

The American Legion



For God and country

OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

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To my fellow Legionnaires in New York,

This is an exciting time to be a Legionnaire. We just celebrated an historic centennial and we are entering the roaring twenties with new energy. The enactment of the LEGION Act in 2019 opens American Legion membership to 4.2 million veterans who were not eligible to join our organization just one year ago. Many of these potential Legionnaires would be glad to join if we simply ask.

Early indicators show that membership has been on the rise this year, but that could quickly change if we grow complacent. We must maintain this energy by emphasizing recruitment, renewal, retention and messaging through the entire year. Every Legionnaire matters. By inviting veterans to participate in all of our activities and programs, they will take pride in their involvement. If we continue to provide strong programming, community service, inclusiveness and advocacy, veterans will see The American Legion as an organization for them.

I am particularly proud of our Veterans & Children's Foundation. Formerly known as The American Legion Endowment Fund, the V&C Foundation has provided more than \$30 million in financial assistance for disabled veterans, military families and young people since 1925. This program provided needed relief to Coast Guard families that had their pay interrupted during last year's government shutdown. Additionally, the foundation supports training for our service officers -- the men and women who help veterans obtain the benefits that they earned.

Hostilities in Iraq and elsewhere seem to be rising and our military personnel and their families will be relying on our advocacy and programs. We must serve them as well as they are serving this country. It is important that we keep these heroes in our prayers and never forget the sacrifices that are being made on our behalf every day.

I thank you for your service as military veterans, as Legionnaires and as members of the Legion Family. Best wishes for a productive and enjoyable conference.

Building a Foundation for the Future,

James W. "Bill" Oxford
National Commander