



American Legion CA / Los Angeles Police Post 381

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NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION

On October 14, 2022, I received an appointment as a member of the National Security Council by then National Commander, Vincent J. Troiola. On July 9, 2023, I received a “Call-In” from the National Commander to attend:

**COMMISSION OR COMMITTEE: National Security Council – Member
American Legion National Security Commission, Saturday August 26, 2023 in
Charlotte, N.C., during the organization’s 104th National Convention.**

I attended the National Security Commission meeting held on Saturday August 26, 2023, which began at 9:00 am in the Charlotte, N.C. Convention Center during the 104th American Legion National Convention. I was joined by approximately 400 National Security Council Members.

The meeting was opened by Executive Director Mario Marquez. The first order of business was to elect a new Chairman of the American Legion National Security Commission. Accordingly, **Comrade Matthew Shuman, AZ**, was elected in due form as the new Chairman of The American Legion National Security Commission.

The National Security Commission meeting focused on four areas of concern, which included guest speakers for each area of concern:

- **Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA)**
- **Resupply of Critical Military Capability**
- **The China-Taiwan Issue**
- **The Military Quality of Life Joint Panel Discussion**

Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

Dr. Fern Sumpter Winbush, the Principal Deputy Director of DPAA addressed the Commission. Dr Winbush provided an overview of the DPAA, and gave a progress report on the over 81,000 servicemembers who still remain unaccounted for since World War II.

She estimates that 38,000 are recoverable, and cited DNA technology as responsible for much quicker identifications. Dr Winbush provided updates on recovery and identification projects the DPAA is working on. Dr Winbush's presentation was both informative and optimistic.

Resupply of Critical Military Capability

Mr. Keith Webster, President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Defense and Aerospace and the Federal Acquisition Council addressed the Commission. Mr Webster explained the invasion of Ukraine prompted the United States and other allies to respond by providing Ukraine with critical military capability from domestic stockpiles. Mr Webster cited the 2024 National Defense Appropriation Act and said that onshoring and reshoring our manufacturing dependencies is paramount and ongoing. He said the U.S. Military Industrial Complex is working full speed ahead to ensure America is always ready to confront our adversaries to ensure that those who volunteer to defend have everything they need to win.

China-Taiwan Issue

Dr Shelley Rigger, a Davidson College Professor of Eastern Asian Studies addressed the Commission. Dr Rigger, an expert on China-Taiwan relations, offered her highly respected opinion as to why a war between the two is not inevitable. Dr Rigger's presentation explored the history and philosophical differences of both sides. She acknowledged the saber-rattling and military build-up from each side created a high level of anxiety around the world. Dr Rigger's presentation offered a reassuring perspective before the American Legion National Security Commission.

The Military Quality of Life Joint Panel Discussion

I found this Joint Panel Discussion the highlight of the Commission's meeting. It was historic in that the highest ranking non-commissioned officers in the Armed Forces were all gathered in one place for an open discussion. The following personnel were present:

Master Chief Petty Officer, United States Coast Guard, Jason M. Vanderhaden

Sgt Major of the Marine Corps, Carlos Ruiz

Chief Master Sgt of the Air Force – JoAnne Bass

Army Sgt Major, Michael J. Perry III

Command Master Chief of the Navy, Matthew Harris

Advisor to the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, Master Chief Tony Whitehead.

In 2022, The American Legion created the Base Assessment and Servicemember Experience (BASE) program. The Military Quality of Life Joint Panel Discussion provided an opportunity to hear from each branch of the military regarding quality of life issues in the military. The discussion began with opening remarks from each branch of service, which was followed by a lengthy period of questions and answers. The questions

were numerous and covered a wide range of topics; Mental Health Services, Child Care, Housing, Work and Home Life, Paying the Coast Guard and much more. At the conclusion of the discussion, I formed the opinion the Military Quality of Life plays an integral role in each branch of the Armed Forces and their mission.

On Sunday August 27, 2023, I attended the American Legion National Security Commission's review of Resolutions although my call-in did not include this portion of the National Security Commission. I attended solely as an observer. The following Resolutions were passed by the Convention Committee on National Security and sent to the American Legion's 104th National Convention for a vote:

Resolution No. 17: Policy on Taiwan

Resolution No. 30: Modernization of the Armed Forces

Resolution No. 48: Rebuilding the U.S. Defense Industrial Base

Subsequently, all three Resolutions were passed during the National Convention.

The American Legion National Commander Vincent J. "Jim" Troiolo addressed the Commission by sharing his experiences while visiting base installations throughout the year from coast to coast. He thanked everyone for the privilege of serving as the American Legion National Commander and thanked the National Security Commission for its outstanding service to the American Legion, State and Nation.

For God & Country,

James R. "Rick" Leiphardt, Member
The American Legion
National Security Commission
National Security Council