

The following email was emailed by Department of Texas Adjutant Bill West on 7/13/2009:

Information received from the National Headquarters.

Bill West  
Department Adjutant  
Department of Texas

**From:** Raughter, John B. [mailto:jraughter@legion.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2009 6:01 AM  
**To:** Department Adjutants; Department Headquarters  
**Subject:** Operation Comfort Warriors

Dear Departments,  
National Commander Rehbein offers the following op-ed and news release for your publications.

The main points:

- Thanks to the generosity of The American Legion family, nearly \$165,000 have been raised for hospitalized and recovering troops at military centers around the world. More than 75 percent of the money has been spent on sweats, calling cards, DVDs, iPods, games, puzzles and other comfort items intended to improve the morale and quality of life for these heroes. The other 25 percent will be spent shortly **but 100 percent of the donated money goes to the troops.**
- More needs to be done. The need is great and the troops are relying on us. **The American Legion will operate a donations booth in the Exhibit Hall at the 91<sup>st</sup> National Convention in Louisville. The National Commander will also accept donations from Departments on the stage of the Convention if they choose to present in that manner.**
- **Checks can also be mailed to Operation Comfort Warriors, PO Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206. Online donations are accepted at [www.legion.org/ocw](http://www.legion.org/ocw)**

**Thank you all for your consideration.**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Operation Comfort Warriors: Our Pride and Purpose** **By National Commander David K. Rehbein**

During my year as national commander, I often speak of pride and purpose. I mention the pride that we should all have as veterans and the purpose that Legionnaires have in continuing to serve our great country. No example better encapsulates this theme than Operation Comfort Warriors.

Operation Comfort Warriors provides direct assistance to patients at U.S. military hospitals and warrior transition units in the form of comfort items and other goods that are not normally purchased through government channels.

Since December, the American Legion family has raised nearly \$165,000 for these heroes. We have provided sweat suits, DVDs, puzzles, electronics, books, calling cards and other comfort items to those

who have already sacrificed so much for us. I am proud of the Legionnaires, Auxiliary members, Sons of the American Legion members and all of those who have given so far. But more needs to be done. Nearly 35,000 of our men and women in uniform have been injured in Iraq or Afghanistan since the war on terrorism started. Add to that the countless thousands who are hospitalized because of illnesses or accidents and you can appreciate the scope of the need.

We have already spent 75 percent of the fund on these wounded warriors and will need to replenish the coffers quickly. Don't worry about the other 25 percent, it will be spent soon enough and for the intended purposes. In fact, not a single penny of donated funds is spent on administrative costs or fundraising. Those expenses are paid from our headquarters budget.

**This year at our 91<sup>st</sup> Annual National Convention in Louisville, The American Legion will host a donation booth for our hospitalized heroes. Departments will be able to present their checks directly to me on the stage of the Convention. If you won't be able to make it to Louisville, you can donate online at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) or send a check to Operation Comfort Warriors, PO Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

As national commander, I visit hospitalized troops often. They are truly inspirational. Many express the desire to re-join their units in combat even after they lost a limb. Their thoughts are not about their own plight but about the safety of their buddies and whether they will be allowed to accomplish the missions that America sent them to do.

They fight to protect our homeland, which includes people like 15-year-old Amanda Braum, a high school sophomore in Simla, Co., who raised \$530 for Operation Comfort Warriors. There are also people like World War II veteran Donald Williams, a Legionnaire from Clinton, Minn., who along with a check sent a note imploring us to "keep Operation Comfort Warriors going."

Not only are our men and women serving in the military a special breed, so are many of the people back home. Adm. Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also believes this. "The American people have been spectacular in their support of our men and women in uniform — and I am very grateful for that, and so are they," he said. "As a country, I would hope we keep our focus on our people, particularly those who have been wounded, and their families, and the families of the fallen. These are people who have paid, in many cases, the ultimate price. And I think we as a country must repay that debt."

Operation Comfort Warriors won't be able to make all of our troops "whole" again, but it will show them that we care. These troops are our pride and our purpose.

***David K. Rehbein, of Ames, Iowa, is national commander of the 2.6 million-member American Legion, [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org), the nation's largest wartime veterans organization.***

Media Contacts: *Joe March, (317) 630-1253; or John Raughter, (317) 630-1350. This text and a high-resolution photo of Cmdr. Rehbein can be downloaded at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org).*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE TO ALL LEGION PUBLICATIONS**

## **Legion Family Raising Funds for Recovering Heroes**

INDIANAPOLIS (July 13, 2009) – The American Legion family is renewing its fundraising efforts to purchase comfort items for troops recovering in U.S. military hospitals and warrior transition units around the world through its Operation Comfort Warriors campaign.

"The government does a good job of providing the essentials," said American Legion National Commander David K. Rehbein. "Through Operation Comfort Warriors we have been able to provide items that usually don't appear in the budget, such as personal sweat suits, I-Pods, DVDs, phone calling cards and other comfort items. The American Legion family is challenging its members and friends to continue giving to those who have already given us so much. I am grateful that American Legion Auxiliary National

President Desireé Stoy and Sons of The American Legion National Commander Tommie Cisna have given their complete support of this effort.”

The American Legion family has already raised nearly \$165,000 for Operation Comfort Warriors since its inception in December. Donors can make online contributions by visiting [www.legion.org/ocw](http://www.legion.org/ocw) or by sending a check to Operation Comfort Warriors, PO Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206. Administrative and promotional costs for Operation Comfort Warriors are paid by The American Legion, allowing 100 percent of the donations to be spent directly on the troops.

The American Legion plans to operate a donations booth at its 91<sup>st</sup> Annual National Convention in Louisville. Those who donate \$10 or more at the booth will receive Operation Comfort Warrior pins. Departments of The American Legion will be able to present checks directly to National Commander Rehbein on the convention stage.

With a current membership of 2.6-million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and patriotic youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 14,000 posts across the nation.

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