

The American Legion Preamble

“For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;

To maintain law and order;

To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;

To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars;

To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;

To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;

To make right the master of might;

To promote peace and goodwill on earth;

To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;

To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.”



For more information, refer to the following resolutions approved by the National Executive Committee, May 6-7, 1998, Spring Meeting, Indianapolis, Indiana:

Resolution #27, Diversity and Veteran Is a Veteran

Resolution #28, Disenfranchising

Resolution #29, Veteran Outreach Program

Resolution #30, Training and Education

Resolution #31, The American Legion Post Operations

Resolution #32, Cooperation with the American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion

SPECIAL RESOLUTION 419

1919

THE MINNEAPOLIS AFFIRMATION

1994

WHEREAS, To us, the heirs of a proud tradition, the Founders of The American Legion in the City of Minneapolis in November 1919 bequeathed the four pillars upon which our great brotherhood yet stands, as proclaimed in the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, It is upon these pillars that we have built the programs by which we serve our comrades, our youth, and our nation; and

WHEREAS, By the Throne of Almighty God the Founders surely stand and say of us "Well done, beloved heirs and comrades"; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, September 6-8, 1994, that we express our eternal gratitude for the wisdom and foresight of our Founders in this, our 75th Anniversary Year, by affirming anew our commitment to the perpetuation of our principles; and be it further

RESOLVED, That in affirmation of our troth, we pledge our unrelenting vigilance on behalf of our comrades-in-arms, their children, and their widows and orphans; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we affirm the American Flag to be the sole unifying symbol of these United States, a nation born of diversity and nurtured in the shadow of that banner, beneath which the honored remains of countless heroes have been laid to rest, deserving if need be of our protection unto death; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we affirm to the generations as yet unborn their due inheritance, a legacy no less grand than that to which we today are heirs: a nation strong, united and flourishing in peace and prosperity; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we affirm to our nation's defenders, and the citizens they serve, our dedication to national sovereignty and security so inviolable as to render America forever free from aggression and domination by those who would do us harm; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we affirm the principle of citizen soldiery by our support and dedication to those who stand in ready preparedness to answer the call to arms, the Reserve and National Guard forces, and be it further

RESOLVED, That we affirm to all Americans our commitment to the principle of government of the People, by the People, and for the People, a principle best embodied by a Congress unfettered and free from foreign influence and ever alert to the failures of foreign policy by which the constraints on war are loosed; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That by the witness of Man and in the Presence of Almighty God, we do hereby commend this affirmation to all in whom these sentiments ring true.

The American Legion



Into the 21st Century



Prepared by:
The American Legion National Headquarters
Internal Affairs Division

Blueprint to the 21st Century

Purpose: Service to our veterans, their families and their communities is as solid a plan today, in a period of epoch-making change, as it was in 1919 when the founding fathers of The American Legion met in Paris.

They were true visionaries. Much of The American Legion's success rests on its understanding that the fight for veterans rights - past, present or future - is never-ending. While our purposes may remain unchanged, our capabilities must not. The environment is changing; we must stay in front of that change to be the nation's advocate for veterans.

For success we must continue to provide first rate service to our veterans in the next century, The basis for this blueprint is the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion which was finalized at the St. Louis caucus in 1919 and reaffirmed at Minneapolis in 1994. This declaration reaffirmed the principles on which our great organization was developed (both the Preamble and Minneapolis Affirmation are included on this brochure).

And the method for applying this blueprint for success to American Legion activities has not changed either. Personal contact at every level of leadership within The American Legion is the catalyst that has made us successful in the past and will make us successful in the future.

Since our founding fathers gave us a sound, clear focus, we need to build on this direction as we seek every opportunity to excel in growth and membership in the next century.

21st Century Key Challenges: The key challenges facing The American Legion in the 21st Century, as outlined by the National Executive Committee in October, 1997, have a common denominator to success -- personal involvement of Legion Officers.

Vision: Every American Legion member must focus on service to the veteran, to their families and to the communities as their number one priority. Legion officers at every level should lead the way in reinforcing this vision.

Goals: We must have goals to fulfill our vision of service. A mission statement should be in place that includes these goals and spells out a direction of where you The American Legion at every level should be in one, three, five and seven years.

Image: We must be aware at all times of our image and how others perceive us and our work in our community. We must remain the champions of service to our veterans and their communities. Everyone in Legion leadership positions must set the example for all members to follow.

Partnership: The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and the Sons of The American Legion need to be partners in providing service to our veterans, their families and their communities. Legion officers again must set

the example for inner-organization dialogue and cooperation. Our work of service to our veterans is a family affair.

Public Relations: We can amplify our commitment of service to the veteran through an aggressive and consistent public relations program. It allows us to maintain visibility in the community. Technology in the media has made it possible for every one to become accessible to print and broadcast media. Likewise, Community Service Committees, Chamber of Commerces, and Business Associations have doubled in number over the past 10 years. These are excellent opportunities to network. Become involved in the community as a good neighbor. Public relations opportunities to tell the Legion story should be pursued.

Programs: Our service to veterans and their communities are manifested in our programs. There are many to choose from our veterans, Children and Youth and Americanism programs. Single theme or service posts can be drawing cards for starting new posts. Legion officers at every level should be coaches, motivators and consultants in helping posts develop and maintain programs.

Training: Every officer and staff member needs training. Through training we gain knowledge to help us better serve our veterans. Whether it is Legion College, the Extension Institute or National Information Conferences, education of our officers and staffs at every level should be an on-going process. The most ideal and effective training programs lies in **mentoring**.

Mentoring: Is the a "hands-on" approach to training that has proven to be the best investment in nurturing future Legion leaders. Mentoring can be tailored to accommodate any learning needs of your members. It can be in small group or done one-on-one. Through the individualized coaching by a seasoned Legion officer, new officers and members can receive the training and reap the benefits of experience which may be lost in a classroom setting. Mentoring allows one to learn at their own pace and in their own locality. It allows ample room for positive motivation and stimulates new ideas for improving Legion business.

Membership: Service to our veterans begins with our membership base. Without members we would have no voice on Capitol Hill nor could we achieve the entitlements and support to our veterans, their families, their communities, our state and nation. **Membership is everyone's responsibility -- especially Legion officers.** Post revitalization and new post development should be on every Legion Officer's mind. Resolution 28, Disenfranchising, reaffirmed that the Department Commander or Department Executive Committee is the final decision maker on establishing posts within the department, not another post or district. The National Executive Committee established, by the same resolution, an objective of one post for each high school in the community. The focus is presence in the community and the objective of growth. Over the next five years we intend to increase our posts to over 16,000. Therefore, every department must focus on post development/ revitalization

21st Century Outreach Program - This program encourages Legion officers to aggressively seek support from the Active Duty, Guard and Reserve organizations in your Department to identify eligible veterans. Since January, 1998, four active duty bases and 11 guard units have agreed to allow The American Legion to address veterans separating from the service. The potential for membership is unlimited. Two initiatives to identify veterans in the community are listed below:

Jobs: Hire Quality , a pilot program partner which is a professional job search agency, specializes in helping younger veterans (especially those about to separate from active duty) find jobs. Each month, lists of veterans who have contacted Hire Quality are made available to the Departments for dissemination to the field. This test pilot program is starting to yield invaluable leads of eligible veterans that would otherwise be missed.

Internet - Several of our members have shown leadership initiative by thinking outside the box when it comes to finding new sources of eligible veterans. Tapping into webrings and getting on veteran service organization chat lines has proven to be highly successful in initiating interest in The American Legion. It is also a new frontier to promote the Legion through new public relation opportunities.

Communication: This is a must! Legion officers must set the example in establishing clear and concise lines of communication with members and nonmember alike. Through communication and personal contact, The American Legion can cross all race, gender and age barriers on its way to providing quality service to our veterans and their communities. District and county commanders should visit every post within their jurisdiction . This provides you with an awareness of their needs and growth potential. Communicate, educate and support one another through all mediums available to you whether its newsletters, bulletins, newspapers, E-Mail and/or direct contact.

Conclusion: As you can see, the essence of the 21st Century Plan is personal involvement through demonstrated leadership. Our blueprint for success was laid out for us by our founding fathers----

<p style="text-align: center;">SERVICE TO OUR VETERANS, THEIR FAMILIES and COMMUNITIES, STATE AND NATION</p>

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