Americanism is an ideal of loyal patriotism, religious tolerance, righteous freedom, fearless courage, honest integrity, abiding faith in the commanding destiny of the United States, and fathomless love for the principles that led our forefathers to found this country. The following are highlights of the Americanism Commission:

Committee on Children & Youth
Herbert J. Petit, Jr.
Louisiana
Chairman

Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) provides financial assistance to children of active duty servicemembers and current American Legion members when their household experiences difficulty in meeting their basic needs. In calendar year 2018 grants totaling $228,975 touched the lives of 376 children from 179 families.

In January 2019 TFA rose to a challenge. The pay of U.S. Coast Guard servicemembers was in peril when a federal government shutdown appeared imminent. Unlike the other four branches of the uniformed Armed Services budgeted through the Department of Defense, the Coast Guard budget is under the Department of Homeland Security. Citing the Coast Guard’s motto of “Semper Paratus”, National Commander Brett Reistad stated The American Legion is “Always Ready” to support those in uniform, and directed that if active-duty Coast Guard was interrupted, we would swiftly administer requests made by those families needing financial assistance for the minor children in their households.

The longest federal government shutdown in U.S. history did cause an interruption in pay, so expedited TFA processing procedures were temporarily implemented. Because of the collective herculean efforts of Legionnaires and Legion Family throughout many departments and at National Headquarters, TFA awarded over $1 million to aid 3,120 children of Coast Guard families before the crisis abated with reopening of the government.

Committee on Youth Education
Michael Westergren
Arkansas
Chairman

This year 57 American Legion Legacy scholarships totaling $1,122,624 were awarded; three to children of fallen servicemembers and 54 to children of Post-9/11 veterans assigned a combined disability rating of 50% or greater by the VA.

Other events during the past year:
• The Samsung American Legion Scholarship fund has awarded more than $6.2 million to American Legion Boys State and American Legion Auxiliary Girls State recipients since inception in 1996.

• Ten Samsung American Legion national scholars were honored in 2018 with a special breakfast on Capitol Hill hosted by Samsung Electronics and The American Legion.

American Legion Baseball Committee
Gary Stone
Missouri
Chairman

American Legion Baseball (ALB) marks its 94th season in 2019. Shelby, North Carolina, is proud home of The American Legion World Series.

• The team from Wilmington, Delaware, sponsored by American Legion Post No. 1, won its first ever ALB World Series in 2018. As national champions, the team attended the 2018 Major League Baseball World Series in Los Angeles as guests of The American Legion and Major League Baseball.

• Christopher Ludman, playing for the Delaware team, is the 2018 George W. Rulon Player of the Year, and is the 70th ALB player to be honored as such by the National Baseball Hall of Fame in a ceremony on Memorial Day weekend.

• Eighty-one members are enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame who are ALB alumni.

• Captain of the 2018 ALB All-Academic Team sponsored by Diamond Sports is Braiden Ruffin of Nebraska.

Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee
Larry Price
South Dakota
Chairman

The Americanism Commission is concerned that law enforcement is not always regarded with the respect it deserves. Through the American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement program young people are empowered to realize that peace officers stand as staunch supporters for moral and legal rights, and that the dedication and impact they have in local communities, state, and nation should be regarded with respect and appreciation. The program also serves as an influential stepping stone for high school students considering a law enforcement career. Twenty-one departments currently sponsor a program.

Youth Programs

• Patrick Junker of Iowa won the 2019 American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest. Caleb Maue of Illinois placed second and Eden Carnes of Tennessee placed third.

• Jaden Anderson of Utah was selected 2019 American Legion Eagle Scout of the year. Runners-up are N’Jhari Jackson of Florida; Trevor Burke of Texas; and Rhylan Peterson of Minnesota.

• Jared Eddy of Georgia and Bailey Hoenig of Illinois captured the Precision and Sporter championship titles respectively at the 2018 American Legion 3-Position Air Rifle National Championship.

• The Francis Redington Sportsmanship award was presented to Kaylene Castillo of New Mexico at the 2018 American Legion 3-Position Air Rifle National Championship.

• Joshua Cheadle of California and Aabid Razvi of Texas were elected President and Vice-President respectively of the 2018 American Legion Boys Nation Senate.