



About the National Commander

Dale Barnett, National Commander of The American Legion

The national commander is the chief executive officer and official spokesman of The American Legion, with full power to enforce provisions of the organization's constitution, bylaws and resolutions. Each national commander serves a one-year term, after which a new leader is elected at the national convention. Five national vice commanders who serve different regions are also elected at the national convention each year.

Dale Barnett of Douglasville, Ga., was elected national commander of the 2.2 million-member American Legion on Sept. 3, 2015, in Baltimore during the 97th National Convention of America's largest veterans organization.

Barnett graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and served as an Army infantry officer from 1974-1996, retiring as a lieutenant colonel. A member of American Legion Post 105 in Fayetteville, Ga., he served The American Legion at every level, including Department Commander of Georgia from 2007 to 2008. After leaving the military, Barnett taught high school social studies and coached basketball, baseball and cross country. He was the Creekside High School Teacher of the Year in 2005-2006 and a national board certified social studies teacher in 2003.

Raised in central Indiana, Barnett attended Whiteland Community High School where he was student body president, captain of the track and basketball teams and president of the Whiteland United Methodist Youth Basketball Team. He credits his experience with Hoosier Boys Nation in 1969 with his decision to attend West Point.

Barnett served from 1990 to 1991 as the battalion executive officer of the 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. His decorations include The Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal with two Bronze Service Stars, Humanitarian Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (two awards), Kuwait Liberation Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, Parachutist Badge and Pathfinder Badge.

Barnett earned an International Relations/Public Affairs degree at West Point, a Masters of Business Administration from Boston University, and he graduated from Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

Barnett served as The American Legion National Membership and Post Activities Committee chairman from 2008-2010 and as the Legion's National Economic Commission chairman from 2010-2013.

Dale and his wife, Donna, live in Douglasville, Ga., and have five children: Michelle, Andrea, Desiree, Kathalyn, and Joseph. They also have four young grandchildren: Heather, Daniel, Joanne and Brandon.