

The devastating impact of Post-Traumatic Stress and Traumatic Brain Injury demand a dedicated and comprehensive study to delineate viable treatments such as animal therapy, hyperbaric oxygen treatment, and other courses of action, including medical marijuana, that have demonstrated beneficial results. The RTM protocol: the Reconsolidation of Traumatic Memories has a proven track record and The American Legion Department of New York strongly urges the State Legislature to approve and fund this work. In addition, we ask that state agencies be directed to undertake such studies as necessary and make public the results.

Resolution #10, 2014: Suicide is an epidemic among our Veterans, still averaging more than 20 per day nationwide. The American Legion encourages Congress and the President to sign into law acts similar to the Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act that will expand and improve care provided for Veterans and service members with mental health issues who are at risk for suicide. We also urge the New York State Legislature and state agencies to provide greater awareness and to keep funding programs and groups that reach out to men and women in uniform, Veterans and their families, through family care programs, suicide prevention programs, job fairs, and public service announcements, bringing about awareness of PTSD and suicide prevention.

Resolution #25, 2016: Requests the Governor and New York State Legislature to pursue, identify, and recommend viable alternative treatments to assist war-time Veterans in assuming their rightful role as leaders and contributing citizens of The Empire State. The American Legion encourages New York State to muster support for any and all viable treatments that offer help for our military service men and women dealing with the trauma of war. The American Legion Department of New York also calls upon our State Legislature to provide to Congress a Memorial Resolution urging establishment and implementation of alternative treatments for PTSD and TBI and to ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides such treatment to afflicted Veterans and military personnel. In doing so, New York State would demonstrate support of The American Legion's national effort to provide Veterans and service members in need of treatment for brain injuries and mental stress the best care and research in alternative treatment and other forms of therapy.

USS Turner Resolution: During the 2019 Mid-Winter Conference, the Department Executive Committee approved a resolution submitted by the Legislative Committee requesting action be taken to identify the remains of the crewmen killed aboard the USS Turner that exploded and sank on January 3, 1944 outside New York Harbor, killing 136 crewmen.

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) states that without an X-file; a file that documents the circumstances of the recovery of the remains and other pertinent information, building a case for disinterment is difficult.

A Letter dated Aug 6, 2019 from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency states "Therefore, DPAA scientific staff have no means of comparing biological profile information to determine which of the 136 missing Sailors from USS Turner are associated with the Unknowns. While DPAA lacks the required evidence at this time to request disinterment of the four graves, we continue to look for innovative means with which to pursue disinterment and fulfill current DoD policies."

Resolution # 18, 2018: The American Legion urges the New York State Legislature to formally recognize the date June 8 as U.S.S. Liberty Day now and forever and dedicate a Memorial in Albany, NY befitting the courage and dedication of the U.S.S. Liberty's Crew, and the 5 New York sailors who lost their lives.

Resolution# 19, 2018: Calls for a change to New York State Executive Law Section 357 to "with the approval of the Board of Supervisors of a County, The Chairman of the Board of Supervisors shall appoint a Director of the County Veterans Service Agency for such County, for a term of 5 (Five) years". This change will enhance the ability of the County Veterans Service Agency by improving continuity, knowledge of Veterans' benefits law, training, and accreditation by the Department of Veterans Affairs when filing claims.

Resolution #20, 2018: Calls for amending New York State Executive Law, Section 365 paragraph 2 (b) to remove the words "prior to the Commencement" and to read as follows "At the Commencement...that the Veteran's remembrance and cemetery maintenance and operation fund created pursuant to section ninety – seven – mmmm of the state finance law, contain monies sufficient... for a period of fifteen years". Thus, eliminating the funding bottleneck caused by requiring funding prior to the commencement of the study to establish and construct the cemetery.

Resolution #22, 2018: Due to the increasing overall claims activity experienced by the County Veterans Service Agencies, Resolution 22 "Urges and requests that the New York State Legislature amend New York Executive Law Section 359 (1) increasing the share of the County (City) Veterans Services Agencies operation and maintenance to \$20,000". This will increase the funding from \$10,000.

Resolution #30, 2016: Calls for coordination of an open flow of information across state agencies, regulatory authorities and education institutions that would remove

barriers and accelerate pathways to civilian occupations for former military personnel, ensuring recognition and acceptance of military licenses and credentials achieved in service.

Many Veterans looking to establish careers and families in New York State after leaving the military, find they must go through a lengthy and often costly formal state administrative process to secure licenses and certificates for professions and skills they performed admirably while on active duty.

One of The American Legion Department of New York's priorities is to enhance public awareness of this program, and how to take advantage of it.

Boys' State: American Legion Boys' State is a unique program that teaches high school juniors leadership, citizenship training, and individual responsibility, while offering a perspective of the practical operation of government. In the past several years, New York State has authorized a \$150,000 grant to a college; presently SUNY Morrisville, to offset overall costs of the program in which 1,000 boys participate annually. Continuation of the grant is urged to ensure the financial wellbeing of the program, while maintaining an important educational opportunity for our state's young men.

Resolution #9, 2019: A resolution to petition the New York State Legislature and the Governor to recognize the recipients of the Medal of Honor by commissioning "Medal of Honor Highway." The Medal of Honor is our nation's highest award for valor presented to Veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States for acting with conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty at the risk of one's life during combat with an enemy of the United States.

The American Legion Department of New York respectfully requests the entire portion of U.S. Highway 20 in New York State beginning at the New York/Massachusetts border and ending at the New York/Pennsylvania state line, shall also be known as the New York Medal of Honor Highway.

Sampson Cemetery designated as State Veterans Cemetery. Since it opened in 2011, the grounds have housed the final resting place for roughly 700 Veterans and their families, with room for many more. The cemetery was designed according to specifications for a VA National Cemetery, with the long-term goal to be designated as a State Veterans Cemetery.





Over a 100 years ago, Veterans of the “war to end all wars” recognized that soldiers and sailors returning home from the battlefields would need help to successfully transition from warrior to civilian life. Thus, The American Legion was born as an organization of war-time Veterans committed to identifying, supporting, and implementing programs aiding former members of the Armed Forces and their families, as well perpetuating Americanism and the ideas of freedom and democracy.

The American Legion Department of New York reaffirms the organization’s principles and a commitment to all Veterans in providing advocacy, diligence, and talent in developing meaningful and timely proposals to present to elected state representatives for consideration as potential legislation, as well the National Organization for Congressional consideration.

During the coming year The Department of New York will champion these resolutions and proposals respectfully and affirmatively, seeking support from our state legislators, reminding them of why and for whom we want specific legislation enacted.

Many of our returning Veterans come home physically and emotionally scarred by the horrors of war. Issues confronting these Veterans often are immediate and literally a matter of life or death. Too many of today’s returning warriors are battling homelessness, suicide, and the need for employment. As the number of woman Veterans continues to grow, additional focus and emphasis must be placed on the care and treatment of our woman Veterans. In looking toward the future, we can’t forget the children of our returning Veterans and the impact multiple deployments of one or more parents has on them, as well as the needs of Veteran caregivers.

The American Legion Department of New York recognizes these concerns and calls upon our New York State Legislature and Governor to join us in reaching out and helping our Veterans by enacting legislation or policies designed to meet those needs.

The American Legion acknowledges that health and mental health care are primarily the responsibility of the Department of Veterans Affairs, but encourages New York State to muster support for any-and-all viable treatments that offer help for our military service men and women dealing with the trauma of war.

The American Legion Department of New York family is the voice of over 200,000 Veterans, service members, and their families. As a resolutions-based organization, The American Legion’s positions represent the views of its members and are based on our four pillars: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth.

This report highlights the top issues The American Legion will fight for in 2020.

Michael McDermott

Department Commander

James Casey

Department Adjutant

Dorothy Button

Department Legislative Chairman

C. Lee Hinkleman

Department Legislative Vice Chairman



**The American Legion
Department of New York**

1304 Park Blvd

Troy, NY 12180

(518) 463-2215

www.nylegion.net



**THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK**

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



**Serving America and its Veterans
for over 100 years**

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