going to happen," said DeLaCruz, a member of Post 111 in Edmund. "No matter what the disaster is, it is going to affect veterans."

NEF is National Commander Daniel

Dellinger's primary fundraiser, with a donation goal of \$1 million. Donations have surpassed \$100,000 but still have a long way to go to reach Dellinger's goal.

Dellinger witnessed the significant need for the NEF program this past November when he visited Lebanon, Ind., and saw firsthand the severe destruction caused from a series of

tornadoes that struck Indiana, Illinois and nine other states.

"This is why the National Emergency Fund is so essential for our organization," Dellinger said. "This is why I urge everyone to take the opportunity, when you have a fundraiser, to please help us. We have to be there for our veterans and their families."

In Illinois, Past National Commander Marty Conatser and other Legion members from the department's disaster relief committee visited Legion Family members affected by

DONATE TO NEF: [www.legion.org/nef](http://www.legion.org/nef)

## NEWS ALERT

### Register for 2014 Legion Baseball

Team registration for Legion Baseball is now underway online: [www.baseball.legion.org](http://www.baseball.legion.org)

Remember, background screening checks are conducted annually each season prior to any meetings, events, practices or games that involve youth participants. During the baseball registration process, an acknowledgement will be required that each coach, manager and volunteer staff of an American Legion Baseball team has been verified as having passed the mandated background check screening requirements for that upcoming season. This is required before managers and coaches can purchase insurance.

### Chaplain's Prayer Book updated

The Legion recently updated and expanded the Chaplain's Prayer Book, available to post, district and department chaplains. Included are suggested prayers for ceremonies, services and other occasions. To purchase a copy, contact Emblem Sales by phone or online:

[\(888\) 453-4466](tel:8884534466)

[emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org)

### Honor Four Chaplains Sunday on Feb. 2

Legion posts nationwide are encouraged to mark the 71st anniversary of the loss of USAT *Dorchester* with memorial services. Among the 672 men who died were four Army chaplains who removed their own lifejackets and gave them to others.

[www.fourchaplains.org](http://www.fourchaplains.org)

## COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

# A year of selfless giving



**Dan Dellinger**  
National Commander

The American Legion's support for U.S. servicemembers and their families goes beyond lobbying for VA benefits, jobs and education opportunities. The Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program is a perfect example of that support. In 2013, TFA disbursed more than \$1 million in grants, assisting 2,080 minor children throughout the United States.

The generosity of Legion Family members and the Legion's Endowment Fund made it possible to provide shelter, food and clothing to families in need. Thank you for your selfless donations.

The TFA program was established in 1925 to provide cash grants for the basic needs of minor children in homes where at least one parent is a veteran eligible for Legion membership. Membership in the organization, however, is not a requirement to receive a TFA grant. The program has awarded nearly \$7 million in grant money since 9/11, fulfilling immediate, urgent needs for families, such as shelter, utilities, food and clothing.

We hear heart-wrenching stories of those needing TFA assistance, such as the father who returned home from serving our country only to receive a job that paid considerably less than his previous position, resulting in the family losing their home. The Legion's TFA program immediately provided assistance to the family, paying the deposit and first month's rent on an apartment the family could afford.

We also hear how the Legion's financial support positively impacted the lives of those in need. One family wrote, "We want to give you all such a huge thank you for your help to our little family. Your help is a burden lifted and a smile on our faces. We feel very humbled that you helped us. We are forever grateful. Thank you, from the bottoms of our hearts."

Veterans and their families need our support. Let them know we are there for them by donating to the TFA program or by helping a family in need fill out a TFA application. Learn more online:

[www.legion.org/financialassistance](http://www.legion.org/financialassistance)

## MEMBERSHIP

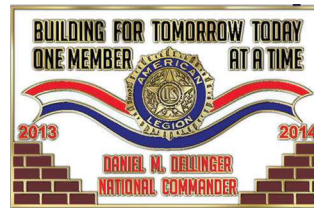
## Recruiters to be honored with 'Building for Tomorrow Today'

During the 2013-2014 membership year, American Legion National Commander Dan Dellinger will award his national commander pin to any Legion Family member who obtains five new members.

A new member is any eligible person joining for the 2014 membership year who was not a member of The American Legion during the 2013 membership year.

Each member listed must be eligible for membership in The American Legion. Forward names of Sons of the American Legion members or Auxiliary members to your detachment or unit for use in their respective incentive programs.

To maintain the integrity of the national commander's pin program, only one pin will be awarded per individual.



June 30, 2014, or when supplies are exhausted.

Also, National Commander Dellinger will award his "Building for Tomorrow Today" coin to any Legion Family member who recruits 15 new members.

[www.legion.org/commanderpin](http://www.legion.org/commanderpin)

## FUNDRAISING PROGRAM

## NEF goal: \$1 million



The American Legion's National Emergency Fund (NEF) program is National Commander Dan Dellinger's primary fundraiser this year.

A natural disaster can strike at any time, devastating the lives of men and women who honorably served their country. While we can't prevent a natural disaster, the Legion does provide relief to veterans and their families affected by devastation.

Since 1989, the NEF program has provided more than \$8 million in direct financial assistance to posts, Legionnaires and their families. The program helps with out-of-pocket expenses, including but not limited to, food, temporary housing and clothing. All donations made to NEF go directly toward the program.

To donate: [www.legion.org/nef](http://www.legion.org/nef)

## NEF Commander's Challenge

American Legion department commanders are challenged to assist in fundraising efforts for the Legion's National Emergency Fund. The departments currently in first place for their respective membership category include:

- Category 1 (100,000+): New York
- Category 2 (65,000+): Indiana
- Category 3 (40,000+): Georgia
- Category 4 (25,000+): Nebraska
- Category 5 (10,000+): Louisiana
- Category 6 (9,999-): Wyoming

[www.legion.org/emergency/challenge](http://www.legion.org/emergency/challenge)

Upon receipt of the certification form, national membership staff will confirm the names and mail the pin directly to the person who earned it. Commander Dellinger's "Building for Tomorrow Today" pin incentive program will end

## NATIONAL ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

# A wagon of honor

*Legionnaire refurbishes a luggage cart to carry fallen war heroes' remains when arriving home by plane.*

By Daniel S. Wheeler

Several months ago, Legion Rider John Wakeley and other Riders from American Legion Post 952 in Georgetown, Pa., were waiting at the Pittsburgh International Airport to escort the dignified remains of a fallen soldier back to his hometown of Erie. Wakeley, who works in airfield operations at the airport, watched as the casket was unloaded from the plane, placed on a "dirty" baggage cart "like a set of golf clubs," he said, and driven to the cargo area where it was then transferred to a hearse. The careless treatment of the fallen soldier's remains didn't sit well with Wakeley.

"We felt it was disrespectful that the remains weren't being honorably treated," he said. "The carts are dirty, the carts are rusty."

Wakeley spoke to co-worker Mark Chamoditz about what he witnessed and his desire to honor America's fallen war heroes with respect. Chamoditz helped Wakeley's desire become possible by asking the airport authority office to donate a baggage cart for Wakeley to refurbish. The airport donated an unused baggage cart, and Wakeley watched his vision of the honor wagon come to life.

Wakeley, first vice commander of Legion Post 952, is also a Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 862 member. He recruited Legion and VVA members alike to help him refurbish the luggage cart and many local businesses received word about the project and donated material and labor for free.

To refurbish the cart, the middle shelf was removed, it was repainted, a roller system was installed to accommodate a casket and a glass/plastic composite was installed on both sides of the cart. Each side of the wagon features the insignia of the five U.S.



The honor wagon is used to carry the dignified remains of fallen war heroes from the plane to the hearse.

Photo courtesy of John Wakeley

military branches of service, the Pennsylvania National Guard emblem and VVA's motto, "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."

Now, when a plane lands with the remains of a fallen war hero, the casket will be respectfully transferred to the honor wagon. The honor wagon was unveiled during a special ceremony at the Pittsburgh airport that involved the family of the fallen soldier, as he was the inspiration behind the wagon.

"I gave ideas on how it should look, but I was overwhelmed when I saw it complete," Wakeley said. "Now, men and women will be honored all the way home."

## Story ideas for Dispatch

What would you like to read about in 2014? Email: [dispatch@legion.org](mailto:dispatch@legion.org)

# Dispatch

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the tornadoes to help them apply for NEF assistance.

“We knocked on doors of (Legionnaires) whose homes weren’t even impacted, and they thanked us for checking in on them,” Conatser said. “It’s the Legion Family stepping up to make sure you’re all right. Just because your house is still there doesn’t mean you weren’t impacted by the disaster.”

The Department of Illinois’ disaster relief committee consists of 10 members who are the first Legion responders when a disaster strikes. Their first task is to visit the Legion post in the area that was devastated. Once there, they look at a map of the community and identify all post members whose homes were in the path of the destruction. They then personally visit each home to check on the Legionnaires and their families and assist with applying for NEF grants.

“The first 24 hours after any disaster, when things are in disarray, is really important,” Dellinger said. “Legionnaires need to help those affected get applications filled for aid.”

#### HOW TO BE PREPARED WHEN A DISASTER STRIKES

The American Legion created an NEF response kit to assist department and post leaders on best practices before, during and after emergencies. The kit contains brochures that explain how to set up an NEF response team, locate affected Legion Family members and assist victims in filling out NEF applications. All material featured in the NEF response kit can be found under Internal Affairs on the Legion’s publication’s web page and downloaded:

[www.legion.org/publications](http://www.legion.org/publications)

Along with the NEF brochures, below are helpful tips to follow when a disaster strikes:

- Publicize through flyers, media and Facebook where your staging area is located so veterans can find you.
- Visit disaster areas in an American Legion marked car and wear a Legion cap, shirt or jacket to let veterans know you are there to assist them.
- Communicate with disaster-relief nonprofit organizations, and police and fire departments to reach veterans.
- Let grant applicants know that the check will not be mailed directly to them. The check will first be mailed to the respective department headquarters.
- Identify how NEF recipients will receive their checks.

#### ASK A SERVICE OFFICER

## Affordable Care Act and VA health care



**Cajun Comeau**  
Department Service  
Officer, North Carolina

**Q.** As a veteran, do I need to sign up for the Affordable Care Act?

**A.** If you are enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health-care programs, including VA health care, Civilian Health and Medical and Spina Bifida Health Care, you have coverage under the standards of the health-care law and do not need to take further action. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) does not change your VA benefits or out-of-pocket costs.

Veterans enrolled in VA’s health-care system will receive this information through the mail. The letter from VA is another means to inform you that there is no need to take any additional steps to obtain health insurance to comply with the health-care law coverage standards going into effect in January 2014.

It is important to note that if you are in VA’s Priority Group 8E or 8G, you are not enrolled in VA’s health-care system and therefore you must take steps to gain health coverage that meet minimum requirements under the ACA. Sub-priority group 8E and 8G are veterans with gross household incomes above the VA national income threshold and the geographically adjusted income threshold for their resident location and are either zero percent, non-compensable service-connected or not service-connected at any rate.

Find a Legion service officer in your state: [www.legion.org/serviceofficers](http://www.legion.org/serviceofficers)

#### MEMBERSHIP

## Become a Paid Up For Life member

American Legion members interested in the discounted Paid Up For Life program can now easily join online: [www.legion.org/join/pufl](http://www.legion.org/join/pufl)

Legionnaires who become Paid Up For Life members will avoid any future increases to membership dues and will never have to pay annual dues or receive renewal notices. Other benefits include a lifetime subscription to *The American Legion Magazine*.

Once registered, members can either pay in full or pay in 12 monthly installments. A member may also print a personalized Paid Up For Life application from the web page and mail in their payment. Each Paid Up For Life member receives a permanent plastic card, as well as an annual paper card to verify membership in The American Legion. The annual card is mailed in July of each year.

After a member signs up, his or her respective department and post will be notified either electronically or by mail. The post has 30 days to notify the department in writing if the applicant is ineligible for a Paid Up For Life membership. The department will then notify National Headquarters about why the application was denied.

Posts may continue to process applications on the current paper forms until informed otherwise.

For more information about the Paid Up For Life program:

Call [\(800\) 433-3318](tel:8004333318)

Email [ia@legion.org](mailto:ia@legion.org)

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

# A real American Legion Family

He lives in a part of Germany where the U.S. military footprint is fading, but Josh Settle, who at age 15 was elected commander of the SAL Detachment of France last spring, is not the only top-level American Legion Family officer in his home. His father, James, is commander of the Legion's Department of France. Josh's Germany-born mother, Isolde, is the Department of France Auxiliary president.

National records can neither confirm nor deny that this is the first time in history an American Legion department commander, Auxiliary department president and SAL detachment commander all from the same family served in those capacities at the same time. It is, at the very least, a rarity.

James Settle joined The American Legion in 1999 after a 21-year career in the U.S. Army. A former MP, James served as an American Legion post adjutant, department adjutant and vice commander at-large before his election as

department commander last June.

As his dad was advancing in the Legion, young Josh was at his side, having joined the SAL in 2002. "He took me to the meetings since I was small," Josh said. "I didn't know anything different. I liked the patriotism. You don't find that in Germany."

By the time he was 11 years old, Josh was the SAL detachment chaplain, saying prayers at meetings and sending get-well and sympathy cards to Legion families. With dual citizenship, Josh said he was "taught to love my country — both of them. I was taught to be proud to be German *and* American."

The Settles work hard to keep American patriotism alive in western Europe. They participate in major U.S. holidays and ceremonies, and at least twice a year the family joins other Legion Family members in commemoration activities that honor nearly 11,000 Americans who are laid to rest, or remembered as missing, at the Lorraine Cemetery near St. Avold,



France, an American Battle Monuments Commission site that has more U.S. graves than any other World War II cemetery in Europe.

The Settles agree that membership growth in Europe is a big challenge when a considerable portion of department and detachment members live in the United States. Those members who live in Europe are often asked to represent both the Legion and the SAL at ceremonies.

"When we are at an event, we always say to bring both caps — your American Legion and SAL cap — to show that we support one another," James said.

"The key words are family and teamwork," Isolde said. "I believe here we are building a stronger American Legion Family. It's all of us working together."

MEETINGS

## Discount airfare available for 2014 Legion meetings

The American Legion has obtained discounts with American Airlines, Delta Airlines and United Airlines for its 2014 meetings. Legionnaires who want National Headquarters to obtain their airline tickets can contact Marti Wooden by phone at **(317) 630-1232** or by email at [mwooden@legion.org](mailto:mwooden@legion.org). Individuals can also contact the airlines directly to obtain the discounts. It is recommended that tickets be purchased at least 30 days prior to travel. Discounts vary, and the airlines will charge a service fee to make the reservation. No discounts apply with Amtrak or Greyhound, but reservations can be made online at [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com) and [www.greyhound.com](http://www.greyhound.com), or by phone at **(800) 231-2222** for Greyhound.

2014 AMERICAN LEGION CALENDAR			
EVENT DATE	EVENT	EVENT CITY	AVAILABLE AIRPORT(S)
March 19-26	Department Service Officer School/Washington Conference	Washington	DCA, BWI, IAD
April 4-6	Oratorical Scholarship Finals	Indianapolis	IND
May 2-8	NEC Spring Meetings	Indianapolis	IND
July 18-26	Boys Nation	Washington	DCA
July 31-Aug. 2	Department Service Officer School/Membership Workshop	Indianapolis	IND
July 29-Aug. 3	Junior Shooting Sports 3-Position Air Rifle National Championship	Colorado Springs, Colo.	COS
Aug. 7-11	American Legion Baseball Regionals	Various locations	BDL, LIT, IND, FAR, EUG, PHX, PHL, GSO, CLT
Aug. 13-19	Legion Baseball World Series	Shelby, N.C.	CLT, GSP
Aug. 22-28	96th National Convention	Charlotte, N.C.	CLT
Sept. 19-21	Children & Youth Conference	Indianapolis	IND
Sept. 26-28	Americanism Conference	Indianapolis	IND
Oct. 10-16	NEC Fall Meetings	Indianapolis	IND
Oct. 25-31	Legion College	Indianapolis	IND

AIRLINE CONTACTS	
American Airlines	1-800-433-1790 — Reference Index No. 22836.
Delta Airlines	1-800-328-1111 — Contract No. 419679. Refer to File No. NMH6B.
United Airlines	1-800-521-4041 — Agreement Code 907150, Z Code ZRES. Booking online at <a href="http://www.united.com">www.united.com</a> receives an additional 3-percent discount. No service fee applies.

## MEMBERSHIP

# Legion efforts influenced IRS DD-214 revision

The American Legion's efforts were successful in getting the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to revise section 501(c)19 of the Internal Revenue Code requiring Legion posts to keep records on file of its members' DD-214s – the separation document given by the military to prove honorable service.

The IRS had been fining Legion posts up to \$1,000 per day for not keeping records of veterans' DD-214s or other valid documentation. The Legion felt it was being wrongly targeted, resulting in the passing of three resolutions during its 2013 National Convention in Houston last summer that called upon Congress to look into the IRS' field investigations of Legion posts.

In early November, Legion staff and legal representation met with four IRS officials – the only veterans service organization (VSO) to do so – during which time the Legion asked that the IRS agree to change its internal regulations and guidance to comply with the three resolutions. The IRS complied.

Effective immediately, DD-214s are only required if an agent “possesses information that contradicts documentary information provided (by the VSO) or if the organization fails to satisfy a reasonable request ...” If an agent requires proof of membership eligibility, he or she will first request four sets of documents before requesting DD-214s or other discharge documents.

The American Legion also requested that the IRS create a new position within the agency – an ombudsman serving as a resource for VSOs – and agree to appoint a VSO liaison in each district that will attend Legion department conventions to provide training and personal assistance to any department that needs it. Types of assistance can include Form 990 completion, initial requests for nonprofit status and compliance measures.

Read the revised IRS guidelines online: [www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/dd214irs.pdf](http://www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/dd214irs.pdf)



## DATELINE: CAPITOL HILL

## President signs DoD budget bill



**Brett P. Reistad,**  
Chairman, National  
Legislative Commission

On Dec. 26, President Barack Obama signed into law **H.R. 3304**, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year (FY) 2014. The bill authorizes \$632.8 billion for the Department of Defense (DoD) and defense-related programs, including \$80.7 billion for the war in Afghanistan and other overseas contingency activities.

Defense spending rose in response to the 9/11 attacks when the United States went to war in Afghanistan and Iraq. Although those wars have ended or are winding down, DoD's base non-war budget is still double what it was in 2000. To date, Congress has failed to pass reductions in base defense spending even though cuts have been mandated by deficit reduction legislation.

Lower defense spending began in 2011 when Congress enacted the Budget Control Act (**P.L. 112-25**), imposing spending caps through FY 2021 that would reduce the growth of projected defense spending over 10 years by \$450 billion. Because the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction failed to find another \$1.2 trillion in savings, a lower set of “sequestration” caps went into effect that reduced defense spending by \$490 billion through FY 2021.

The first round of sequestration cuts occurred during FY 2013 of \$43 billion and in FY 2014, defense is to receive a \$21 billion cut. However, the House and Senate budget committee leaders agreed last month to roll back a portion of the sequester for two years, which would restore \$23 billion of defense spending for FY 2014 and \$9 billion for FY 2015. That measure, the Bipartisan Budget Act (**H.J. Res 59**), establishes a \$520.5 billion cap for defense for FY 2014 and \$521.3 billion for FY 2015.

The NDAA's \$552.1 billion authorization for non-war defense spending includes \$544.4 billion in discretionary spending and \$7.7 billion in mandatory funding. The total includes \$239 billion for operations and maintenance, \$146.2 billion for personnel costs, \$105.1 billion for procurement and \$67.9 billion for research and development.

Meanwhile, the recently passed budget bill, **H.J. Res. 59**, included a tax on some working-age military retirees by way of a 1-percent reduction in their annual cost-of-living-allowances (COLA) for retired pay every year until age 62. There are published estimates that the potential loss of income is about \$70,000 on the low end to \$120,000 on the high end, depending on retired rank and years of service. The COLA provision doesn't go into effect until 2016. According to Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., chairman of the House Budget Committee, that will give Congress and interest groups plenty of time to “evaluate” the proposal.

On Dec. 17, Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., introduced **S. 1844**, the Military Retirement Restoration Act, which would restore full military retirement benefits by closing corporate tax loopholes. The measure currently has 20 co-sponsors. A House companion bill, **H.R. 3793**, was introduced two days later by Rep. Dan Maffei, D-N.Y., and it has 44 co-sponsors. The American Legion has two resolutions that support these bills: Resolution 29, “Oppose lowering of cost-of-living adjustments,” and Resolution 25, “Support for military quality of life standards.”

# MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVES AND AWARDS

## EAGLE INCENTIVE

Six American Legion departments showing the highest percentage of membership gain in their respective size categories between Oct. 9 and May 8 of this year will receive eagle statues (pictured below).

The Commander Dellinger Eagle Award will be awarded to the top department in each Big Twelve category showing the largest percentage of membership growth between the 55- and 100-percent target dates. A seventh eagle will be presented to the national vice commander whose region displayed has the highest percentage of membership gain during the same period.

The Big Twelve categories are:

- Category I – departments of 100,000 or more members
- Category II – departments of 65,000 - 99,999 members
- Category III – departments of 40,000 - 64,999 members
- Category IV – departments of 25,000 - 39,999 members
- Category V – departments of 10,000 - 24,999 members
- Category VI – departments of 9,999 or less members



## BIG TWELVE COMPETITION

The Big Twelve Competition recognizes departments that meet or exceed their pledged membership goal percentage by the March target date. The percentage does not include members gained through DMS.

The competition is broken down into six categories. The winner in each category will be reimbursed for computer equipment purchases of up to \$2,000, while the runners-up in each category will be reimbursed for computer equipment purchases of up to \$1,000.

The six categories in the Big Twelve Competition are:

- Category I – departments of 100,000 or more members
- Category II – departments of 70,000-99,999 members
- Category III – departments of 40,000- 69,999 members
- Category IV – departments of 25,000-39,999 members
- Category V – departments of 10,000-24,999 members
- Category VI – departments of 9,999 or fewer members

Read more about the Big Twelve Competition by downloading the online National Membership Points Award Manual publication located under Internal Affairs.

 [www.legion.org/publications](http://www.legion.org/publications)

## DISTRICT COMMANDERS RACE-TO-THE-TOP

The District Commander Race-to-the-Top award is given to district commanders who attain at least 100 percent of the district's assigned membership objective by March 31, 2014. Competition is divided into five categories based on the membership of the district without regard to geographic locations.

Race-to-the-Top categories are:

- Category I – districts of 15-1,499 members
- Category II – districts of 1,500-2,999 members
- Category III – districts of 3,000-4,999 members
- Category IV – districts of 5,000-7,499 members
- Category V – districts of 7,500 or more members

**First Place Award** is a trip to the 2014 National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., The award will be presented to the top district commander and guest in each category whose district membership on March 31 represents the greatest percentage over the final previous year membership of that district. Cannot be less than 100 percent to qualify. This entitles each winner and guest to a trip to attend the National Convention as a distinguished

guest of the National Commander, including round-trip airfare, tickets to the National Commander's Banquet, and hotel accommodations for six days/five nights. These district commanders will also be awarded a Legion cap that signifies they are a Race-to-the-Top winner that will be awarded on stage at the National Convention. Plus Race-to-the-Top ribbons for each of the district's posts.

**Second Place Award** is presented to the district commander in each category whose district membership on March 31 represents the second highest percentage over the final previous year membership of that district. Cannot be less than 100 percent to qualify. Winners will receive a \$500 check.

**Third Place Award** is presented to the district commander in each category whose district membership on March 31 represents the third highest percentage over the final previous year membership of that district. Cannot be less than 100 percent to qualify. Winners will receive a \$375 check.

# Dispatch

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## MEMBERSHIP

# Legionnaire receives 70-year membership award

Cliff Reynolds, a member of Post 547 in Monroeville, Ohio, was recently honored for his commitment to The American Legion for 70 continuous years. Post 547 Commander Jim Bores presented Reynolds with a plaque commemorating his Legion membership.

"Commander Bores was proud of Cliff and felt privileged to be able to present Cliff with his 70-year award," said Bob Good, vice commander of Post 547.

Reynolds, a World War II Navy veteran, served aboard the USS *Milwaukee* as well as the USS *Alfred A. Cunningham*. He was discharged in 1945.

Reynolds has served as Post 547's vice commander, second vice commander and



Post 547 Commander Jim Bores (left) presents Cliff Reynolds with his 70-year American Legion membership award.

Photo courtesy of Bob Good

chaplain, and he currently serves on the post's color guard. He also opens the post in the morning, prepares food, puts away delivery supplies and helps maintain the post. Reynolds often attends monthly meetings and "his input is always highly considered," Good said.

## PLANNER

### FEBRUARY

- 1 Department submissions due for National Law Enforcement Officer, National Firefighter of the Year awards
- 2 Four Chaplains' Sunday
- 15 85 percent membership target date

### MARCH

- 1 Eagle Scout of the Year applications due to department headquarters

Do you have a story to share? Email your story to: ✉ [dispatch@legion.org](mailto:dispatch@legion.org)

[www.legion.org/dispatch/calendar](http://www.legion.org/dispatch/calendar)