

National Security

2010-2011 National President's Theme: The Power of One
2010-2011 Department President's Theme: It is Great to be an American!

Plan of Action: National Security Committee

Purpose: To maintain and promote a strong national defense by strengthening and supporting military service members and their families.

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Department Objectives

1. **Objective:** Develop, implement and monitor programs and activities that contribute to the practical and emotional well-being of military service members and their families.

Action Steps

- A. Participate in Department of Defense and other outside programs that support our military and their families throughout the entire deployment cycle.
 - a. Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program – a national combat veteran reintegration program organized by the Department of Defense to provide National Guard and Reserve members and their families with information, services, referral and proactive outreach opportunities throughout the entire deployment cycle. Potential activities that Units may undertake with a Yellow Ribbon program office of a local military Unit (Reserve or National Guard) or a state Joint Force Headquarters include demonstrating patriotic and morale support at Welcome Home events; offering hospitality, refreshment, or child and youth activities at Yellow Ribbon events; or making presentations on Auxiliary resources and services to family members of returning service members at Yellow Ribbon events.

Log on to www.yellowribbon.mil to learn more about this program. On the website's homepage, you should click on the "for Providers" link on the left-hand side to learn how Units can become involved. Each area of the state has unique resources and each population of service members and their families will have unique needs based on their deployment experience. Doing an Internet search by typing in "Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program" will yield numerous websites for state programs, as well as sites for various military branches and Units.
 - b. Operation Homefront – Operation Homefront, a nonprofit organization, provides emergency and morale assistance for our troops, the families they leave behind, and for wounded warriors when they return home. Operation Homefront provides aid to families struggling not only with emergencies, but also with the problems of everyday life. Potential activities that Units may undertake with an Operation Homefront chapter include assembly of service member care packages and family member support packages; provision of hospitality, refreshment, or children and youth activities at Operation Homefront spouse support events; or volunteering at an Operation Homefront activity.
 - c. Family Readiness Groups – Their mission is to help military families manage the challenges that are often faced following a deployment. Auxiliary Units can contact Family Readiness Groups on military installations and in Reserve or National Guard facilities to see how they can help. Since these families do not always know about the Auxiliary, it is imperative that we reach out to them. We need to let them know that we are willing and able to help. Some ways Units can help include distributing the Sesame Street Video *Talk, Listen, Connect: Helping*

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Families During Deployment, at sendoff ceremonies; holding social events for the families; and mowing lawns or fixing a leaky faucet. Units can compile a list of members and services that each can supply. The Family Readiness Group could then distribute the list so that families could initiate contact with The American Legion and Auxiliary members.

- d. Family to Family Support – Auxiliary Departments and Units may offer practical and morale support to military families on a group level, such as matching an ALA Unit to a Family Readiness Group, or on an individual family-to-family basis. Units can contact nearby military installations or Reserve or National Guard facilities to offer assistance.
- e. USO – provides morale, welfare and recreation-type services to military members and their families. Units can contact local USO centers to learn how to get involved.

THE DEPT. OF MISSISSIPPI HAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED A WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USO IN MISSISSIPPI. NEW PROJECTS INFORMATION WILL BE SENT TO THE UNITS AS THEY ARISE.

B. Participate in the Military and Family Support programs of The American Legion

- a. Family Support Network - Provides a broad range of services to help families cope with the unique challenges of deployments. Since September 11, 2001, the nation's active-duty military has been on high alert, and National Guard and Reserve Units are being mobilized in record numbers. As a result, the families of these men and women often find themselves unable to meet normal monthly expenses, and assistance is needed for a variety of everyday chores. These tasks include grocery shopping, child care, mowing the grass, fixing the family car and other routine household jobs. To address these issues, The American Legion has a nationwide toll-free telephone number, (800) 504-4098, for servicemembers and their family members to call for assistance. They also can e-mail requests to familysupport@legion.org. Auxiliary Departments and Units can work with their Legion Departments and posts to provide volunteers and other Auxiliary resources as part of the Legion Family response to requests that come through the Legion's Family Support Network.
- b. Operation Comfort Warriors – a program dedicated to meeting the needs of wounded and ill warriors, either hospitalized or in warrior transition Units, with comfort items not usually supplied by the government. Auxiliary Departments and Units can support their Legion Departments and Posts to raise funds for Operation Comfort Warriors.
- c. Heroes to Hometown – The American Legion continues to assist returning heroes through its Heroes to Hometown program which focuses on addressing issues for

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newly returning heroes, ranging from employment to emergency monetary assistance, to renovating homes for handicap access, to family counseling. Service members and their families seeking assistance can call (202) 621-9924 or e-mail heroestohometowns@legion.org. This program provides numerous opportunities for Auxiliary Units and Legion posts to work together.

- d. Gold Star Banner and Blue Star Banner Programs - The Blue Star Service Banner was designed and patented in 1917. It quickly became the unofficial symbol of a child in the service. Today, Blue Star Service Banners are displayed by families who have a loved one serving in the Armed Forces including, the National Guard and Reserves. If the individual symbolized is killed or dies while serving, the star representing that individual will have superimposed on it a gold star of smaller size so that the blue forms a border. The American Legion Family is rekindling the spirit of pride in our military men and women following the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, by providing banners to families in communities across the nation. In March 2010, the Legion announced a new Blue Star Coin to honor spouses and family members of service members who currently or formally served this country. The American Legion also has a special Blue Star Banner Corporate Flag for government and corporate America to show their support for employees called to active duty. Auxiliary Units can work with The American Legion to present Gold Star/Blue Star Banners to individuals and the corporate flag to businesses. Units also can hold receptions or events for Gold Star/Blue Star family members.
- e. POW/MIA Initiatives - The American Legion and Auxiliary are committed to achieving a full accounting of all POW/MIAs from the Gulf War, Vietnam War, Cold War, Korean War and World War II. This means returning living POWs, the repatriation of their remains, or finding convincing evidence why neither of these is possible. Units can join with the Legion to host a ceremony on National POW/MIA Recognition Day on September 17, 2010. This commemoration is set aside to honor the commitment and sacrifices made by this nation's prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action, as well as their families. National POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremonies can be held on military installations, ships, schools, churches and post homes. The focus is to ensure that America remembers its responsibility to stand behind those who serve and to make sure we do all that is possible to account for those who have not returned. The POW/MIA Empty Chair Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th American Legion National Convention, calls for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of The American Legion as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States. Units should follow this resolution at all official meeting and events.
- f. **The Department of Mississippi has established its own troop support project—the Camp Shelby Chaplains Project.** We will continue to support this program for 2010-2011. Monetary contributions from Units are highly

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encouraged and should be sent to the Department Headquarters, annotating that the contributions is for Camp Shelby. Contributions will be used to purchase popcorn supplies and hard candy to support the Camp Shelby Chaplains' project they have set up for troops who are processing in and out at the Base Headquarters. These comfort items hopefully will ease the "wait" while processing.

- C. Support implementation of homeland security programs of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.
 - a. Citizen Corps – This is the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) grassroots strategy to bring together government and community leaders to involve citizens in all-hazards emergency preparedness and resilience. Citizen Corps asks every citizen to embrace the personal responsibility to be prepared, to get training in first aid and emergency skills, and to volunteer to support local emergency responders, disaster relief and community safety. Units should reach out particularly to military families transferring into their communities and include them in the Citizen Corps initiatives.
- D. Provide recognition and support for ROTC and JROTC groups.
 - a. ROTC and JROTC provide leadership opportunities for future military personnel. Students learn firsthand what it takes to lead others, motivate groups and conduct missions. Units can support these future leaders by presenting recognition awards and by inviting them to participate in Post and Unit events.

Additional Activities

American Legion Auxiliary Gateway to Services – Accessed through the Auxiliary's website at www.legion-aux.org, this portal contains valuable information on how to connect veterans, military service members and military families to resources and support that enhance their lives. It is also a useful resource for Units and members to use to find more information about all of the programs identified in the National Security Plan of Action. Information is available in the following areas: family, community and social support; health and wellness; career, training and education; and financial and legal support.

National Military Appreciation Month (May) – Units can partner with The American Legion and other community organizations during May to increase awareness of and show appreciation for military families. To maintain a strong, all-volunteer fighting force, it is imperative for our National Security that we help to sustain our military families.

"We, as a nation, have a solemn obligation to care for those who fight and defend our way of life. When a soldier takes the oath of office, his or her family takes that oath, too. Behind every soldier in uniform today is a family struggling with the stresses of war." –Kristina Kaufmann, an Army wife

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National Security Awards

1. Military Support Unit Award
A citation presented to a Unit in each Division that reports the Most Outstanding Overall Program serving and supporting military families with special emphasis on helping them through times of family member deployment and/or injury (severely wounded). Entry must be typewritten in narrative form, not to exceed 1,000 words. Please include pictures and news articles. All entries must be postmarked by May 1, 2011, and sent to the Department Committee Member Janice Crosby. A Department award will be presented to the winning Unit at State Convention 2011. The Department Best Program will be forwarded to the Divisional Chairman for consideration. Use Award Form Cover #2.
2. ALA ROTC/JROTC Unit Program Certificate
A National Certificate presented to the Unit Chairman reporting the Most Outstanding Promotion of the ROTC/JROTC Program in her Department. Department Chairman will establish the report form and relay deadline date for entries to be submitted by the Unit to the Department. Completed forms must be postmarked by May 1, 2011, and sent to Department Committee Member Anita Means. A Department award will also be presented to the winning Unit at State Convention 2011.
3. Dorothy Pearl Civil Preparedness (CERT) Plaque
A citation plaque will be presented to the Department having the greatest percentage of Units participating in civil preparedness. Entry must be a typewritten summary (narrative or spreadsheet) of participating Units, CERT training dates and number of participants registering for the program and number of participants completing the program. All entries must be postmarked by May 1, 2011, and sent to the Department Committee Member Glenda Wheelis. A Department award will be presented to each participating Unit at State Convention 2011.
4. Best Unit Program Supporting the USO in Mississippi
An award will be presented to the Unit having the best overall program to support the efforts of the USO in Mississippi, including contributions to the various programs (phone cards, backpacks, etc.), number of unit members who become certified USO volunteers, etc. Entry must be a typewritten summary (narrative) of activities and contributions, including number of members who participated and number of hours contributed. Pictures and newspaper articles may be included. All entries must be postmarked by May 1, 2011, and sent to the Department Chairman. Use Award Form Cover #3.
5. Best Unit Program Supporting the Camp Shelby Chaplains' Project
An award will be presented to the Unit having the best overall program, to include highest total monetary donation, to support our efforts to provide popcorn supplies and hard candy for our troops at Camp Shelby. Entry must be a typewritten summary (narrative) of activities and contributions, including number of members who participated and contributed. All entries must be postmarked by May 1, 2011, and sent to the Department Chairman. All Units who contribute will receive a Certificate of Appreciation/Participation. Use Award Form Cover #4.

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6. Best Unit Overall Program

An award will be presented at State Convention 2011 to the Unit having the best overall National Security program, addressing all or most of the stated objectives. Entry must be a typewritten summary (narrative) of activities and contributions, including number of members who participated and number of hours contributed. Pictures and newspaper articles may be included. All entries must be postmarked by May 1, 2011, and sent to the Department Chairman. Use Award Form Cover #1.

Resources

1. American Legion Auxiliary Gateway to Services
 - www.legion-aux.org
2. Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program
 - <http://www.yellowribbon.mil/>
 - www.jointservicessupport.org/YRRP
3. Operation Homefront
 - <http://www.operationhomefront.net/>
4. Family Readiness Groups (FRGs)
 - www.armyfrg.org/skins/frg/home.aspx - United States Army FRG homepage
 - <http://www.hooah4health.com/4life/hooah4family/frg.htm> - includes FRG Handbook
 - <http://familyreadinessgroup.org>
 - www.navyfrg.com – Navy Family Readiness Groups
 - Many States have National Guard Family Readiness Groups which can be found by doing an Internet search using “National Guard Family Readiness Groups.”
5. USO
 - www.uso.org
6. ROTC/JROTC
 - www.goarmy.com/rotc
 - www.afrotc.com
 - www.nrotc.navy.mil
 - www.mcjrotc.org
7. American Legion Programs – www.legion.org
 - Family Support Network - www.legion.org/familysupport
 - Operation Comfort Warriors - www.legion.org/troops/operationcomfort
 - Gold Star and Blue Star Banner Program - www.legion.org/troops/bluestar
 - POW/MIA Initiatives - www.legion.org/powmia
 - The American Legion Publications for National Security – www.legion.org/publications
8. POW/MIA
 - www.dtic.mil/dpmo/
9. National Military Appreciation Month
 - www.nmam.org/
10. Citizen Corps/CERT Training
 - www.citizencorps.gov/cert/training_mat.shtm
 - www.citizencorps.gov