



The American Legion's Support for the  
**Global War on Terrorism**

American Legion National Security Symposium  
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NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF  
THE AMERICAN LEGION  
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA  
MAY 9 – 10, 2012

**Resolution No. 15: Support for the Global War on Terrorism**

**Origin: National Security Commission**

**Submitted by: National Security Commission**

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of wartime veterans created by an act of the United States Congress in 1919; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is committed to the security and defense of the United States and its allies; and

WHEREAS, In any war, continued public support not only for the troops, but also for their mission, is essential for victory; and

WHEREAS, The United States of America was suddenly, and without provocation, attacked by terrorists on September 11, 2001, resulting in the death of nearly 3,000 innocent people, injuring over 6,000 victims and causing untold economic damage to the Nation; and

WHEREAS, This attack was not an isolated event, but one in a long series of terrorist attacks aimed at destroying such core American values as liberty, democracy and respect for human rights; and

WHEREAS, In response to this clear act of war against the United States, Congress authorized the use of military force against those persons and organizations who planned and helped carry out the attack, their affiliates and those that harbored them, and to deter and pre-empt future acts of terrorism; and

WHEREAS, Our service members have made tremendous sacrifices over the past decade in fighting the forces of tyranny and terror including over 6400 the number of U.S. casualties from Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn as confirmed by U.S. Central Command; and

WHEREAS, Members of the United States military and intelligence agencies, displaying great courage and commitment to the mission, are still deployed around the world in support of the Global War on Terrorism, including Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, the Philippines, and elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, While the U.S. and our allies have had great successes in the war on terrorism – most notably the killing of Osama bin Laden – al-Qaeda, associated global terrorist groups, and their sponsors continue to pose a grave threat to the national security of the United States; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, By The National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 9-10, 2012, That The American Legion fully supports the men, women, and leadership of our armed forces as they are engaged in the Global War on Terrorism; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges all Americans and freedom-loving peoples everywhere to stand united in their support of the Global War on Terrorism, and united in their support of the troops who are engaged in protecting our values and way of life; and, be it finally**

**RESOLVED, That the National Commander be, and is hereby authorized, to use whatever means at his disposal to disseminate accurate information about the Global War on Terrorism, and to engage whatever means necessary to ensure the united support of the American people.**

# MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL COMMANDER

The events of Sept. 11, 2001, drew a line through human history. Time is now defined as either pre-9/11 or post-9/11. I will leave it to social scientists to study and interpret the differences between the two eras. I can only say what 9/11 meant to me, as a member of The American Legion, and how the attacks stand to influence the work of our organization going forward.

First of all, Kimlau Post 1291 in Chinatown was The American Legion's closest presence to Ground Zero after the terrorist attacks. I was adjutant of that post on 9/11. Another post, housed in the Downtown Athletic Club in lower Manhattan, was destroyed in the attacks; it has since reconstituted itself onboard the USS *Intrepid*, as 9/11 Memorial Post 2001.

Like much of the city, Chinatown was caked in ash and dust for weeks after the Twin Towers fell. Many days after the attacks, you could look into the sky and occasionally see burning paper floating on the wind overhead. The air was smoky and harsh as the fires at Ground Zero burned deep into the fall and bodies were recovered one by one.

The economy of Chinatown was basically shut down in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. The Kimlau Post and the entire Chinatown business district urgently switched gears and transformed into a clearing house of relief and support for first responders, recovery workers and families of those who lost loved ones in the attacks. Legionnaires from across the United States responded quickly with shipments of food, water, supplies, money, and prayers.

The outpourings of support occasionally took unusual turns. When a little girl in Canada heard about all the children who lost parents in the attacks, she launched a campaign to buy teddy bears and other stuffed animals to comfort them in their grief. A radio station reported on her effort, and, a few weeks later, a big truck full of stuffed animals arrived in Manhattan. Until we could distribute them to the children, these animals lived in the basement of my post.

Throughout New York, and across America, we saw U.S. flags like never before. If ever a case were made for the power of that symbol, it was following the 9/11 attacks. American flags appeared above overpasses and were suspended from bridges. They were displayed in windows and mounted on the backs of motorcycles. They were raised up from the ruins of the fallen towers. Our nation drew comfort, confidence, and fortitude from our banner while our enemies on the other side of the world were burning it and dancing in the streets of their cities. Anyone who thinks the U.S. flag is merely a piece of cloth or patriotic decoration need only reflect on its meaning after 9/11.

When our nation went to war, Legionnaires across the land urgently mobilized in support of our military leaders, the troops, and their families. The Legion revived the tradition of hanging Blue Star Banners in the windows of homes with deployed loved ones. The Legion's Family Support Network and Temporary Financial Assistance programs went into overdrive, providing money and volunteer hours on behalf of military families in local communities. The TFA pro-

gram distributed \$4.9 million in grants to military and veteran families between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 11, 2011. The American Legion's Legacy Scholarship Fund was established within weeks of the attacks to provide college funds for the children of military personnel killed on duty on or after 9/11. The fund has grown by hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, bolstered greatly by the annual Legacy Run to national convention, and dozens of young people are now going to college with help from the Legion.

The American Legion distinguished itself early in the war by pronouncing its support of the troops and their mission. Resolution 15 was crafted around the understanding many of us who served in Vietnam have about home-front support; it is disingenuous - if not impossible - to support the troops without supporting what they are fighting for. A decade since the beginning of this "new and different war," our troops have proven themselves from the caves of Tora Bora to the battered streets of Fallujah. Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, and thousands of other terrorist henchmen are dead. Moreover, hope for a future of freedom has replaced the despair of tyranny in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The war has produced heroes, more than 6,400 of whom have made the ultimate sacrifice in combat. They join a sacred band of brothers and sisters whose memories we will honor forever and whose sacrifices will be canonized by generations not yet born.

The war has also delivered to a grateful nation a massive wave of veterans with service-related physical and mental conditions requiring nothing less than our deepest compassion, care, support, and advocacy. The American Legion, doing what it does best, has fought for improved treatments for post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury, and the Legion's Heroes to Hometowns program connects local Legionnaires with wounded warriors and disabled veterans in local communities around the country.

Compounding these challenges is the economic condition of our nation today. Ten years of war and three years of recession have been difficult on us, but we need only look at our history books to see how returning veterans can fuel an economic recovery.

The American Legion will continue to promote and conduct job fairs, business workshops, and education symposiums - as it has throughout this period of war - to help today's generation of veterans lead the recovery. We will push industry to understand how the loyalty, discipline, teamwork, and expertise of military experience can be put to work in the economy. We will push government to improve its performance in awarding federal contracts to service-disabled veterans, as required by law. We will continue to demand that the Veterans Preference Hiring Act is followed and that good government jobs for veterans are not so wrapped in red tape that no one can get through the application process.

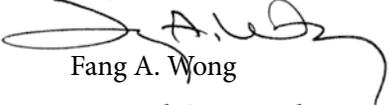
The American Legion, instrumental in drafting the Post 9/11 GI Bill to better serve the 21st

century veteran, will continue to fight for expansion of veterans' education benefits. We know, in the decades since drafting the original GI Bill and regularly improving it, how important that can be to the nation's economic recovery.

It is true that a new era is upon us. As a New Yorker, I can tell you that the compassion of our nation - particularly The American Legion - mattered greatly after 9/11. We will never forget that. As a Legionnaire, I am proud that our organization stood by the troops, their families and their cause, in their efforts to bring down terrorists and tyrants. Today, we welcome them home with all of the support we can muster and offer our continued support to those still in harm's way.

We have learned much since 9/11. Patriotism is far from extinct. We can fight a war on two fronts and protect our homeland from terrorist attacks at the same time. And we showed to the world - and continue to do so every day - how relevant The American Legion is, in good times and bad.

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fang A. Wong', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Fang A. Wong

National Commander

# Three Decades of Terrorism Against the United States and Allies

Thousands of innocent people have been killed or injured at the hands of Islamic terrorists over the past few decades. Listed below are some of the most notable attacks since 1983.

**October 23, 1983:** 220 U.S. Marines, 18 Navy personnel, and three soldiers are killed when a truck bomb destroys their barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. A simultaneous attack kills 58 French paratroopers stationed nearby.

**October 7, 1985:** The cruise liner *Achille Lauro* is hijacked in international waters by PLO gunmen. Retired Jewish American businessman Leon Klinghoffer is shot in the head and chest as he sits in his wheelchair, and his body is thrown overboard.

**December 21, 1988:** Pan Am flight 103, en route from London to New York, explodes over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 259 passengers and crew, including 189 Americans. An additional eleven people on the ground are killed.

**February 26, 1993:** A truck bomb explodes beneath the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. Six people are killed and thousands are injured. Al-Qaeda associate Ramzi Yousef, along with several other conspirators, are later convicted.

**June 25, 1996:** The Khobar Towers housing complex in Khobar, Saudi Arabia, is bombed, killing 19 U.S. airmen. The United States identifies members of Hezbollah Al-Hejaz (Party of God in the Hijaz) as the responsible party.

**August 7, 1998:** Hundreds of people are killed in simultaneous truck bomb attacks against the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Twelve Americans are killed, including two CIA employees and one Marine. It is this attack that prompts the FBI to place Osama bin Laden on its Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list.

**October 12, 2000:** Seventeen sailors are killed and 37 injured when Navy destroyer USS *Cole* is bombed in a seaborne suicide attack while refueling in the Yemeni port of Aden. Al-Qaeda claims responsibility.

**September 11, 2001:** Nineteen al-Qaeda terrorists hijack four airliners, crashing two into the World Trade Center buildings in New York City, and one into the Pentagon. The fourth, thought to be destined for the U.S. Capitol or the White House, is brought down in a field near Shanksville, Pa. Nearly 3,000 people are killed, and another 6,000 are injured in the attacks.

**February 1, 2002:** American journalist Daniel Pearl is beheaded by his al-Qaeda captors in Karachi, Pakistan. Among them is Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, one of the chief architects of the 9/11 attacks.

**March 11, 2004:** Terrorists detonate 10 simultaneous backpack bombs on Madrid's commuter train system during rush hour, killing 181 and injuring 1,800.

**July 7, 2005:** Islamic terrorists launch a series of coordinated suicide bombing attacks on London's public transit system, killing 52 and injuring over 700.

**November 26, 2008:** Members of Pakistani-based Islamic terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba, or Army of the Righteous, launch 11 coordinated attacks across Mumbai, India. The attacks last four days, killing 164 people, and wounding 308.

**December 30, 2009:** The most lethal attack against the CIA in 25 years is carried out by an al-Qaeda and Taliban-linked suicide bomber at Forward Operating Base Chapman in Khost, Afghanistan. Seven CIA employees are killed, and six more are injured.

## ANATOMY OF RESOLUTION 15

### **Whereas, The American Legion is an organization of wartime veterans created by an act of the United States Congress in 1919; and**

Focusing on service to veterans, service members and communities, The American Legion evolved from a group of war-weary veterans of World War I into one of the most influential nonprofit groups in the United States. Membership swiftly grew to over 1 million, and local posts sprang up across the country. Today, membership stands at over 2.4 million in 14,000 posts worldwide. The posts are organized into 55 departments: one each for the 50 states, along with the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, France, Mexico, and the Philippines.

### **Whereas, The American Legion is committed to the security and defense of the United States and its allies; and**

The American Legion believes national security must be maintained to fulfill the mandate for a strong national defense. As stated in the 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 safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy."

The American Legion is an organization of veterans who fought for freedoms, which they are dedicated to keeping and preserving. As one of the Four Pillars it was founded on, the American Legion believes national security is upheld by keeping a well-funded Department of Defense, a good quality of life for troops and a sensible transition between service and separation.

**Whereas, In any war, continued public support not only for the troops, but also for their mission, is essential for victory; and**

The American Legion has always been a champion of a strong national defense. We understand that the primary responsibility of government is to maintain the security of its people. Our men and women in uniform sign up for service knowing they could be sent anywhere at any time, yet they do not ask for any recognition for the risks they take to protect the safety of their fellow citizens back home.

The American Legion provides troop support through various programs nationwide, and stands firm in its belief that there is no separating the warrior from the war. Those who put their lives on the line in defense of their country deserve the utmost support from every American who continues to enjoy the very freedoms that the troops fight to defend.

**Whereas, The United States of America was suddenly, and without provocation, attacked by terrorists on September 11, 2001, resulting in the death of nearly 3,000 innocent people, injuring over 6,000 victims, and causing untold economic damage to the Nation; and**

At 8:46 a.m. on Sept. 11, 2001, five hijackers crashed American Airlines flight 11 into the World Trade Center's North Tower. United Airlines flight 175, hijacked by five terrorists, hit the World Trade Center's South Tower at 9:06 a.m. Thirty-one minutes later, at 9:37 a.m., American Airlines flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon. A fourth flight, United Airlines flight 93, crashed into a field near Shanksville, PA at 10:03 a.m. after passenger fought the hijackers for control of the plane.

The South Tower collapsed 56 minutes after being hit, and the North Tower 102 minutes after being hit. Once the buildings began to fall, each took less than 30 seconds to fully collapse. The South Tower, though hit second, collapsed first. The Pentagon had a gaping, smoldering hole smashed through its western side.

As a result of the attacks to the towers, 2,752 people died, including all 157 passengers and crew aboard the two airplanes. The collapse of the twin towers also caused extensive damage to the rest of the complex and nearby buildings. Debris from the collapsing towers severely damaged or destroyed more than a dozen other adjacent and nearby structures. Nearly 3,000 people died in the attacks including the 227 civilians and 19 hijackers aboard the four planes, none of whom survived.

**Whereas, This attack was not an isolated event, but one in a long series of terrorist attacks aimed at destroying such core American values as liberty, democracy, and respect for human rights; and**

While 9/11 was devastating in terms of loss of life and economic damage, it was not the first major attack against the United States, nor was it the last. Islamist terrorists and their associates declared war on the United States long ago, and there is no doubt they are still determined to strike again.

**Whereas, In response to this clear act of war against the United States, Congress authorized the use of military force against those persons and organizations who planned and helped carry out the attack, their affiliates and those that harbored them, and to deter and pre-empt future acts of terrorism; and**

On Sept. 14, 2001, Congress passed the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF). The authorization granted the president the authority to use all "necessary and appropriate force"

against those whom he determined “planned, authorized, committed or aided” the Sept. 11 attacks, or who harbored said persons or groups. The AUMF was signed by President George W. Bush on Sept. 18, 2001.

**WHEREAS, Our service members have made tremendous sacrifices over the past decade in fighting the forces of tyranny and terror including over 6,400 the number of U.S. casualties from Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn as confirmed by U.S. Central Command; and**

More than 10 years ago, in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, America embarked on a mission in Afghanistan to defeat al-Qaeda, topple the Taliban, and bring freedom and stability to a nation ravaged by poverty and decades of war. Our brave men and women in uniform have sacrificed greatly in this mission. Many of America’s finest have given their lives in duty to the nation. Abraham Lincoln called it the “last full measure of devotion.” It is the ultimate sacrifice for one’s comrades and country.

Additionally, there are many thousands more veterans who bear the visible scars of war, as well as the invisible wounds of Post Traumatic Stress and Traumatic Brain Injury. These sacrifices must not be forgotten, nor made in vain.

**WHEREAS, Members of the United States military and intelligence agencies, displaying great courage and commitment to the mission, are still deployed around the world in support of the Global War on Terrorism, including Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, the Philippines, and elsewhere; and**

Today, the U.S. military and supporting agencies, along with allied troops, are taking the fight to the enemy. They are deployed in some the most dangerous and inhospitable locations in the world, yet they carry out their missions with the pride, courage, and skill that we’ve come to expect.

Often away from their families and loved ones for months at a time, these warriors have volunteered to do what others are either unwilling or unable to do. We owe them not only our gratitude, but our active and vocal support.

**WHEREAS, While the U.S. and our allies have had great successes in the war on terrorism – most notably the killing of Osama bin Laden – al-Qaeda, associated global terrorist groups, and their sponsors continue to pose a grave threat to the national security of the United States; now, therefore, be it**

There have been many successes in the war on terrorism, yet much work remains. From Indonesia, to Pakistan, to northern Africa and even Europe, Islamic terrorists are bent on the destruction of democratic values and the spread of violent and perverted form of Islam.

While experts may argue whether the al-Qaeda that carried out the 9/11 attacks still exists as a viable terrorist organization, there is no doubt that the violent ideology that inspired the initial core group of al-Qaeda terrorist has spread and continues to inspire those that seek to destroy our way of life.

**RESOLVED, By The National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 9-10, 2012, That The American Legion fully supports the men, women, and leadership of our armed forces as they are engaged in the Global War on Terrorism; and, be it further**



This is not a matter of politics; it is a matter of national security. The American Legion is a nonpartisan organization, and during this war – if it lasts as long as our enemies seem prepared to fight – the White House and Congress will pass between both major political parties several times. Nor does this resolution call on Legionnaires to blindly support the president and Congress in every matter. Instead, it asks the Legion family to support our armed forces as they prosecute the war on terrorism.

**RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges all Americans and freedom-loving peoples everywhere to stand united in their support of the Global War on Terrorism, and united in their support of the troops who are engaged in protecting our values and way of life; and, be it finally**

The American Legion strongly believes in the right to free speech, even in times of war. As veterans of military service, Legionnaires know that freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and the many other freedoms enshrined in our Constitution are to be treasured and protected – and sometimes defended by force of arms.

American Legion members have seen firsthand the awful consequences of government unchecked and unchallenged. We know what it costs to liberate and defend places and people unwilling or unable to fight for their own freedom. As President Clinton explained in 1998, “No campaign for peace can succeed without a determination to fight terrorism.”

**RESOLVED, That the National Commander be, and is hereby authorized, to use whatever means at his disposal to disseminate accurate information about the Global War on Terrorism, and to engage whatever means necessary to ensure the united support of the American people.**

Legionnaires recognize that in a country as diverse and as free as ours, there are differences of opinion about the war. As the great American war correspondent Edward R. Murrow once observed, “We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty.”

The war protester has a right to speak against this war, but he should do so responsibly. And he must know that the same First Amendment which protects his right to protest this war was brought to him by men and women who gave their lives for our country. Further, that same First Amendment also protects our right to support the war, to speak, to share information, to assemble and to organize.

All Legionnaires and, indeed, all Americans have an important role to play in protecting the home front, and perhaps most important of all, in supporting the men and women who defend us.

This resolution is a message to those fighting today, that those of us who fought in wars past won't let the antiwar movement nullify the many achievements America has made in the war against terrorism. Nor will America's veterans fail to provide 100 percent support for today's troops and their families, and we will not let the lives lost in this battle be for naught.

# BUILDING PUBLIC SUPPORT

This booklet arms you with information to build public support for our troops and our nation's cause in the war against terrorism. Foremost, our troops must receive a clear message that their country, especially veterans of wars before them, stands squarely behind them and their efforts.

Individual Legionnaires, posts, counties, districts, and departments can use this information to mobilize communities to rally in support of our men and women in uniform and to counter politically motivated negative messages carried by the media, to the detriment of our war effort.

Using a number of proven public relations techniques, any American Legion post can garner local support and media attention for the organization's positions on the war, the troops and responsibility on the homefront.

1. Be vigilant and seek equal time and opportunity when local antiwar demonstrations occur. Respond with a press release to local media using the information in this booklet and provided message points. Be available for interviews by news reporters, both at your post and by telephone. Don't let any negative information go by without correcting it. Antiwar, anti-troop messages can be countered with voices of hope and support for our armed forces.
2. Establish a troop-support council in town. Involve local elected officials, business leaders, churches and civic groups. Meet to discuss how your community can best rally support for the troops and deliver the message to them, wherever they are stationed.
3. Coordinate a community troop-support event using the main themes in this booklet. Involve schools, churches, volunteers, Boy and Girl Scouts, and other organizations. Post the information on The American Legion ([www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)) Website.
4. Establish your post as a news media resource for interviews when protests arise. Become the positive voice of troop support in your community.
5. Write letters to the editor of local newspapers. Encourage everyone to do the same. Use message points provided in this booklet. Cite personal experience, and write from the heart, but keep it under 250 words.
6. Write a guest editorial for the local newspaper. Contact the opinion-page editor to find out the feasibility and the number of words the paper will accept. Be amenable to editing of your piece as long as the meaning is not changed. Frequently, editors are able to shorten and tighten up your editorial. A guest editorial enables you to write a longer piece than would a letter to the editor. Frequently, newspapers will ask to run a photo of the writer, so it's important to have one readily available, with Legion cap on.



## KEY MESSAGE POINTS ON RESOLUTION 15

### **The Global War on Terrorism has been a matter of vital national interest accentuated by the terrorist attacks on America on Sept. 11, 2001.**

The war reached our shores when terrorists murdered 3,000 civilians and military personnel and have since continued to kill, in Madrid, Istanbul, Jakarta, Casablanca, and London. Victory over these global terrorist organizations is critical to the future safety and security of our people.



### **The Global War on Terrorism has been successful so far, but work remains.**

Since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, more than 50 million people have been liberated from two of the world's most brutal and aggressive regimes. Afghanistan is undergoing massive social, civil and governmental changes that bring new freedoms to women, students, media, worshipers, and democratically elected officials. Additionally, dozens of key al-Qaeda leaders and hundreds of their henchmen have been killed or captured by allied forces, including:

**March 1, 2003:** Al-Qaeda number three and suspected mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, is arrested in Pakistan.

**August 14, 2003:** Indonesian Riduan Isamuddin, known as Hambali, and suspected of being al-Qaeda's representative in Southeast Asia and the alleged mastermind of the 2002 Bali bombings, is arrested in Thailand.

**June 18, 2004:** Saudi Abdul Aziz al-Muqrin, al-Qaeda's suspected leader in Saudi Arabia, is killed in Riyadh. His predecessor, Yemeni Khaled Ali Haj, had been killed three months earlier.

**May 2, 2005:** Libyan Abu Faraj al-Libbi, al-Qaeda's number three and the head of the network in Pakistan, is arrested in the northwest of the country.

**August 11, 2005:** A Jordanian of Pakistani origin, Abu Qatada, presented as al-Qaeda's "ambassador" in Europe, is arrested in Britain for the second time.

**February 27, 2006:** Saudi Fahd al-Joweir, chief of al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia, is killed near to Riyadh. His predecessor, Saleh al-Oufi, was killed in August 2005.

**June 7, 2006:** The head of the Iraqi section of al-Qaeda, Jordanian Abu Mussab al-Zarkawi, is killed in an air raid during a U.S.-Iraqi operation to the north of Baghdad.

**September 25, 2006:** Kuwaiti Omar al-Farouk, lieutenant of Osama bin Laden and suspected chief of al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia, is killed by British troops in Basra in southern Iraq.

**January 29, 2008:** An al-Qaeda commander in Afghanistan, Abu Laith al-Libi, one of Osama bin Laden's leading lieutenants, is killed by a U.S. missile in northwest Pakistan.

**April 18, 2010:** Al-Qaeda's suspected chief in Iraq, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, and his military chief, Abu Ayub al-Masri, are killed in joint U.S.-Iraqi military operations in northern Baghdad.

**June 1, 2010:** Al-Qaeda says Mustafa Abu al-Yazid, its number three leader and chief of operations in Afghanistan, has been killed.

**May 2, 2011:** Osama bin Laden is killed in Pakistan shortly after 1 a.m. local time, by Navy SEALs from the United States Naval Special Warfare Development Group. The mission, code-named Operation Neptune Spear, was ordered by the president and led by the CIA. Participating units SEAL Team Six, the U.S. Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), and CIA operatives.



The raid on bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, was launched from a staging base in the city of Jalalabad in eastern Afghanistan.

The raid was scheduled for a night with little moonlight so the helicopters could enter Pakistan "low to the ground and undetected." The flight from Jalalabad to Abbottabad took roughly 90 minutes. The helicopters used hilly terrain and nap-of-the-earth techniques to reach the compound without appearing on radar and alerting Pakistani military and intelligence entities.

According to the mission plan, the first helicopter would hover over the compound's yard while its full team of SEALs fast-roped to the ground. At the same time, the second helicopter would fly to the northeast corner of the compound and deploy the translator, the dog, and four SEALs to secure the perimeter. The second helicopter would then hover over the house and the team leader, and six SEALs would fast-rope onto the roof. The team in the courtyard was to enter the house from the ground floor.

Bin Laden resisted the assault force and died in a firefight. Along with bin Laden, three adult males were killed. After the raid, U.S. forces took bin Laden's body to Afghanistan for identification, then buried it at sea within 24 hours of his death.

Tensions between the United States and Pakistan have been growing since U.S. forces found and killed Osama bin Laden in the city of Abbottabad. U.S. officials have been publicly questioning whether Pakistan did all it could to track down the world's most wanted terrorist.

**June 4, 2012:** Al-Qaeda leader Abu Yahya al-Libi, the charismatic commander who helped steer the terrorist group after Osama bin Laden's death last year, is killed by a CIA drone strike in Pakistan's lawless frontier region.

### **Sacrifice is a fact of war.**

Wars are often associated with a rhetoric of renewal and new beginnings, evidenced by the fact that most nations conceptualize and narrate their origins in terms of foundational wars. Over a decade ago, the United States embarked on a mission in Afghanistan to defeat al-Qaeda and bring freedom and stability to a nation that has known nothing but war.

While the death of any soldier is a tragedy, war is a risk calculated by those who serve in an

all-volunteer military. The late 18th century brought about the age of the modern nation-state, and with it, patriotic sacrifice became regarded as the noblest and most civilized gesture a man could make. Patriotic sacrifice remains today the most important, complex, and seemingly irrational aspect of patriotism. But this willingness – so closely associated with the military – is essential to the cohesiveness of any group.

Modern national cohesion is incumbent upon sacrifice – as was seen in the aftermath of 9/11. In the days following that tragedy, special focus on the sacred status of the flag and special attention toward our uniformed service members was revitalized in the American consciousness. Now, over a decade later, we would be wise to remember that without these things – without patriotism and sacrifice – our nation would not be able to defend itself. And a nation that cannot inspire its members to lay down their lives for it will inevitably fragment and lose its sovereignty.

### **Home- front support is essential to victory and troop safety.**

U.S. forces serving in Afghanistan, Africa, and elsewhere are committed to completing their mission successfully and defeating terrorism. Troops everywhere must know that the people at home support them.

The American Legion provides troop support through various programs nationwide and believes there is no separating the warrior from the war. Those who put their lives on the line in defense of their country – and their fellow citizens – deserve America's total support.

One example is a program originating at post 621 in Minnesota called GPS for Troops. Minnesota Legionnaire Ed Meyer started GPS for Troops in 2005 when a former student of his was preparing for a deployment to Iraq and asked Meyer which GPS unit would be best to take on the deployment. Meyer, shocked to find out that the Department of Defense was providing only one GPS device per unit, decided that wasn't good enough.

Since that time, Meyer's GPS for Troops – through St. Augusta American Legion Post and Auxiliary Unit 621 in Minnesota – has shipped more than 500 GPS units to U.S. service members who served in Iraq, or are currently serving in Afghanistan.

*To see more of what The American Legion is doing for our troops visit: [www.legion.org/troops](http://www.legion.org/troops)*

## More Resources on the Web

To learn more about U.S. progress in the Global War on Terrorism and how our troops feel about their mission, visit:

**[www.defense.gov](http://www.defense.gov)**

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



THE AMERICAN LEGION  
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

700 North Pennsylvania St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-630-1200

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