

PROCEEDINGS
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Fall Meeting
Sheraton Hotel City Centre
Indianapolis, Indiana
Saturday, October 7, 2023
Sunday, October 8, 2023

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Table of Contents

Saturday, October 7, 2023	4
Invocation	4
POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony	5
Pledge of Allegiance	5
Preamble to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion	6
Blue Star Banner Ceremony	6
Roll Call	6
Reading of Minutes of Previous Meeting	13
Remarks	22
Kevin M. Mook, Maryland, SAL Liaison.....	22
Report of Child Welfare Foundation Committee	24
Report of children and Youth Committee	29
Report of Americanism Commission.....	34
Report of Century Committee.....	50
Report of Finance Commission	56
Report of Public and Media Communications Commission.....	59
Report of Membership Committee	64
Report of Member Training and Development Committee	75
Report of Convention Committee.....	81
Report of Internal Affairs Commission.....	83
Report of Legislative Commission	89
Report of Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission.....	98
Report of Veterans Employment & Education Commission	108
Report of Subcommittee on Resolutions	116
Remarks	120
Joseph R. Navarrete, New Mexico, Leading Candidate	120
William Clancy III, New York, Trailing Candidate	123
Sunday, October 8, 2023	131
Invocation	131
Pledge of Allegiance	132
Roll Call	132

Greetings	139
Daniel J. Seehafer, Wisconsin, American Legion National Commander	139
Lisa Williamson, Alaska, American Legion Auxiliary National President.....	146
Robert Morrill, New York, American Legion Child Welfare Foundation President	151
Appointments to National Commissions/Committees	157
Old Business	161
New Business.....	161
For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion.....	162
Remarks	166
Donald "J.R." Hall Jr., Maryland, National Commander.....	166
Greetings	169
Dennis Boland, Florida, American Legion National Children & Youth Committee Member	169
Benediction	176

Saturday, October 7, 2023

...At 1:00 p.m., Saturday, October 7, 2023, the National Executive Committee was called to order by National Commander Hall.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Good morning, everyone -- afternoon.

...Chorus of "Good afternoon."

It's good afternoon, we didn't change that here, see. Good afternoon.

Please rise.

With the colors of our country being in place, please join me in offering a right-hand salute: Two.

National Chaplain Ernie Laberge will invoke the blessing of God. Please uncover.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LABERGE: Hello. Before the prayer, please remember Jim Wilbanks who recently passed. We were notified of that.

Invocation

Ernest Laberge, Massachusetts, National Chaplain

To prayer. Heavenly Father, Your ways are perfect and filled with Your rightful plan. The difficult trials that You at times allow us to endure seem puzzling and unfathomable at first, but they eventually produce the results we ourselves desire. Teach us to always trust the way You guide us through life's lessons. Help us to consistently see that the testing of our faith produces the steadfast we need very much in our lives. Allow to us realize that our continual perseverance leads to the maturity that is needed in our lives. Amen.

...Chorus of "Amen."

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: In memory of our departed comrades and the comrades of our veterans, let us stand in silence.

...The National Executive Committee observed a moment of silence.

POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: To maintain a high awareness of the constant vigil to be maintained so that no POW or MIA will be left unaccounted for, the Sons of The American Legion designate a POW/MIA empty chair at all meetings.

This is a physical symbol of thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for, as a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty, and a full accounting of all those missing.

Let us rededicate ourselves to this vital endeavor.

Sergeant-at-Arms, will you please now place the POW/MIA flag on the empty chair?

...The POW/MIA flag was placed on the Empty Chair.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: I call upon Sergeant-at-Arms Mark Fayer to lead us in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of Allegiance

...The National Executive Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Recover.

I now call upon National Vice Commander Robert Bristo to lead us to reciting the Preamble to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion.

Preamble to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion

...The National Executive Committee recited the Preamble to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion.

Blue Star Banner Ceremony

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Serving as a constant reminder that our servicemen and women, on a daily basis, are putting themselves at risk to ensure our freedoms, the Sons of The American Legion display a Corporate Blue Star Service Banner at all meetings to serve as a symbol of our support of all of our military personnel serving this great country.

Let us never forget that every day these individuals are protecting our liberty. The Blue Star Service Banner is in place.

I now call upon National Adjutant Anthony Wright who will lead the roll call for the fall 2023 meeting.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Pursuant to Article VII, Section 1 of the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion, the National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion hereby calls for a meeting of the National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion to be held October 7th through 8th, 2023, at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Read the roll call.

Roll Call

NATIONAL OFFICERS

National Commander

Donald L. "JR" Hall Jr., Maryland

National Vice Commanders

Northeast: John R. Cook, New Hampshire

Southeast: Linwood A. Moore, Virginia

Central: Robert L. Bristo, Minnesota

Midwest: Terry A. Harris, Kansas

Western: James R. Fischer Sr., California

National Adjutant

Anthony W. Wright, Pennsylvania

National Assistant Adjutant Emeritus

Harold E. Thompson Jr., Nebraska

National Assistant Adjutants

James E. "Ed" Sheubrooks, Florida (Excused)

Robert J.F. Avery, New York

Scott A. Williams, Virginia

Scott J. Thornton, Ohio

Jeffrey E. Hicks, New Jersey

Clifford E. Hall, Georgia

National Chaplain

Ernest E. "Ernie" Laberge, Massachusetts

National Parliamentarian

Gary B. Leach, California

National Historian

Jeffrey Thorne, Maryland

National Sergeant-at-Arms

Mark T. Fayer Sr., Maryland

National Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms

Brian K. Waters, Pennsylvania

Gregory A. "Greg" Falco, New York

Lyle G. Larson, Kansas

Matthew W. Griffis, Arizona

Timothy S. Brower, New York

National Commander's Aide

Thomas G. "Tom" Deal, Maryland

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDERS

Immediate Past National Commander

Christopher A. Carlton, Indiana

Past National Commanders

J.R. Stillwell, Illinois

Robert H. Faust, California

James R. Hartman Jr., Maryland

Charles E. Gannon, Maryland

David P. Stephens, Indiana

Christopher R. Cerullo, New York

Frederick L. Hartline Sr., Ohio (Excused)

Douglas P. Bible, Minnesota

David R. Faust, Wisconsin (Excused)

Robert A. Worrel, Indiana

Eugene L. Sacco, California

Joseph M. Mayne, Minnesota

William E. Matoska, Maryland

Byron J. Robichaux, Louisiana

Richard L. Cook, Oklahoma

Kevin N. Winkelmann, Texas

Clifford A. Smith, Massachusetts

Michael J. Deacon, Iowa

Earl R. Ruttkofsky, Michigan

Thomas E. Cisna, Illinois (Excused)

James K. Roberts III, Florida (Excused)

Joseph W. Gladden, Maryland

Michael W. Moss, Colorado (Excused)

Kevin L. Collier, Alaska

Jeffrey C. Frain, Arizona (Excused)

Greg K. "Doc" Gibbs, New York

Joseph A. Paviglianti, New York

Michael C. Fox, California

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMEN

Alabama, NEC

Alaska, Alternate

Arizona, Both

Arkansas, Alternate

California, NEC

Connecticut, NEC

Delaware, Both

Florida, NEC
France, NEC
Georgia, Both
Hawaii, NEC
Idaho, Both
Illinois, NEC
Indiana, Both
Iowa, Both
Kansas, Both
Kentucky, NEC
Louisiana, Alternate
Maine, Both
Maryland, Both
Massachusetts, Both
Michigan, Both
Minnesota, NEC
Mississippi, Both
Missouri, NEC
Montana, Alternate
Nebraska, NEC
Nevada, NEC
New Hampshire, NEC
New Jersey, Both

New Mexico, NEC

New York, Both

North Carolina, NEC

Ohio, Both

Oklahoma, NEC

Oregon, Both

Pennsylvania, Both

Puerto Rico, NEC

South Dakota, NEC

Tennessee, NEC

Texas, Both

Vermont, Both

Virginia, Alternate

West Virginia, NEC

Wisconsin, Both

Wyoming, Alternate

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: According to my calculations, we have 44 detachments out of the 55. Commander, you have a quorum.

UNIDENTIFIED NECMAN: I didn't hear the Detachment of Maine mentioned.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Maine, both. Thank you.

(Laughter)

It does say "unknown" next to here.

So that's 45. You have a quorum.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Good afternoon, gentlemen.

...Chorus of "Good afternoon."

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: I now declare this fall 2023 meeting of the National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion regularly convened.

As a point of housekeeping, I would remind everyone to, please, when addressing the chair, use the microphones located in the aisle. Please say your detachment and your name, please, when identifying yourself. This will help us to maintain order and give our court reporter, which isn't here --

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: It's being recorded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: -- a chance to do it all for the video. So, understand it will still be taken the right way.

At this time, I'll have the national adjutant, Anthony Wright, read the minutes from the last meeting.

Reading of Minutes of Previous Meeting

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Proceedings from the National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion pre-convention meeting, Charlotte Convention Center, Exhibit Hall C2, Charlotte, North Carolina.

NECMAN DONALD ALLISOT JR. (ME): I would like to make a motion. Don Allisot from the Detachment of Maine. I would like to make a motion that we accept those minutes as written and distributed.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: We have a motion on the floor to accept the minutes as printed.

ANECMAN JOHN LAWRENCE (LA): John Lawrence, alternate NEC for Louisiana, seconds the motion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: We have a motion and a second. On the question?

NECMAN JACOB MCCARTY (WV): Mr. Commander, Jacob McCarty, Detachment of West Virginia.

There was a deficiency in the pre-NEC minutes that were distributed. The roll call was truncated, eliminating West Virginia, and we'd like it recorded into the minutes that we were present at the pre-NEC.

And then also during the roll calls for the convention and the post-NEC, there's no classification of recording as to who was present within the transcriptions. Those should be captured within the minutes to show who was present in declaring the quorum.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Thank you for those points of information. We did receive information regarding that. We have made those changes to make sure that West Virginia was accounted for. In fact, we amended the sheet as requested, and there were several corrections. I was going to wait until there was a vote, but there were several corrections that were distributed, in particular, by Jack Youngs that we've noted some of those changes, and we'll make sure they get corrected in the actual official packets, and then we'll proceed from there with that.

NECMAN NED FOX (CA): California, Ned Fox.

I believe the rules of the NEC require that the minutes be distributed ten days in advance of our meeting, which we just got those on the 3rd. Today is the 7th, so that's only four days. I think the minutes, we should reject them at this time and move it to a Zoom meeting that can be called to go over the minutes.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Let's finish all the arguments and then we'll move on the motion.

NECMAN DONALD ALLISOT JR. (ME): I would make an amendment to the motion that the minutes be accepted as presented. However, we need to allow corrections or additions submitted in writing to the national adjutant.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: So, you want to make an amendment -- Don, make an amendment to your motion?

NECMAN ALLISOT: Yes, I'll accept that amendment.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Can you please say so we can say it all at one time, please?

NECMAN ALLISOT: Don Allisot from the Detachment of Maine.

I would like to make a motion that we accept the minutes as presented with time to, by email, to make the changes to the minutes as presented.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Ned, does that answer what you would like to see done, too? Is by email good enough, that anybody can give any changes in within the time to be accepted, that any changes be emailed in to the adjutant?

NECMAN NED FOX (CA): California, Ned Fox.

I disagree.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: We'll move with the vote for the email. Anybody else have any arguments?

All those in favor to accept it by email, say aye.

UNIDENTIFIED NECMAN: Mr. Commander?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Yes, sir.

UNIDENTIFIED NECMAN: We had a motion on the floor, it was seconded. We had the discussion. He amended his motion, but that was never seconded.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Do we have a second, please?

UNIDENTIFIED NECMAN: And can we have the other motion at the same time -- while we have that one motion on the floor, can we bring up a second motion without rescinding the first motion? I'm asking.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: He amended his motion.

UNIDENTIFIED NECMAN: He amended it?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: He was the original maker of the motion, so he amended it.

UNIDENTIFIED NECMAN: Okay.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: So, we have a motion on the floor. Can we get a second?

NECMAN RONALD ROBERTS (MS): Mr. Commander, Ron Roberts, NEC from Mississippi.

There's a lot of confusion right now. Could we have the motion repeated so we know what we're voting on, please?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: The amendment was to accept them as presented and give the NECs time to email back any corrections or changes.

Am I right, Donny?

NECMAN DONALD ALLISOT JR. (ME): Yes.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Yes.

Do we have a second on that?

ANECMAN JOHN LAWRENCE (LA): Sorry about that. John Lawrence, alternate NEC from Louisiana.

I'll second the motion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: We have a motion and a second. Is there any other discussion?

Hearing none, all those to accept, say aye.

All opposed?

Looks like we're going to have a roll call. This is a fun way to start.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: All right. We're going to --

UNIDENTIFIED NECMAN: Use the gavel?

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: With the start of the -- did somebody call for a roll call vote or am I just --

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: I called for it, yes.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: I just wanted to make sure.

So, we're going to go through the roll call vote. So, it's going to be, if I'm not mistaken, the national vice commanders, the detachments, and I believe the immediate past national commander has a vote; is that correct? I just want to go on record making sure I'm doing this correctly. Thank you.

...At this time, National Adjutant Wright called the roll and recorded votes as follows:

National Vice Commanders	Y	N	NV
John R. Cook	X		
Linwood A. Moore	X		
Robert L. Bristo	X		
Terry A. Harris	X		
James R. Fischer Sr.		X	

Detachments	Y	N	NV
Alabama		X	
Alaska		X	
Arizona		X	
Arkansas	X		
California		X	
Connecticut		X	
Delaware	X		
Florida		X	
France	X		
Georgia		X	
Hawaii		X	

Idaho		X	
Illinois		X	
Indiana		X	
Iowa		X	
Kansas		X	
Kentucky		X	
Latin America			X
Louisiana		X	
Maine	X		
Maryland		X	
Massachusetts		X	
Michigan		X	
Minnesota		X	
Mississippi		X	
Missouri		X	
Montana	X		
Nebraska		X	
Nevada		X	
New Hampshire	X		
New Jersey		X	
New Mexico		X	
New York		X	
North Carolina		X	
Ohio		X	
Oklahoma		X	
Oregon		X	
Pennsylvania	X		
Puerto Rico		X	
South Carolina			X
South Dakota		X	
Tennessee		X	
Texas		X	
Utah			X
Vermont	X		
Virginia	X		
West Virginia		X	
Wisconsin		X	
Wyoming		X	

National Commander	Y	N	NV
Donald L. "JR" Hall Jr.			X

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: I'm going to have to sit down, but I'm going to tell you no's have it.

(Laughter)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: I'm going to ask NEC Fox if he will come back up and say what he said again so maybe we can have a motion or that for the Zoom for the ten days to be present. Is that what you asked?

NECMAN NED FOX (CA): California, Ned Fox.

Motion that the adjutant schedule a Zoom meeting to approve the minutes on a date that can be selected that works.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: We have a motion on the floor.

NECMAN WILLIAM "BILL" KELLY (FL): Bill Kelly, NEC, Florida.

I'd like to second that motion and have it restated, please.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: We have a motion on the floor to have a Zoom meeting set up by the adjutant to accept the minutes after the ten days have been -- after the NECs have had ten days to respond to them. Any argument?

Hearing none, all those in favor, say aye.

Any opposed?

The ayes have it.

The parliamentarian is asking what page is that on, the ten-day notice.

UNIDENTIFIED NECMAN: I'll look it up.

NECMAN RONALD ROBERTS (MS): Mr. Commander?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: There was 13 YES's and 39 NO's, just so everybody knows.

Yes, Ron?

NECMAN ROBERTS: Mr. Commander, point of inquiry. The question has never been asked and I think it's an appropriate question. Why were the minutes not sent out on time?

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Kevin is right there.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Mr. Mook?

NECMAN ROBERTS: Mr. Mook, what's the excuse?

NATIONAL STAFF LIAISON MOOK: Commander?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Sir.

NATIONAL STAFF LIAISON MOOK: Kevin Mook, SAL liaison.

It was received very, very, very late, that's why.

NECMAN ROBERTS: That's why she's not here today?

(Laughter)

NATIONAL STAFF LIAISON MOOK: Different -- no, no, sir. The court reporter is not here because she has COVID. It would be better if she's not here, but that's a different person.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: It's actually two different companies altogether.

At this time, I ask all first-time attendees to the NEC to please stand and be recognized.

(Applause)

I would also ask that all veterans please rise and be recognized.

(Applause)

At this time, I ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort up National SAL Liaison Kevin Mook to the podium for remarks.

(Standing ovation)

Remarks

Kevin M. Mook, Indiana, SAL Liaison

Please be seated.

First and foremost -- Kevin Mook, SAL liaison. The reason -- again, the reason that the court reporter is not here is because she has COVID. This is being recorded. Not only is it live on Facebook for everybody else to see, but it's being recorded so that the minutes can be produced on time so that it will be reviewed. Okay? That's the truth.

What you need to know is, well, the SAL flag topper? It's there, it's in Emblem Sales. There's a whole bunch of them. Has anybody ordered them for their squadron yet? One, two, three, four. I put some good sweat equity into that. Please go back to your squadrons and get those ordered. I think they're \$45. Does that sound about right? Please do.

There's also now a RED, Remember Everyone Deployed, with a Sons word mark. That's now available. Trying to make sure that you guys are taken care of.

Something you all need to know about: finances, checks. I know we owe you some money. I know that we're behind. It's absolutely, positively not Brian or myself problem. It's finance. The truth is, they had somebody resign, and then they had someone who died. The person who died is the person that we would send in our call lists to them, they would upload it into the system and then magic would happen. Well, he's the one that did that, and they have not figured out how to replicate that yet.

So as of right now, I have a list from Brian, there are 66 checks printed and there's 127 that are not printed, because the data got corrupted last night as they were working on it. So, it's being done. Trust me when I tell you that leadership is fully aware of that. It's not just me and Brian making up stories, telling you that it's not happening. Trust me when I tell you, my leadership's been all over it. Matt Herndon is aware of it, Internal Affairs Commission chairman is aware of it, my executive director, James Baca, is aware of it, Dan Wheeler himself is aware of it. They're working on it. Please bear with me. You're not forgotten. We owe you absolutely. Do you understand that? Okay.

So, a phone call and email every two days won't help, because there's nothing I can do for you. Okay? It's going to get done. Yeah, I promise you that it's going to happen. And those that do have checks, there will be checks today at 4:00 outside. Brian will have them out there. Okay? I apologize for the inconvenience. Trust me, I'm all about making sure that that you're taken care of, but you need to know the truth, and the truth is that they're two people down. Although that's not your problem, that's our problem collectively as a company, as an American Legion. Okay? It's not just affecting the SAL. The TAL is having the same problem. Understand? I just want you to know the truth instead of me up here tap dancing and telling you some other story.

Now, for the minutes, legitimately, they came in way, way late, and we had to send them when we got them. As soon as we got them, we sent them out, but we'll work on that. Okay?

This time I'm not paying a fine (puts on SAL cap).

(Laughter)

I totally understand, guys. Okay? I do understand. And if I was in your position, I'd be pissed too. But it's going to be taken care of. It's not forgotten; all right? Please just know that. All right, thanks, guys.

(Standing ovation)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: We will now proceed with our national commission and committee reports.

I ask Chris Casey from the Americanism Commission to come with a report, along with Children and Youth and CWF report. On deck will be Jeff Vrabel for Centcom. And Bill Hill, you'll be after that with Finance.

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CASEY: Good afternoon.

...Chorus of "Good afternoon."

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CASEY: Mr. Commander, past national commanders, distinguished guests, and fellow Sons, he'd like to start by calling on Chairman Nave for his report on the Child Welfare Foundation Committee.

Report of Child Welfare Foundation Committee

Mark Nave, Pennsylvania, Chairman

Good afternoon, everybody.

...Chorus of "Good afternoon."

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN NAVE: The Child Welfare Foundation Committee meeting convened yesterday evening at 6:30 in the Ohio Room on the 21st floor. We had 22 in attendance, including committee members, consultants, NEC liaison, and guests.

We introduced our new CWF committeeman, John Sansoucie out of the Detachment of Missouri, who will be representing the Western Region going forward on the Zoom conference calls.

To date, as of September 28th, the Sons have raised \$103,000 for CWF this year. That is a \$25,000 increase from the previous year. We have 37 detachments that have donated so far, which is far ahead of last year's pace. So, gentlemen, you are doing a great job so far this year.

(Applause)

With that, we are currently approximately \$309,000 away from reaching \$10 million, and I'm quite sure, by the time this weekend is over, we're going to be a little bit closer. The goal for us is 10 million by New Orleans. So, we want to have a nice celebration in New Orleans as we cross over \$10 million in total donations.

Our committeemen gave their reports on their various regions. We had a good conversation concerning a youth initiative. One of the things that was the highlight at the national convention was young Henry Hasselhan bringing that check for \$2,500. Then right after that, we had another young Sons member who, within the next day, had raised another \$100. You know, I saw a young lady who is a part of the Junior Auxiliary in Pennsylvania who decided that she wants to raise funds for CWF, and her goal is to raise \$1,000.

So, discussion was, when we have our youth who take the initiative to raise money for other kids, let's capitalize on that. Let's honor them for their commitment to give to kids. And we're looking forward down the road to have a program, something maybe called "Kids for Kids," where we'll have some standards set up on how to accept and what type of reward to give. We've had some preliminary discussions with national and they seem to be positively with that and be willing to assist us in any way that they can.

We talked about our merchandise, which, gentlemen, you've seen out front, and we've had Doug Evans be our model for the CWF apron. And we started discussing some new ideas going into next year about some new merchandising items, and the clothes we are doing are good of the Sons. There was some good discussion about some possible fundraisers that were going to be happening, and various members discussed fundraisers that are already going to be happening within the detachments for CWF. Our meeting concluded at 7:32 p.m.

And that concludes my report for theses Child Welfare Foundation Committee.

...Committee Chairman Nave submitted the report of the Child Welfare Foundation Committee.

Child Welfare Foundation Committee

Opening:

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm on October 6, 2023 in the Ohio Room
of the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel by Chairman Mark E. Nave (PA) .

Roll Call:

Chairman: <u>Mark E. Nave (PA)</u>	Secretary: <u>Scott A. Williams (VA)</u>
Members: <u>Lyle Chapman (GA)</u>	Consultant: <u>Phil Stander (IL)</u>
<u>George Fleming, Jr. (PA)</u>	NEC Liaisons: <u>Paul Hayse (IL)</u>

Sanford "Sandy" Lipman (MI)
Jon Coakley, II (OH)
John Sansoucie (MO)

David Vulcan (MN)

Guests: Joe Schultis (IN), Paul Rush (IN), Larry Horne (OR), Keith Barnes (NJ), Allen Watry (WI), Casey Lenort (MN), Bryan Hine (TN), Chris Cook (OK), PNC Chris Carlton (IN), Richard Huntley (ME), Bob Brown (GA), Brandon Curry (KY)

Reading of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

There being no objections, Chairman Nave declared the minutes of the Spring 2023 meeting approved as published.

Reports of Members:

Welcome new members David Dieckgraeff (AK), David Vulcan (MN), Paul Hayse (IL), and Michael Greichen (RI).

Chairman Mark Nave – 103K so far this year. 37 Detachments donated. We are \$309K away from \$10M. Goal of \$10 Million by New Orleans in 2024.

The Western Region now has 15 Detachments. Colorado came in highly motivated. West has brought in \$21K. High energy in the Western Region call. Membership linked to CWF donations. John Sansoucie will be the new Western Rep.

Lyle Chapman – We had a Zoom meeting last Thursday September 27th at 8pm Central time. I praised all the 7 Detachments who were over \$1 per member last year. Colorado led with \$9.38 per member. The only problem is they are moving to the West. I told them that our committee has chosen seven grant applicants out of fifteen that were given to us.

Hopefully, we can get a few of those some grants that will not take effect until 2024 with a full year to complete them.

I also talked about the new red CWF aprons and the leftovers from the National Convention that we will sell at our NEC.

I concluded with "Let's all work together and achieve all our goals for the upcoming year."

George Fleming, Jr. – So far doing good in East Pennsylvania has. We in Northeast donation made (\$14,602.13) we have seven detachments out thirteen donate so far. great job it is early long way to go. We have Pennsylvania leading in Northeast with (\$6,831.28). Next is New Hampshire with (\$2,617.85) don't forget the dollar per member banner program. We be doing a 50/50 raffle. We be selling items at the NEC meeting. Please all detachment I like to get a CWF chairmen information from each detachment. If want me to come visit fundraising event for CWF I travel

Sandy Lipman – I am proud to welcome the new detachments to the Central region (Kentucky, West Virginia and for this year Georgia); and am looking forward to working with each detachment and their membership. We are off to a flying start with \$31,805 already donated!! This is approximately 1/3rd of our entire total of \$99,961.13. Excellent work so far. Here is the breakdown as of 9-15-23: Georgia \$70, Illinois \$3430, Michigan \$4663, Minnesota \$3374, Kentucky \$500, West Virginia 2375 and our top so far Ohio \$17,393. It always amazes me, the dedication of our brothers to the Central Region and we thank you for continuing the fabulous work that you all do! As I have not yet received any information on the Central call I cannot at this time report on anything new from the body overall. Sorry to not be on the zoom but I will be at our Fall conference and will try to find a way if I can get on. Please feel free to contact me at sandylipman95@hotmail.com if anything is needed or questions answered. Also Email letters have been sent out to the Detachments in the Central

Jon Coakley, II – Gentlemen, unfortunately with the new changes to the new meeting schedules, I was unable to attend the Southern call. My apologies to NVC Linwood for missing it. I now have the new map of the regions along with the schedule of meeting days and time. I look forward to being on the next call. I'd also like to say welcome to John Sansoucie to the committee. I look forward to working with him.

For those of you that don't know me, my name is Jon Coakley II from Ohio. This is, I believe, my 5th year on this committee. With a one-year break in there. CWF has always been my go-to charity. As the old saying goes, To Make a Difference in the Life of a Child. And the SAL is doing that. I am also the ANEC for Ohio as well as a PDC for the Detachment. I am currently the adjutant and finance officer for my squadron in Grove City, Ohio. I look forward to seeing us hit \$10 million!

John Sansoucie – Let me start by saying what a pleasure it is getting to work with the Western region. Getting to work with the Western region gives me a chance to see how others operate. What works and what doesn't work. Being from Missouri, I have always worked with the Central region since I joined 26 years ago. I am proud to have been a National Vice Commander for that region, proud to have seen how others operate, but I never got to see how those outside of my region worked. I know that we will work well together with the passion we have for the Child Welfare Foundation.

To those who do not know me, I have been a member for 26 years in the Detachment of Missouri. I have held every office in my squadron, currently Commander. In the Detachment I have served in all the offices as well, currently Senior Vice Commander. My biggest honor was holding the office of National Vice Commander. Being so involved with the Legion family of course means I have a huge support group, my family: Christine, my wife, and our children, Nicole, and Nathan, who are all members of the Legion family. Nicole and Nathan have been members since birth. We currently reside in De Soto Missouri and attend church in Festus, Missouri where I am an Elder for the church. Finally, I am the sales manager for F.L. Porter Foods, a food and paper distribution company.

Old Business:

Talked about the National Convention and donations. Little Henry's donation for CWF was the highlight for the Convention. Table with leftover Merchandise for CWF from Convention this weekend. Can do Consignments through Stacey Cope at National HQ.

New Business:

Small list of applicants versus previous years. Meeting with CWF Board this weekend to finalize the grant recipients.

New Meeting formats – will meet the 3rd Thursday on odd number months. Send CWF Updates to Round Up as well as CWF Fundraising events. Zoom Meetings are open meetings. Working on the Parent – Child initiative. This will help the children become more active in the sons. Children could sell age-appropriate items that the Committee could provide. The CWF Committee needs to find ways to support and move forward with this initiative.

Getting close to reaching \$10M donations. Recognize the Detachment that pushes CWF over \$10 Million in donations.

Resolutions:

There were none.

For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion:

Wing Fest in PA; American Flag Quilt; Several ideas were suggested for 2024 Merchandise. Mugs, tumblers, Cajun Sauce, etc.

Closing:

With no further business to consider, Chairman Mark E. Nave (PA) adjourned the meeting

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CASEY: Next, we have a fine new chairman of Children and Youth Committee. Unfortunately, his job required him to return back to D.C. immediately, so he held the meeting last night.

I'd like to call on Vice Chairman Lawrence for the report on the Children and Youth Committee.

Report of Children and Youth Committee

John Lawrence, Louisiana, Vice Chairman

Good afternoon.

...Chorus of "Good afternoon."

COMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: The Children and Youth Committee met here last night. Most committee members were present; several were excused for other obligations.

We talked about transitioning the Children and Youth Academy to the Americanism Commission. We talked about COTA, we talked about The American Legion Family Day, we discussed the Children and Youth Month, and VCF goals. The proposed goal is try to get a dollar per capita for VCF.

Some action items that came out is we want to promote the development of a newsletter for Children and Youth Month, promote Commander Hall's Four Pillar Challenge, Commander Hall's Youth Initiative Project, and American Legion Family Day.

Mr. Commander, that's my report.

...Committee Vice Chairman Lawrence submitted the report of the Children and Youth Committee.

Children and Youth Committee

Opening:

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm on October 6, 2023 in the Circle East Room
of the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel by Chairman Joseph A. Lohman (MD) .

Roll Call:

Chairman:	<u>Joseph A. Lohman (MD)</u>	Secretary:	<u>Robert J. Avery (NY)</u>
Vice Chairman:	<u>John Lawrence (LA)</u>	NEC Liaisons:	<u></u>
	<u>Thomas M. Arista (TX)</u>		<u></u>

Christopher V. Reachard (DE) – Exc.	
Brian C. Shedd (GA) - Excused	
Jeffery S. Trout (IL)	

Guests: Dale Toenies (AK), William Murphy (MA), Steve England (VT), Gary Nelson (NJ), James Noble (NJ), Steven Cox (PA), Keith Murdough (NH), Chris Sherman (WI), David Rippe (NE), Gary Lang (OH), Ronnie Grist (GA).

Reading of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

There being no objections, Chairman Lohman declared the minutes of the Spring 2023 meeting approved as published.

Chris Casey (NE) Americanism Commission Chairman, spoke and thanked the Committee for their hard work.

Past Children & Youth Committee Chairman James Noble spoke briefly. He has been assisting in the transition of the Committee leadership.

Old Business:

Committee Member Reports:

Jeff Trout - Assist Americanism with C&Y Academy

The Americanism Commission has not set any goals related to the National Children & Youth Academy. We aim to improve the program across the board by working on the following:

- develop an age-appropriate curriculum with hands-on activities.
- develop a registration form with emergency contact information.
- develop a participant patch and rocker (year specific)
- incorporate The American Legion Auxiliary Junior Patch Program
- reaching out to former participants (parent/guardians) for feedback

John Lawrence - COTA

The Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA) is the premier organization providing fundraising assistance to transplant families. COTA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, so funds raised to help meet transplant expenses are not considered income for families. COTA also works with individuals of any age with single-gene disorders such as Polycystic Kidney Disease, Cystic Fibrosis or Sickle Cell Disease. COTA's services and guidance are provided at no charge to transplant families. 100% of each contribution made to COTA in honor of patients helps meet transplant-related expenses, and gifts to COTA are fully tax deductible. COTA funds can be used for transplant related expenses that include lodging, transportation, household expenses, prescription medications, insurance premiums, living donor costs and much more.

Tom Artisa – American Legion Family Day

The National Executive Committee passed Resolution No. 7 titled "American Legion Family Day" at its Fall Meeting in October 2022. The resolution established an American Legion Family Day to be observed annually on the last Saturday of April. On

American Legion Family Day, April 27, 2024, posts are encouraged to open their doors to members of their community for the day to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of Legionnaires, Sons of The American Legion, Legion Riders and American Legion Auxiliary. It is a time to give back to those who support the American Legion Family. Start planning your American Legion Family Day now. We are asking for your support and promotion of this special day. Let's spread the word; let's recognize, educate and recruit. Our National American Legion Commander Seehafer has stated that the organization's top priority will be a continuation of the Legion's focus: "Be the One". We are all encouraged to push the number one. Be the One to save one. The Family Day can be filled with a variety of activities. Posts can set up tables with membership brochures and applications for the American Legion family for recruiting new members. A table can also be set up for bringing awareness to our organization's "Be the One", which can include information with available resources. The posts can offer breakfast, lunch and/or dinner throughout the day. Let's remember to include children and young people. Face painting and a bounce house are very popular activities for the children. Americanism can be a topic for educating children and young people of all ages. There are a lot of educational aids and fun projects for all ages on the Emblem Sales website. Order now. A "How to Session" can be scheduled, such as how to fold a flag or how to follow the protocol for flying the flag at half-mast. This is also a great time to introduce Girls/Boys State, Oratorical, Baseball, as well as other American Legion programs. More information will become available in the months ahead. Please put Saturday, April 27, 2024, on your posts' calendars. Let's involve the entire American Legion Family. As our new Sons of The American Legion Commander Donald (JR) Hall says: "We can all make things better by working together".

Brian Shedd – C&Y Month

As most of you know, C&Y month is in April, however, I'm not sure that many Legions, Squadrons, or Auxiliary units know this. I will be encouraging all Legions to try and enact at least one C&Y program or activity during the month of April. I also would like to put a newsletter together that explains more about our current C&Y programs, as well as giving some ideas out to our Legions on how they can help build their Jr. Membership. I would like to get more entities on board and get information to strengthen our up-and-coming youth who will one day be our military and leaders of our country!

Chris Reachard – Veterans & Children Foundation (VCF)

At the 51st National Convention in Charlotte NC. Americanism Commission Chairman Cassey introduced a resolution to move 250,000.00 from the reserve account to the VCF. This resolution passed without objection. This year's goal for the Detachments to donate to the VCF is \$1.00 per capita. The American Legion Riders have shifted their focus to the VCF Foundation and will be focusing their Legacy Run funds to the VCF. The VCF's goal is to have at least 25 million in reserves. This will help the foundation to be self-sufficient and be able to assist more Veterans and Children during emergency relief efforts.

The Committee and the Americanism Commission will be establishing a suggested per capita for donations to the Foundation.

Joe Lohman – National Commander Hall's parent/youth initiative project

The C&Y Committee held an internal meeting on Monday September 18th, 2023, to discuss potential events to support Commander Hall's parent/youth initiative project.

Discussions/Concerns

- How to involve parents? They are the key to getting our young involved.
- How do we communicate with the parents and youth about the project?
- Need to provide guidance to the Detachments on how to promote the project.

In summary, The C&Y Community has agreed to promote a C&Y program during the American Legion Family Day or at any other Detachment event such as a campout or American Legion family event as designated by the Detachment. The project will consist of promoting a C&Y program (to be announced later) that will involve both the parent/youth with the purpose of educating our family members about this project and potentially raising funds to support the project.

Ronnie Grist (GA) spoke of a children's camp run by the Detachment of Georgia. They are including parents as camp counselors.

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Regional Call Representation Reports:

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Chris Reachard – Attended the Eastern Region call on Wednesday September 20th, 2023. Outside of what I reported there were no other discussions on C & Y.

Jeff Trout - The Central Region Zoom meeting was held on 13 September 2023. There was no discussion from Detachments & Development Chairman Michael Cotton and I mentioned National Commander Hall's youth initiative.

John Lawrence - Participated in quarterly Mid-western region conference call on 9-26-2023. Present the goals for the committee emphasizing C&Y month and family day.

Joe Lohman – Attended the West Region call on Wednesday September 20th, 2023. There was some discussion regarding guidance on how squadrons are to report to National if they completed Commander Hall's 4 pillar challenge. There were no discussions regarding C&Y among the Detachment reports.

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New Business

- 2023-2024 Proposed Goals:
 - donate to the VCF is \$1.00 per capita
- 2023-2024 Action Items:
 - Promote and develop newsletter for C&Y month
 - Promote CDR Hall 4 pillar challenge.
 - Commander Hall's youth initiative project
 - American Legion Family Day

For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion:

Next meeting date Monday November 13, 2023 at 7pm EST

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Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://legion.zoom.us/j/95116226587?pwd=NHRWRTh2OXEvMEI0YmpMNHFKemU4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 951 1622 6587

Passcode: 799095

888 475 4499 US Toll-free

877 853 5257 US Toll-free

Closing:

With no further business to consider, Chairman Joseph A. Lohman (MD) adjourned the meeting
at 7:05 pm .

Report of Americanism Commission

Chris Casey, Nebraska, Chairman

All right, hello again. I just wanted to start real quick. You might see this massive button on me. I have a very strong-willed daughter, and I got a birthday card recently. She wanted to make sure that I knew it was just from her, not her brothers. And I could feel the big button in there. You know, most dads are thinking, this button is going to be "Number 1 Dad." As I read it, and knowing my daughter, it should have been no surprise to me that it says, "My Daughter's Number 1."

(Laughter)

So, she asked me immediately, "Dad, when is the next time you talk in front of the Sons?" So, she knows, and I'm sure she's watching, so Lillian, that's for you. Because I'd catch -- I don't want to see that side of her when I get home if I don't have the button.

(Laughter and applause)

So, thank you to the committees that are part of the greater Americanism Commission. They do great work. Child Welfare Foundation, can't wait to see us hit \$10 million as an organization. Us Sons take great pride in that, as we should.

I just want to take a moment to recognize the Americanism Commission members that met earlier today. We have some new members -- we have one new member, two new consultants. We have some guys that are ready to do work for arguably the largest commission in the Sons.

So, to start out with our vice chairman -- and if you're in the room, please rise. I want you guys to put faces to names, because the commission wants you to provide information from your detachments about things that you have going on in Americanism that you excel at. We want to be able to share that across the country.

So, if you walk up to Gerald Hammerschmidt, our vice chairman from Kansas, or our newest member, Daniel Maurin from Louisiana, or Paul Hayse from Illinois, Keith Murdough from New Hampshire. And also, we have Bud Neel, he's not here today, he's excused; he has a large Special Olympics fundraiser he's running in his squadron. So, these are our members of the Americanism Commission. And our consultants, Chris Sherbourne, who is already standing up in the back, from Oklahoma; and Bill Murphy from Massachusetts, if Bill is in the room. Thank you, Bill.

So, this is your Americanism Commission. We'd love to hear from you and we look to provide guidance this year. So, I'll kind of go over that, gentlemen, if you want to take a seat.

I'll go over kind of what we talked about in our meeting. Quickly, I want to just read you our purpose. And I found you the purpose, we've had it in past minutes. But I went and updated

it, because it has changed a little bit on the Legion side. So, this is the purpose of the Americanism Commission for the Legion:

"To promote an understanding and appreciation of American government, the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship, and activity in the American way of life through youth activities, community service, instruction of prospective citizens, and legal immigrants, education and educational facilities, and protection of the U.S. flag from physical desecration."

So, our goals are going to be in line with the purpose. So, I'm going to go through those goals with you. The first is that we'd like to increase Boys State participation numbers by 10 percent. So, what that means is, we're looking at the participation numbers that the Legion puts out every year, not necessarily the CSR. The CSR looks at how much the Sons give. We're great money-givers. We raise a lot of money and donate a lot of money and we put in a lot of hours. What we want to see is how that work is affecting the participant numbers.

So, I wasn't able to provide that to you at the convention. Those numbers weren't provided from the Legion until after convention. So, I can tell you now that we were at 9 1/2 percent growth of boys that participated in programs across the country. So, we're just shy of the 10 percent. We want to look at 10 percent additional growth for next year, and we'll have guidance through the year on how we can achieve that across the country.

Our consultant from Oklahoma has been given the task of Boys State. In Oklahoma the Sons run Boys State and do an exceptional job, so I expect Chris Sherbourne will have lots of guidance for detachments across the country.

Second is that we want to increase flag education programs by 10 percent. So, we'll have guidance on programs that have worked, what those programs might look like. If you

struggle to get into your school districts, we'll give you guidance on how you can find your state standards. Because in the state that I live in, they're mandated. You just go find state standards. I'm a former teacher, so when you want to get something done with the school board, you use their standards against them. So, we found in Nebraska that fifth grade, that's the magic number. Fifth grade, they are required to be provided education on the symbols of our government and our country, and so flag education is it. So, we'll provide guidance on that.

And I just want to go back to the purpose. The last line in the purpose is "the protection of the U.S. flag from physical desecration." As long as I've been a member of the Sons, the Legion has had an amendment, a flag protection amendment, but it's never gone anywhere. So, our thought is, we produce a whole generation of young people that understand the flag, why it matters. And when they're old enough to lead our country, they're going to get an amendment done.

(Applause)

Lastly, but not least, supporting the Flying Flags for Heroes program by increasing detachment participation by 10 percent. No longer a goal of flags. The purpose is flags. We just want to see more detachments participate. We had 24, 24 detachments that didn't register a single flag on Flying Flags for Heroes website, for whatever reason. We just want to help empower you to buy into that. You know, that website looks really good when there is over a million flags placed. It's another thing that the Sons can be proud of that we do.

It's happened forever. People have always placed flags. We're just asking you to simply take that extra step to register them. It's not difficult. And if that's what's kept your detachment

from registering flags, you're not quite sure how that works, just reach out to one of us; we'd be happy to help you. You tell me what you did and I'll put it on Flying Flags for Heroes for you.

Those are the goals, the measurable goals we're going to take a look at this year. There's additional action items. The Children and Youth vice chairman kind of hit on it, that the American Commission has been tasked with the National Children and Youth Academy, with the assistance of the Children and Youth Committee. So, no specific goals, but overall, an improvement of the Children and Youth Academy.

And what we're looking at is developing age-appropriate curriculum with hands-on activities. Some of those little, little members, they need the hands-on or they're bouncing all over the place. So, we want to find things that they can do whether they're five years old to 16 years old. Maybe there are some things that we do with just the five-, six-year-olds, and some things we do with the others.

So, we're going to develop a registration form with emergency contact information. We'll develop a participant patch, and rocker that will be year specific. So that's our hope is that we can roll out a patch. You know, kids love patches. So, a patch that won't have a year on it, so we can use it year after year after year. It will have the -- it was on the video board earlier -- but our brand mark, the one that looks like home plate, maybe something like that in the middle of a patch that says, "National Children and Youth Academy."

And then the rockers are meant to be -- any Legion Riders knows what a rocker is. You go to Sturgis, you get one patch that says, "I rode my bike to Sturgis" and then you put the rockers underneath with the different years you've done it. So, the rocker underneath for the

first year will say "New Orleans 2024," the next will say, "Tampa Bay 2025." So, we look to incorporate that, bring that in.

We want to try to incorporate as family, we have Junior Auxiliary members that attend this. They have an outstanding American Legion Auxiliary Junior patch program, so we want to try to incorporate that. We may not be able to fill their entire sheet to earn them a patch that day that we have them, but we can get them started and send it home to finish it. The nice thing about the junior patch program is, they already have -- they're earning the same patches, but it's age specific. So that whole idea of having curriculum that's based on their age, the Auxiliary has already done it for us. We shouldn't try to -- let's see how it works for us; we'll incorporate it in.

And then we want to reach out to former participants, the parents and guardians, for feedback. Things that they liked about the past Children and Youth Academies, what would make them come back again, what do they want to see added. So that's how we intend to improve the National Children and Youth Academy.

Secondly, another action item is the youth/parent program initiatives that were given. This is something to carry on multi-year. And what we were asked to do is to find something that the youth under 16 could run the program, with buy-in from parents.

So, I won't go too in depth into the program that we're considering for the Americanism Commission, but how it will work is, we'll eventually get this to Centcom with how a squadron could pull this idea off, this initiative. Centcom will then, I believe they're asking through the national vice commanders, to identify detachments that this could be piloted in.

So just quickly about our level. American Red Cross already has a program that will fit really well with this. It's a Future Blood Donor program. In most states, kids 17 can donate with parental consent. But the 16 and under, which is what we're looking for our initiative, they can't donate blood. So, the future donor program is, they're provided education by the American Red Cross on what blood donations look like, what's the purpose of it, why we need to do it. I mean, many of us have heard shortages all across the country, critical shortages. So, this will help provide education to these younger members. They can feel that they're part of a program that they're running.

And the buy-in for the parents are, the parent or the guardian is the one that they recruit to provide the blood donation on their behalf. When they do, the American Red Cross gives them a little award, little trinket. It will be a key chain, whatever's available in your region, whether it's a trinket or whether it's a pair of socks, the kids earn that. So that's a program that we'd like to -- we'll build that, we'll make sure that it's able to be rolled out and presented to Centcom. So, keep an eye out for that upcoming.

Just some of the additional highlights in the meeting. Kevin did a great job of helping us last year. The Legion has a fillable flag appreciation certificate that they sell on Emblem Sales. We asked if that could be modified to Sons, that our emblem and things are on there. It's provided for free on the website. So, I don't know how many of you have utilized it, but we'd encourage you. Recognize those people in your communities that are flying the flag properly. Make it to where, you know, business puts that up there. They put that in their business, our logo is on there, our emblem is on there, and might spark a conversation. So go to the national website; we encourage you to use that in your communities.

The Americanism action alerts, they'll be published bimonthly. We'll continue those. When the commission doesn't have a business meeting, the off months, that's when you'll see an action alert, and those will come through the national vice commanders.

And then the National Americanism Commission still has a Facebook page. We've gotten some traction, we've gotten some new likes on there, people following things. But there's a lot of information on there that would be useful, stories. You know, we certainly could look at adding things that you do in your detachments. Right now, I'm finding things you guys do and I'm putting it on the Facebook page. But it sure would be nice if you pointed those things out, because I'm just not able to follow everything you guys do across the country; I'd love to. So, anything related to Americanism is on there and its @SonsAmericanism, you can put that in the search bar.

So, as I've said to you guys before, last year, convention, Americanism has programs that require constant attention. Although we're going to be focused on certain measurable goals, we can't forget all the other programs. You know, we have Junior Shooting Sports, we have National Oratorical. So, we'll make sure that we're still providing guidance on those. It's just not going to be a measurable goal we're going after. There's only so many things we want to hone in on and really knock it out of the park.

So, I thank you for all the work that you guys do for the organization and to further the ideals of Americanism. We're looking forward to a big year and we hope that we get your guys' help, because it takes all the membership, your guidance back to the membership, because they're the ones doing the work.

Commander, this concludes my report.

...Commission Chairman Casey submitted the report of the Americanism Commission.

Americanism Commission

Opening:

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am on October 7, 2023 in the Circle East Room
of the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel by Chairman Chris Casey (NE) .

Roll Call:

Chairman:	<u>Chris Casey (NE, 2023)</u>	Secretary:	<u>Jeffrey E. Hicks (NJ)</u>
Vice Chairman:	<u>Gerald Hammerschmidt (KS, 2025)</u>	PNC Advisor:	<u>Danny J. Smith (CO) – Excused</u>
Members:	<u>Keith Murdough (NH, 2024)</u>	NEC Liaisons:	<u>Francis E. Riddell, Jr. (HI)</u>
	<u>Robert “Bud” Neel (NE, 2024) – Excused</u>		<u>Charles T. “Abe” Abrahamson (ID)</u>
	<u>Paul Hayse (IL, 2025)</u>		<u>Carvin L. Chapman (MI)</u>
	<u>Daniel Maurin (LA, 2026)</u>		<u>John Hook (NH)</u>
		Consultants:	<u>Christopher Sherbourne (OK, 2024)</u>
			<u>William Murphy, III (MA, 2024)</u>

Guests: Jeff Trout (IL), Sean Deiter (PA), Ernie Laberge (MA), NVC Terry Harris (KS), Jeff Lee (VA), Larry Horne (OR), Michael Vozar (IL), Gerard Sambets (FL), Casey Lenort (MN), Keith Barnes (NJ), Gene Theroux (MA), NVC Linwood Moore, NVC Robert Bristo (MN), Mike Holley (MI), National Commander Donald L. “JR” Hall, Jr. (MD), National Commander’s Aide Thomas G. Deal (MD), and National Historian Jeffrey Thorne (MD).

Reading of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

There being no objections, Chairman Casey declared the minutes of the Spring 2023 meeting approved as published.

Reports of Committees:

Children & Youth Committee – Chairman Joe Lohman (MD) had to return to work in Maryland and Vice Chairman John Lawrence was not present, so no report was filed with the Commission during its meeting. The Children & Youth Report would be heard in the NEC meeting later today.

Child Welfare Foundation Committee – Chairman Mark Nave (PA) gave his report. Good morning Americanism Commission and thank you Chairman Casey for the opportunity to speak to the commission. As of the latest CWF Cross Tabs report from September 28th, \$103,867.13 has been donated by 37 detachments, which is a \$24,894.21 (31.5%) increase from this time last year. We are well on our way to reaching \$10 million dollars in total donations. Based the current amounts, the Sons have a raised \$9,690,867, which leaves us at \$309,133 away from reaching this goal. Let's continue the great work that we have always done raising funds.

This weekend the CWF Committee will be selling our merchandise outside the meeting room. We have our red Sons for Kids apron selling for \$25. The phone charger is selling for \$10. The CWF polo shirt is going for \$50 along with the baseball cap going for \$25. The CWF challenge coin is going for \$10. Stop by and purchase items. If you want to a large purchase or get items on consignment, contact Stacy Cope of the Americanism Division at headquarters.

The committee welcomed a new committee member, John Sansoucie from the Detachment of Missouri was a past National Vice Commander. John will be assigned to the Western region. Let's welcome John to the committee.

The committee has been hard at work since National convention reviewing grant applications for the 2024 year and have submitted our recommendations to the CWF Board. The applicants will be awarded at the CWF board meeting, October 8th and communicated shortly after.

One of the items the committee will be working on is a youth initiative for CWF. We want to build off the energy of 6 year old, Henry Hasselhan from the Detachment of New Jersey, who donated \$2,500 at National Convention.

Please encourage your Detachment CWF Chaiman to be on the CWF Zoom meetings. We would love to hear from them and exchange ideas and thoughts.

Let's continue to do the great work that we have done and looking forward to a successful year. Thank you.

Paul Hayse (IL) made a motion to accept the Child Welfare Foundation Committee report; seconded by Keith Murdough (NH). Discussion none. All in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

Reports of Members:

Chairman Chris Casey – Upcoming Commission Meetings (virtual)

3rd Monday (bi-monthly) for future meetings.

- 2023 Dates: October 16th, December 18th

Vice Chairman Gerald Hammerschmidt – See report below.

Keith Murdough – National Children & Youth Academy

I believe we need to have youth in different age groups. Depending on age from registration forms will determine hands on different projects. For example, you shouldn't

have a 16-year-old participate in a project with a 5-year-old. I'm sure we have information on parents or guardians from last year, so we could contact them and learn from their experience.

Bud Neel – The SONs need to coordinate with the sponsoring Posts on how they can help with the Family Day.

We can also make sure there is a serviceable American Flag flying at the Post, along with Legion and SONs flags, if available.

The Auxiliary received a grant for Americanism and has purchased items for a Star-Spangled Kids kit. The kit contains a comic book on I Pledge Allegiance, flag lapel pins, a roll of flag stickers, book on Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, 4X6 flag, flag key chain, book "Let's be Right on Flag Etiquette and Our Country's flag. Tina Nelsen will email me a copy of the items and quantity in the box. These boxes were provided to every Department Auxiliary Americanism Chairman.

I believe we need to have available pamphlets on every one of our Americanism programs at the family day, or make sure they are available through the Posts, including: Boy's State, Jr. Shooting Sports, Jr. Law, Girl's State, Boy's Nation, Oratorical, Military Kids, Children & Youth, military kids, Operation Comfort Warriors, National Emergency Fund, bicycle safety and Safe Halloween.

A laptop or T.V screen should be available to have a continuous run of all the programs above if someone in the SONs or Post have the knowledge.

Anyone attending Family Day should have a business card available to provide to anyone having questions on any program and follow up with phone call or email from a sign in roster. The volunteer answering questions should be familiar with all the programs assisted by a Legion and Auxiliary member. Three heads are better than one.

Paul Hayse – The Central Region met on September 13th at 7:00 pm, there were only twenty people on the call. With N.E.C being in October the call was more of a formation meeting. Boys Nation and Junior Shooting was brought up. More will be discussed at the next call after N.E.C. Nothing to report on American Legion Baseball.

Daniel Maurin – See below.

Old Business:

Americanism Action Alert (4th alert was sent in June) feedback requested. The plan is to publish these bi-monthly during the months when the Commission does not host a business meeting.

Regional Call Representation / Commission Members

Northeast – Keith Murdough (NH) – Main topic was youth/parent initiative, members 16 and under. Talked on FFFH. There were 8 detachments on the September 20, 2023, conference call.

Southeast – Daniel Maurin (LA) – Did not really have a report, but he pledged to get more involved later in the year.

Central – Paul Hayse (IL) – The Central Region met on September 13th at 7:00 pm, there were only twenty people on the call. With N.E.C being in October the call was more of a formation meeting. Boys Nation and Junior Shooting was brought up. More will be discussed at the next call after N.E.C. Nothing to report on American Legion Baseball.

Midwest – Gerald “Hammer” Hammerschmidt (KS) – On the September 27th conference call, I talked about The American Legion Family Day on April 17th. I talked about a Youth/Parent program initiative that we are going to decide on. I told everyone that we are going to support Flag Education/Etiquette programs. We are also supporting the Boys State program. We also want to attain a goal for the FFFH. We want to make it something that will be attainable.

West – Robert “Bud” Neel (NE) – excused due to squadron business. However, he filed a report. No report for the Western Region since the local Internet provider tower was down for 2.5 days at the time of the Western Region Zoom meeting. Our goals have NOT been approved. The Western Region does NOT provide a copy of its Zoom meeting for national committee/commission members assigned to its region to attend.

New Business:

2023-24 Proposed Goals

1. Increase Boys State participation numbers by 10% (Chris Sherbourne)

As we discussed on the Americanism Commission call Boys State is looking to grow by 10% this year.

I spoke with Leadership from the Oklahoma Boys state program who gave a report last week in Indianapolis on how we achieve this goal. In boy's states hay day, the recruiters were WWII vet and in the early 90's these vets began to pass away, we lost the knowledge and experience on how they recruited delegates and got sponsorships. A lot of the post/ squadrons don't send delegates because they say they can't afford to. When in reality most of the post/ squadrons didn't pay for their delegates, they got sponsorships from the community to sponsor the young men

because they were explained to the importance of this program and the future of our country. We need to start by adding post/ squadron and district / county liaisons to the boy's state program so we can get the most accurate information out to the post / squadrons so we can teach them how to recruit and get sponsorships. If every post/ squadron sends one more delegate, then they did last year and every post/ squadron that didn't send a delegate send one we will exceed our 10% goal. We also need to get into the schools and see the counselors to get them the info they need about boy's state. Every state has a state counselor within their department of education get with them and have them send all the counselors in your state boys state information. Let's use last year's delegates as recruiters they know the program and know who in their school would be good to go through boy's state. I believe educating our members and our schools is key to growing our boys state programs.

2. Increase flag education programs by 10% (Daniel Maurin)

A multi-step process:

- A. Communication to Detachments, Squadrons, etc. Newsletter - ex. Round-Up
- B. Promoting Importance of education
- C. Promote flag education along with other SALAC programs' ex. Legion Family Day

3. Support the Flying Flags for Heroes program by increasing detachment participation by 10%. Twenty-four (24) detachments did NOT participate last year! (William Murphy, III)

2023-24 Action Items

1. American Legion Family Day April 27, 2023 (Bud Neel)

- Americanism needs to be on display during the event.

2. The Americanism Commission will work to improve the National Children & Youth Academy with the assistance of the Children & Youth Committee. (Keith Murdough, Paul Hayse, and Jeff Trout-C&Y Committee)

- Develop age-appropriate curriculum with hands on activities
- Develop a registration form with emergency contact information
- Develop a participant patch and rocker (year specific)
- Incorporate The American Legion Auxiliary Junior Patch Program
- Reach out to former participants (parent/guardians) for feedback

3. Youth/Parent Program Initiative (will propose to the NEC for further action)

Future Blood Donor program through the American Red Cross. The program is designed for those 16 and under. See flyer.

Resolutions:

None

For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion:

The fillable SAL Flag Appreciation Certificate PDF is available on the national website.

oLegion.org/sons <MEDIA <Publications & Forms <Under "Forms"

Upcoming Conference Calls

Americanism Commission, October 16, 2023, 7:30 PM (EST)

[https://legion.zoom.us/j/93540660918?](https://legion.zoom.us/j/93540660918?pwd=YU5nK0JON2Y2OEIwYm9uMlp5Z05WZz09)

[pwd=YU5nK0JON2Y2OEIwYm9uMlp5Z05WZz09](https://legion.zoom.us/j/93540660918?pwd=YU5nK0JON2Y2OEIwYm9uMlp5Z05WZz09)

• Meeting ID: 935 4066 0918; • Passcode: 571659

• (877) 853-5257 US Toll-free

Child Welfare Foundation Committee, November 16, 2023, 7:00 PM (EST)

[https://legion.zoom.us/j/98470314786?](https://legion.zoom.us/j/98470314786?pwd=bEtYRXVrSWISZ0kvYmc5VjhWQzJsQT09)

[pwd=bEtYRXVrSWISZ0kvYmc5VjhWQzJsQT09](https://legion.zoom.us/j/98470314786?pwd=bEtYRXVrSWISZ0kvYmc5VjhWQzJsQT09)

• Meeting ID: 984 7031 4786; Passcode: 780858

• (877) 853-5257 US Toll-free

Children & Youth Committee, November 13, 2023, 7:00 PM (EST)

[https://legion.zoom.us/j/95116226587?](https://legion.zoom.us/j/95116226587?pwd=NHRWRTh2OXEvMEI0YmpMNHFKemU4Zz09)

[pwd=NHRWRTh2OXEvMEI0YmpMNHFKemU4Zz09](https://legion.zoom.us/j/95116226587?pwd=NHRWRTh2OXEvMEI0YmpMNHFKemU4Zz09)

• Meeting ID: 951 1622 6587; Passcode: 799095

• (877) 853-5257 US Toll-free

Thank you for all you do for the Sons!

Closing:

With no further business to consider,

Chairman Chris Casey (NE)

adjourned the meeting

at 8:38 am .

(Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: If there's no objection, the Americanism Commission report will be moved to file.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SACCO: Commander?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Sir.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SACCO: To the Child Welfare chairman, if I may ask a couple of questions.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Sure.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SACCO: The \$10 million that we're going to hit no doubt by New Orleans is fantastic, and you briefly mentioned that you'd like to celebrate that milestone in New Orleans. Did your committee discuss any type of celebration that you'd like to do in New Orleans?

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN NAVE: Not officially, not officially. The one thing that we will do, probably --

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SACCO: By the way, excuse me. Gene Sacco from California.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN NAVE: Yes, sir. Thank you.

The one thing that we will do is, the detachment that reaches that \$10 million mark, which obviously is by chance depending on which checks come in, they will be recognized in some form or fashion with acknowledgment that they were the detachment that went over the \$10 million mark.

As far as the celebration, nothing has been defined yet.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SACCO: Okay. So, I'd like to just suggest something for your committee and the commander to consider.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN NAVE: Sure.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SACCO: A couple of years ago we had what I think to be a wonderful luncheon to celebrate our 50th convention, and there was a coin made and everything like that. It cannot be discounted in any way that, without the Sons of The American Legion, the Child Welfare Foundation of The American Legion would not be where it is today.

And reaching the \$10 million mark, to me, is substantial and fantastic, and it really deserves to be celebrated in a special way. You may want to consider, like we did for the 50th convention, having a luncheon, having a commemorative coin made for that milestone to be given to all people that pay to attend the luncheon. And at the luncheon, you may want to consider -- this is something I thought we should be doing for many years in the past but let's start it possibly at this luncheon -- your committee helps choose grants that the Sons are going to be giving; correct?

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN NAVE: Correct.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SACCO: Okay. I think it would be great, whether it's in person or by video, that maybe if you guys do decide to do a luncheon, that maybe you have some representatives of organizations that the Sons have given grants to come and tell us what that money that we donated to them really did to help children. And if they can't attend in person, maybe they record a video that we could play at the luncheon.

But this needs to be celebrated. This needs to be celebrated to where American Legion members come, Auxiliary members come, and let them pay the accolades that are due to every member of the Sons of The American Legion for this great milestone. It should not be overlooked by just acknowledging -- I don't discount acknowledging the detachment that brought us over that \$10 million mark, but it's not just that one detachment. It's the decades of us donating this money to get to \$10 million, a membership of under 400,000 does better than The American Legion and the Auxiliary together? We deserve to brag about that more than we do and we deserve to celebrate it. Thank you.

(Applause)

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN NAVE: I thank you for the ideas, and we're definitely going to take all those ideas and definitely put them under consideration and move forward as necessary.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Thank you. Are there any other questions?

If not, we'll move on, the report from Mr. Vrabel on Centcom. Finance is on deck, and then Public & Media.

Report of Century Committee

Jeff Vrabel Sr., Ohio, Chairman

Good afternoon.

...Chorus of "Good afternoon."

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN VRABEL: Century Committee met on Friday, October 6, at 7:30 p.m. in the Circle Centre in the lower level. The members that were present, and I'm going to ask you to stand and be recognized, are Jeff Vrabel Jr., Bobby Crevelli, PNC Joe

Mayne, PNC Gene Sacco. And new to our committee is Vice Chairman PNC Joe Gladden.

Thank you. Also in attendance was our NEC liaison Jim Stewart, and our PNC Joe Paviglianti as a consultant, and Past National Historian Bill Towns as an administrative consultant. We also had a few guests.

At that meeting we approved and placed on file our minutes from the July 13th meeting, and we went into a recap of everything that happened from the day the committee was formed up to the time of that meeting. And some of the things we talked about were how we developed five keys for the strategic plan going forward as Membership, Americanism, Youth, Brand Awareness, and Operations.

We also discussed about what some plans were going to be for the upcoming membership year for 2023-2024. Part of the new alignment will include the 100th Anniversary Committee will be a sub of Centcom. Those members are PNC Kevin Winkelmann as the chairman, PNC Bob Worrel as the vice chairman, PNC Doc Gibbs, and Bill Towns. So those will be the people, if you have any 100th anniversary questions.

We're going to have Bob come on up and tell us a little bit about what the 100th anniversary plans are moving forward.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER WORREL: Thanks, Jeff.

Also, a member of the committee is PNC Dave Faust who is unable to be here this weekend.

The one thing that the 100th anniversary really needs, all of you, when you get back home, we need a representative from each detachment. This is going to have to be detachment and squadron heavy. We need your input. And if you can appoint a point member or someone,

chairman of a committee, forward that to myself or Bill Towns, and we'll work with them to help develop your detachment histories and also to work to develop squadron histories. Those are going to be very instrumental in what we want to accomplish with the 100th anniversary.

Some of the objectives that we've been toward, this will just not be a one-day or a one-year celebration. We want to start building the celebration with the 95th convention in 2027, and we want to highlight the first 20 years, 1932 to 1951. We want to break this down and highlight 20-year increments. And then when we get to the convention in 2032 -- I put 3032 on my notes. We're not waiting a thousand years -- we're going to do a yearlong celebration of the 100th anniversary of the organization.

We want to do this in a grand style and grand fashion. We've got a lot of different objectives that we're looking for. We want to honor squadrons that have been chartered 50, 60, 70, and 80-plus years. We're looking into establishing a founders award for squadron level, detachment level, national level. And we also are looking at developing some type of grand gesture gift to give to The American Legion for our 100th anniversary.

So, I just encourage all of you to be involved. Give us your input, your ideas. We're open to everything. We want to make this one of the grandest endeavors of the Sons of The American Legion. And we do this well, it's going to set us on a new trajectory for the future. So, thank you. Thank you, Jeff.

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN VRABEL: Thanks.

Part of the Century Committee process, as you probably know, is receiving a couple of surveys. That information, although Centcom is taking a different direction, will not be in vain. I've already had other committees or programs ask for some of that information so that they can

use it in what they're working on. So, we appreciate everything that you all have done to support Centcom.

I am going to be moving on to a different assignment starting at the end of the gavel tomorrow, so if you have any Century Committee questions, you want to direct those to PNC Joe Gladden. He'll be able to help you out because he is a wealth of knowledge on Century Committee, as I was when I came in. But again, thank you. Thank you to my members. I know that we had some bumps to get through, to get over and some hoops to get through, but I think we all did the job to the best of our abilities. So, thank you all.

That's the end of the report. Thank you.

...Committee Chairman Vrael submitted the report of the Century Committee.

Century Committee

Opening:

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm on October 6, 2023 in the Circle Centre Room
of the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel by Chairman Jeff Vrael, Sr. (OH).

Roll Call:

Chairman:	<u>Jeff Vrael, Sr. (OH)</u>	Secretary	<u>William "Bill" Towns, Jr. (OH)</u>
Vice Chairman:	<u>PNC Joe Gladden (MD)</u>	Consultants:	<u>PNC Joseph Paviglianti (NY)</u>
Members:	<u>PNC Thomas E. Cisna (IL) - Excused</u>		<u>William "Bill" Towns, Jr. (OH)</u>
	<u>PNC Joe Mayne (MN)</u>	NEC Liaison:	<u>Jim Stewart (NV)</u>
	<u>PNC Gene Sacco (CA)</u>	Leading Cand.:	<u>Joseph R. Navarrete (NM) - Excused</u>
Regional Reps:	<u>[E] Malcolm Mahoney (MA) - Excused</u>	Trailing Cand.:	<u>William M. Clancy, III (NY) - Excused</u>
	<u>[S] Tyler Vanice (VA) - Excused</u>	National Adjutant:	<u>Anthony Wright (PA) - Excused</u>
	<u>[C] Jeff Vrael, Jr. (OH)</u>	National Liaison:	<u>Kevin Mook (MD) - Excused</u>

[M] (vacant)

[W] Bobby Crevelli (CA)

Guests: 100th Anniversary Subcommittee Members: PNC Kevin Winkelmann (TX), Chairman; PNC Bob Worrell (IN), Vice Chairman; PNC Doc Gibbs (NY). Jim A. Mariner (NM); Ryan Maker (); Chris Cook (OK)

Reading of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

There being no objections, Chairman Vrabel declared the minutes of the July 23, 2023 conference call approved as published.

Old Business:

Recap of CENTCOM activities over the last two years. PNC Joe Paviglianti as first chairman reported that the committee started at the Arizona National Convention to create a strategic plan to lead into the next century. There were several offsite meetings in Illinois, and Nevada. A third-party organization was given to help obtain these goals. The organization did not meet the needs of the committee, so they were released. At the Milwaukee Convention Chairman PNC Joe stepped down and was replaced by Chairman Jeff Vrabel, Sr. The committee came up with the five keys of the strategic plan, Membership, Americanism, Youth, Brand Awareness, and Operations. A document call "Thirty Questions to Start the Conversation" was developed to get people talking about the organization. Four surveys were developed and sent out. Two venders were selected from Requests for Proposals that were sent out. After committee interviews, one was selected to work with. After review from The American Legion the outside vender was cancelled. At the Charlotte Convention PNC Joe Gladden was added to the committee as Vice Chairman and will chair the committee starting Sunday.

New Business:

- a. Plans for 2023-2024 administrative year by Vice Chairman Joe Gladden. The plan will be to feed off the previous work and information and determine, where do we want to be in 2032, and how do we get there. How do we want to be recognized nationally in conjunction with what TAL will allow. Brand awareness, and ways to help TAL membership.
- b. Vice Chairman Gladden went over documents that 100th Anniversary subcommittee Vice Chairman PNC Bob Worrell had presented on the objectives and ideas of the subcommittee. See attached files.
- c. PNC Gladden asked the members what is your understanding of what the Committee should be doing?
 - i. Member Bobby Crevelli (CA) To set goals, create an interest for younger members, and make a plan for membership growth.
 - ii. Member Jeff Vrabel Jr. (OH) Stated a big question is how we sustain members whose membership is paid by a father or grandfather. Address issues at hand.
 - iii. PNC Joe Paviglianti (NY) To create a reason for young members to join. Create a strategic plan to get us to 2032.
 - iv. Chris Cook (OK) Hours that must be committed between meetings and monthly calls may not be possible for younger members. This is not just to create younger members to be national leaders but to help them be active at the squadron and detachment level.
 - v. PNC Gladden talked on starting programs that parents and children can work together on to keep the family involved. What the desired outcome should be set and then build the plan around how to achieve it.

- vi. Chairman Vrabel read his report that was given to the Oversight Committee at the DC Conference.
- vii. Bill Towns (OH) questioned that the original 5 keys were set should be continued.
- viii. PNC Doc Gibbs Has input from TAL be asked to see what they are expecting and will allow? PNC wants to speak to TAL JA with these questions.
- ix. PNC Bob Faust (CA) Time is running fast. In 1932 young Legionnaires formed the Sons of the American Legion to sustain the programs. Detachments need a program like Boys State to promote and implement. PNC Gladden informed about Maryland starting a Detachment level Jr. SAL with officers.

Resolutions:

None.

For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion:

Bill Towns (OH) There is a need to collect and save old documents, photos, and items for the 100th Anniversary, including finding ways to finance shipping. Bill to write an article requesting donations and asking each detachment to provide a contact point for this program.

There is a need to look into starting an Archival Committee to collect and store SAL History.

Member Bobby Crevelli submitted a written review of his interpretation of the platform document presented by Chairman Vrabel and discussed at the July meeting. Members are to look it over.

Closing:

With no further business to consider, Chairman Jeff Vrabel, Sr. (OH) adjourned the meeting
at 8:40 pm .

(Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: If there's no objections, at this time we will move the Century Committee report to be filed. We move on to Bill Hill with Finance report. Kevin Chaplin is on deck, and then Bill Clancy with IA.

Report of Finance Commission

William "Bill" Hill, Maryland, Chairman

Thank you, Commander. I'm sure you're all just waiting to hear all this fantastic information about money. As I say every time, please hold on to yourselves, hold down the applause and the excitement. This is the most important, riveting part of this entire day.

(Applause)

Thank you. You're going places, Joe, I can tell.

Just wanted to mention that, real quick, we have the appropriate funds to support the appropriate programs of The American Legion. Do you need to know more than that? There you go.

Our Finance Commission meeting starting at 8 a.m. over on the 9th floor in the boardroom. All Finance Commission members were present or accounted for, to include our two new liaisons. As others have done before, too, I want to recognize the members and the liaison, so if you're in the room, please stand up. Member of the commission, Steve Honigfort from Ohio; Bob Thompson was absent; Jeff Van Horn was excused; Jeremy Revell, he loves the way I say his name. Our two NEC liaisons, Bill Kelly and Dave Hanson. Thank you, gentlemen, for your help today.

In general, we went through our business meeting, which is pretty much a recap of what we have done over the past couple of virtual meetings we've had.

We presented the fact that our FY '23 current budget, the last reconciliation was at March of 2023. I've spoken with Kevin and Brian about that. The Legion's working on that, again, with other issues they're having with their financial systems. The other item was our FY 2024 revised budget. The only revision on that, there was no material changes; we just collapsed and consolidated where the SAL Oversight Committee had funds available for travel and the SAL Advisory. When those two were merged, we appropriately merged the funds for those two, to make sure everything was solid and solid in that area.

The only other new business we had was really not too much of new business other than a verification that the MT&D is working on SAL University. They're working on the details of that, more so the financial details and how they're spending their funds. Their funds were allocated in our projected budget for MT&D. What they're doing now is the details of that, you know, how many coming in, how much is this going to cost, how much is that going to cost. We're going to help them with those details so they can finalize that information up to The American Legion Internal Affairs, to make sure all that information is straight, and there's any question from the finance on our side and their side is correct and able to move forward. We made a commitment to them to get that information back to them from what they provided. We'll get the consolidated and get everything straightened out to them by the end of this month and get that information back to them.

There was no additional information from resolutions and stuff coming forward to us. There was no additional comments from the commission.

I do want to mention one thing before I kind of close this report. I applaud the idea of the CWF recognition at the national convention. I would just question as to, you know, making sure where the funds are coming from for that great idea. If anybody is making donations to that, please let us know. We'll be glad to support you and see where the funds can be moved to do such an adventure, but you probably need to start organizing immediately.

Outside of that, Commander, that was our meeting. Adjourned about 12 minutes after that, we wrapped up around 8:15 a.m. There was no further business before us. That is my report, sir.

...Commission Chairman Hill submitted the report of the Finance Commission.

Finance Commission

Opening:

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am on October 7, 2023 in the Board Room
of the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel by Chairman William G. Hill (MD) .

Roll Call:

Chairman:	<u>William G. Hill (MD, 2024)</u>	Secretary:	<u>Robert J. Avery (NY)</u>
Vice Chairman:	<u>Jeff Van Horn (IL, 2024) - Excused</u>	NEC Liaisons:	<u>Bill Kelly (FL)</u>
Members:	<u>Steve Honigfort (OH, 2024)</u>		<u>Dave Hanson (IN)</u>
	<u>Robert Thompson (SC, 2024) - Absent</u>		<u></u>
	<u>Jeremy Revell (VT, 2024)</u>		<u></u>
	<u></u>		<u></u>
	<u></u>		<u></u>

Guests: David Lee (NY)

Old Business:

Review FY '2023 current budget reconciliation. Prepare feedback if necessary to The American Legion Internal Affairs, based on any findings. No reconciliation information provided beyond March 2023.

Review FY '2024 revised budget. Revisions based on committee realignments, if necessary.

No material changes based on adjustments made to merge expenditures for the SAL Oversight Committee and SAL Advisory Committee.

New Business:

Chairman Hill has had discussions with MTD regarding the new SAL University and any associated costs. Initial details pertaining to the overall expenditures have been submitted to the NEC for review. We will assist with a final outline, showing the details and appropriate expenditures to be submitted to TAL for final review and approval.

The Commission discussed expense check distribution, which takes place this afternoon at 4:00 PM.

For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion:

David Lee from the Legislative Commission noted that the expenses surrounding the Washington Conference have increased and the Commission needs to keep that in mind for budgeting purposes.

Closing:

With no further business to consider, Chairman William G. Hill (MD) adjourned the meeting
at 8:15 am .

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: If there's no objections, the Finance Commission report will be moved to file.

All right, now we call up Kevin Chaplin Lynn from Public & Media. On deck is Bill Clancy and Mike Cotten.

Report of Public and Media Communications Commission

Kevin Chaplin, Virginia, Chairman

Good afternoon, everyone.

...Chorus of "Good afternoon."

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHAPLIN: The Public & Media Communications Commission met yesterday, October 6, at 6:30 p.m. in the Illinois Room of the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel. The following commission members were present: Chairman Kevin Chaplin; members Doug Evans, he's a new member; Doug Heiser; our national webmaster, Gene Theroux; and our NEC liaisons, Mark McCue, Joseph Wysochanski Jr., Jeff Lee, Terry Pressley; and Lyle Larson was our adjutant.

Our commission reviewed the goals for this year. Our primary goal is to establish a synergistic, cooperative approach with the national staff of The American Legion for guidance and support in activating a social media presence on the same social media platforms as The American Legion uses. We are currently consulting with The American Legion social media and marketing teams to help us develop effective strategies to reach the younger demographic. Currently Facebook is our only social media platform, and that younger demographic does not even use Facebook.

We'll have some additional news tomorrow regarding our newsletter. I can't share that with you just at this time.

I'd like to remind everyone about our contests, Snapshots of Service and Videos of Service. Hopefully, everybody got a chance to see the winners at national convention, and we hope to be sharing that on Facebook and our website soon. We need to make sure that everybody's sending us photos for Snapshots of Service contest to be considered for the national award. I'd just like to remind everybody, the photos must represent one of the Four Pillars: Americanism, Children and Youth, National Security, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation.

Also, let's not forget about the Videos of Service contest, it's our newest contest to bring awareness to the public about the Sons of The American Legion by the use of social media platforms. It's open to all members of the Sons of The American Legion. And similar to Snapshots of Service, this contest uses published social media content, and a link must be submitted to the SAL Public & Media Communications Commission chair. The videos must contain the SAL member or members with their covers or branded identifiable clothing on during the activity or event, and fall under one of three categories: program support, community engagement, membership and recruitment.

We all know this organization does some truly amazing things for our veterans, children and youth, active military and their families. Let's make sure the world knows what great things we do.

Commander, this concludes my report.

...Commission Chairman Chaplin submitted the report of the Public and Media Communications Commission.

Public and Media Communications Commission

Opening:

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm on October 6, 2023 in the Illinois Room
of the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel by Chairman Kevin Chaplin (VA) .

Roll Call:

Chairman:	<u>Kevin Chaplin (VA, 2023)</u>	Secretary:	<u>Lyle Larson (KS)</u>
Vice Chairman:	<u>Robert Hill (MD, 2025) - Excused</u>	Consultants:	<u></u>
Members:	<u>Doug Heiser (IN, 2023)</u>		<u></u>

	<hr/> Doug Evans (KS, 2024) <hr/>	NEC	<hr/> Jeff Lee (VA) <hr/>
		Liaisons:	
	<hr/> Brandon Roberts (GA, 2024) - Excused <hr/>		<hr/> Joseph Wysochanski Jr. (PA) <hr/>
Webmaster:	<hr/> Gene Theroux (MA, 2025) <hr/>		<hr/> Terry Pressley (NC) <hr/>

Guests: David Dilts (OH), Bill Towns (OH), Gary P. Nelson (NJ), Henry Hasselhan (NJ), Mark McCue (MA), Jeff Vrabel Sr. (OH), Ryan Maker (OH).

Reading of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

There being no objections, Chairman Chaplin declared the minutes of the Spring 2023 meeting approved as published.

Reports of Members:

Chairman Kevin Chaplin – Showed Video of 2023 Snapshots of Service winners.

Doug Heiser – Report on Snapshot of Service

Doug Evans – Report on importance of making sure if you place an ad with media to identify who and where your organization is.

Gene Theroux – Report on task assignment.

Old Business:

Chairman will continue to gather metrics on the work that is already in place.

Chairman is working on resolution to get cut-off dates for Videos of Service to match up with Snapshots of Service.

New Business:

Chairman introduced Jeff Vrabel as Newsletter Editor. Jeff went over the new procedures to create a monthly newsletter. National will send out over 100,000 emails to members. Jeff will continue the roundup for a while. The newsletter has been nonexistent since 2018. Jeff answered several questions from the floor.

Doug Heiser (IN), Draft a letter to send to state adjutants to try to get as many email addresses as possible.

Chairman tasked the Commission to think of ways to complete the Parent Youth Initiative from CENTCOM. Several ideas were brought up and the Commission will follow up on some of these thoughts.

Mark McCue (MA) asked if something can be done to control Facebook pages put out by other National Committees and Commissions.

Resolutions:

None

For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion:

Doug Heiser (IN). Try to get the why I'm a member link to the Facebook page or the web site. Try to simplify the web site.

Closing:

With no further business to consider, Chairman Kevin Chaplin (VA) adjourned the meeting
at 7:30 pm.

(Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: I don't know if anybody's seen it, but I saw on Facebook the other day, they had some of the videos out there. They're wonderful to see. You know what's awesome? Everybody takes a picture of the kids. It's all pictures of the kids out there doing a lot of work too, but we've got to keep working to get those kids in there and keep them involved.

If there's no objections, the Public & Media Communications Commission report will now be moved to file.

At this time, I call on Bill Clancy for Internal Affairs Commission, along with the Convention Committee, Member Training & Development Committee, and Membership Committee. Legislative Commission and VA&R are on deck.

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CLANCY: Gentlemen, good morning.

...Chorus of "Good afternoon."

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CLANCY: Good afternoon. The day's gone fast.

At this point, I'd like to just start off with the chairman of the committees that report to IA. We'll start off with Mr. Daryl VerStreate from the Detachment of New York, I might add, who is also a dual member, so I thank him for his service. He's going to give you a quick update on membership.

Report of Membership Committee

Daryl VerStreate Jr., New York, Chairman

I'd just like to add, I got put in the hot seat. Thank you, sir.

I was asked to give you a short report, so I left my dictionary over there, my notebook, as you will. I'm not going to stand up here and give you a long report because, let's face it, we've already pre-submitted. You don't need me to stand up here and put you to sleep.

Everybody's got their little speech, so here's mine. Every day when I open up my membership book, I sit in front of the computer and I look at the members that I serve with on the Membership Committee. Same guys I've served with for the last two years. And there's one phrase that comes to mind: The best of the best, the cream of the crop.

I honestly believe the gentlemen we have this year representing this organization are exactly that, as I would refer to as the cream of the crop. I don't think I need to explain that.

Those members on the committee are the chairman, myself, Daryl VerStreate; Northeast would be Bob Manzo; the Southeast, Thom Skelley; Central, Butch Ray; Midwest, Mike Monserud; Western, Dan Ashley. Consultants, as of the moment, George Gray, Jack Youngs. I'd be remiss to leave them out because they are such a huge help, would be the five national vice commanders, and the three NEC: Marc Chaney, Joseph Roberts, and Juan Cruz.

Every year, whether I'm doing membership for this detachment or doing membership here, I try to come up with a thing, something to keep people motivated, focused, and what are we going to do this year. Rather than me having to do it, a good percentage of the committee came to me and said, "We would like hit 400,000." That's possible, so let's run with that.

So, we're going to hit -- our thing this year is, we're going to try for 400,000 members. That being said, if we can actually do that, as Past Chairman Skelley mentioned, there's no reason in the world why we can't arrive at 105 percent.

So, this year we did something a little different. As you noticed, this morning they had a workshop. That workshop had roughly 26 to 30 members in it. They spent, I want to say, two, roughly two -- because I was in an Internal Affairs meeting at the same time -- I want to say roughly two, two and a half hours brainstorming or brain dumping or whatever, general conversation. What we're going to end up doing is taking that, not only I would say compiling it, but dissecting it, pulling it apart, and using that to form the goals for the Membership Committee for not only this year; for the future years. So, we can actually look at all that and say, this is where the membership here, everybody here, this is where we want to be. Where do

we got to be to get there? So, we can start putting those building blocks in place this year, as we did last year, and keep building upon them and have a strategy to get to the end point.

I'd like to congratulate those members who have already reached the 25 percent goal. 29 out of 55 detachments; two regions, the Midwest and Southeast. We need 9,405 members to reach the 25 percent goal before October 18th.

The renewal postcards will be mailed between October 23 and the 27th for a cutoff date of September 29. This year we're breaking the committee down into three general areas: Recruiting, which will be spearheaded by Casey Hanson; retention, by Jason Miller; and awards, and I know I'm going to kill this name, it's like mine, it's a long Dutch one, Matt Verkuilen. Again, ideas in the workshop, we use this as the goals, we just cover that, as well as the 16 and under program.

What I'm telling, I've signed on to at least the five region Zoom calls at least once. What I'm telling everybody for what I want to work on as part of the retention is, if you have a squadron -- I'm encouraging reinvites -- if you have a squadron in your area that's struggling, or even if they're not. You know that big green monster you get with your cards? Or if you haven't gotten one, you can print one off from MyLegion. You can look at that, reach out the members that haven't renewed in the last three years.

And particular concern are those that are marked, if you ever looked at them and read them, those that are marked with a "U" for undeliverable. That means national has sent them stuff, it's been returned, and they get marked as a U for undeliverable in the computer. So, at that point they're not even getting reminders from us in order to renew their dues. It could be something as -- it's happened to me, and I've lived where I have for a long time. Just call them,

verify the address, include it with the buddy checks if you want. Don't just call them for their money. Check in with them, and this is a good way to do it and just touch base.

Like I promised you, short, sweet, and to the point, and I won't put you to sleep.

...Committee Chairman VerStreate submitted the report of the Membership Committee.

Membership Committee

Opening:

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 pm on October 6, 2023 in the Circle Centre+East Rooms
of the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel by Chairman Daryl VerStreate, Jr. (NY).

Roll Call:

Chairman:	<u>Daryl VerStreate, Jr. (NY)</u>	Secretary:	<u>Jeffrey E. Hicks (NJ)</u>
Vice Chairman:	<u>Casey Hanson (SD)</u>	Consultants:	<u>George Gray (GA)</u>
Members:	<u>Jason Miller (MD)</u>		<u>Jack Youngs (ID)</u>
	<u>Matt Verkuilen (MN)</u>		<u>James Walters (PA) – virtual (online)</u>
		NEC Liaison:	
Regional Chairs:	<u>[N] Robert Manzo (MD)</u>	National Vice Cdrs.:	<u>[N] John Cook (NH)</u>
	<u>[S] Thomas Skelley (TX)</u>		<u>[S] Linwood Moore (VA)</u>
	<u>[C] Harl “Butch” Ray (IL)</u>		<u>[C] Robert Bristo (MN)</u>
	<u>[M] Michael Monserud (IA)</u>		<u>[M] Terry Harris (KS)</u>
	<u>[W] Dan Ashley (AZ)</u>		<u>[W] Jimmy Fisher, Sr. (CA) – absent</u>

Guests: Don Allisot (ME), Steven Cox (PA), Michael Vozar (IL), Rick Allen (IL), David Mennel (MI), Terry Hanson (SD), Bob Phillips, Jr. (NJ), James Lastovka (IA), Carvin Chapman (MI), Dale Toenies (AK), Juan A. Cruz (PR), Daniel F. Maurin (LA), Joe Roberts (AZ), William D. (Bill) Kelly (FL), Marc Chaney (OR), Robert Bascou (NJ), and Linwood Moore (VA).

Reading of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

There being no objections, Chairman VerStreate declared the minutes of the Spring 2023 meeting approved as published.

Review of Committee Appointments

Recruiting (Casey Hanson and George Gray) – Report submitted and emailed out to the committee. Recruitment work was started last year under Thom Skelley and will be sent out to regional reps. Looking for feedback.

Retention/Revitalization (Jason Miller and Jack Youngs) – Big thing to drive home that we need to constantly follow up with members that we have through our Buddy Checks. Keep them involved and teach them what the programs are. A couple of ideas were listed on report that was sent out previously.

Awards/Misc. (Matt Verkuilen and Jim Walters) – Spreadsheet being created. IRA Reporting Form:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1M_W_rxEN4DHS3Q22lui_h_fzs3y2Ermpnxhkr0LA5TIM/edit#gid=0

Turn red if over 1 – using Q as check field. Where are forms housed when completed? (Question from James Walters). Once approved, the regional membership chairman and NVC will retain a copy of the completed form for the archive in addition to ensuring the spreadsheet is up-to-date. Edit suggestion – verify only 1 IRA pin per person is allowable. Suggestion (Thom) create new awards for 10-15-20 pin (Gold Silver Bronze). Small awards based on detachments (ex. Hawaii/Philippines) to add categories to recognize smaller detachments (under 200 members). Requirements 103% ensure growth. Realign categories. Get Thom access to sheet – needing access code. Demo of National Awards Tracker. Deadline for report submission – TBD.

i. **Overview of Membership Workshop (Saturday, October 7, 2023, 8 AM to 12 Noon, Sheraton)**
Overall theme: **We don't know what we don't know - Figuring out where to start**

Premise: Doing a collective "brain dump" of what's on our minds of how to improve and enhance areas within membership and even "slightly" outside of membership that could impact membership.

Agenda Item 1: Introduction of workshop and overview of plan for the session

Discussion 1 (20 minutes): Roundtable discussion of each participant's background/passions/hobbies/etc. Who they are/where they are from/Legion work so far, etc.

Activity 1 (20-30 minutes): Utilizing large tablet paper and post-it notes, each participant will write down ideas of what should be improved or pain points related to the SAL related to membership and overall functioning. Once written the participants will add these post-it notes to one of the four tablet papers specifically:

1. Recruitment
2. Retention
3. Awards
4. Misc. (not specific to membership but would help membership)

--BREAK--

Activity 2 (~60 minutes+): Review each tablet paper individually and do the following:

Combine duplicates or similar ideas into groups/consolidate where needed (clarify where needed)

1. Translate/group tasks into "projects"
2. Determine priority of projects (high, medium, low)
3. Determine which projects to focus on first - assign rest to "pipeline" for future completion
4. Assign project managers or who point person will be on each project.

--BREAK--

Discussion: How we move forward and use this information. In other words, this becomes the agenda items for our business meetings where each "group" can give an update on the project/projects they are working on and we can discuss questions/add support etc.

Remainder of time (if any): General membership discussion of best practice ideas - what is currently going well within each detachment and nationally.

Adjournment

Reports of Members:

Chairman Daryl VerStreate, Jr. (NY) –

In Process:

1. Commanders Challenge
2. If anyone would like to do a mini revitalization please let their Regional Chair or NVC know and I will supply a list of anyone who has not renewed dues in a particular squadron in the last three years. In an effort to increase the retention rate.
3. Core Members read-only to my legion for Detachment access
4. Still in the works is an chairman book that can be handed down

Completed

1. Committee assignments (attached)
 - a. Recruiting

- i. Casey Hanson – Core
 - ii. George Gray - Consultant
 - iii. 5 Regional Reps
- b. Retention/Revitalization
 - i. Jason Miller – Core
 - ii. Jack Youngs - Consultant
- c. Awards
 - i. Matthew Verkuilen – Core
 - ii. Jim Walters - Consultant
- d. Commercial – Presentation
 - i. Thom Skelley – Regional Rep
 - ii. George Gray - Consultant
- 2. Fall Meeting Membership Workshop planned and flyer created (attached)
- 3. Commander challenge flyer (attached)
- 4. Casey Hanson appointed as Vice Chair
- 5. Matt Verkuilen appointed as Scribe

Theme

The committee more or less came up with it all on their own. Everyone says 400. The goal is 400,000 and to arrive at 105%. Shooting for the stars.

Matt Verkuilen (MN) (Awards):

In progress:

- Work being done to confirm update status of membership awards forms and when they will be posted on the website
- Clarification of awards literature to ensure that the text and criteria is consistent across all publications

Completed:

- Updates to IRA tracking spreadsheet have been completed with detachments realigned to their new regions in some cases https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1M_W_rxEN4DHS3Q22luih_fzs3y2Erm_pnxhkr0LA5TIM/edit#gid=0
- Membership Workshop to be held at Fall SAL meetings has been planned and will be facilitated by Matthew Verkuilen, Casey Hanson, and Jason Miller with help from others). Workshop will be an interactive brainstorming activity that will then be grouped and reviewed by the committee into projects for this year and subsequent years.

Jim Walters (PA) (Awards): Working on a new spreadsheet that will track when detachments reach 100% among other awards areas. Spreadsheet is Excel-based with data imported from national membership reports.

George Gray (Commercial/Presentation):

1. Spent time talking with Thom Skelley about the work on the video project that he, Matt Chastain and I have been contemplating for some time. I think that is in the final approval phase.
2. Sent a couple emails to Daryl about communication going forward.

Jason Miller (MD) (Retention): After reviewing Membership Reports here in Maryland and talking to Squadrons in both Maryland and across the country, it seems that many of the Squadrons that are behind on membership are not utilizing mylegion.org. I have heard various reasons for this including, the resistance to change and going digital, access not working and not being able to get the issue resolved. As far as the quick renewal option (QR Code/Website) I am hearing a lot of concern as to how and when Squadrons will receive their portion of the membership. I have been able to clarify this for Maryland but I am unsure if it's the same across the board. If we are going to push this and hopefully get all Squadrons to utilize it, I think we all need to be receptive to the struggles and concerns Squadrons are having and what if anything we can change to make it easier, etc.

Secondly is retention, I feel that sometimes we get caught up in the numbers and many automatically become focused on recruitment. Although we should always strive to recruit new members, we need to be sure to keep them and more importantly get them involved! Some of those things that could help with this are;

- Invite the new member to the first Squadron meeting, introduce them to the membership.
- Take advantage of the new "Welcome Kit" and personalize it to work for your Squadron. Report of Activity as of October 2, 2023 Daryl Verstrete, Jr., Chairman
- Form a "Welcoming Committee"
- Sit with them and find out what interests them and what they are passionate about. Find something for them to get involved in that fits within those interests.
- Sit down with them and get them registered for mylegion and show them how to take advantage of it. including possibly getting setup for automatic renewal.
- Encourage them to take the online basic course so they have a better understanding of what the American Legion is, how we came about and the programs we support.
- Be sure to be open to new ideas and take into consideration something a new member may offer.
- Be sure to check in on your members. Be there in their time of need. So many times, we hear about members saying they only hear from their Squadron or Post when it comes time to renew. Any other time they do not care or want the help.

I can go on and on, as this is something I am passionate about and it's so important. I actually think it's something fairly easy, however human nature many times gets in the way and we are our own worst enemies. (Ego's, power struggles, close mindedness etc.)

Consultant Jack Youngs (ID) (Retention): We will be getting together for the first time as a committee and laying out our plans and goals for the future.

We have had some issues arise out of Arizona:

1. Dual members with two (2) member numbers.
2. Transmittal Charge Backs.
3. Members being transferred from one squadron to another without transfer paperwork.
4. New members signing up at squadrons and then getting mailers from national getting these folks to establish a mylegion account then being told they owe more money for dues.

With the above issues we don't know as of yet if any of them also affects more Detachments than just Arizona.

Casey Hanson (SD) (Recruitment): Membership is off to a great start! I hope we use this momentum to continue to collect membership. We should be reaching out regularly to our respective detachments and communicating with them on the membership report! Our communication must be encouraging, positive, and confident. Detachments should be looking at the weekly Report of Activity as of October 2, 2023 Daryl Verstrete, Jr., Chairman reports, as the numbers don't lie. These reports tell us how much work we have done and how much we have left to do. Even though it's one report, you should look at the two important numbers separately...renewals and membership percentages. Your renewal rate will always be included in your membership, to me that's as far as those numbers should relate. We all agree renewals need to improve and that's where the foundation begins, but don't let that stop you from recruiting new members also. A new member is no less important than an existing member. We were all new members at one time. We need to do the best we can in both those categories, renewals and membership. I am working on a recruiting flyer, that can be placed on tables or possibly sent out. I will send to the regional Chairman as they will be working with me on the recruiting aspect, and once we get it finalized I'm hoping I can send to Matt for him to do his magic and make it look pretty. Keep up the membership effort and remember to overload the beginning of the year, because it gets harder to collect the second half.

Northeast Region Reports

Chairman Robert Manzo (MD) – As usual, the East having the largest size of membership is off to a slow start, but they will catch up later in the year. Offered strategies for success in renewing members.

NVC John Cook (NH) - No report.

Southeast Region Reports

Chairman Tom Skelley (TX) – Check in with Kevin/Brian re IRA Blue Brigade forms on website. Regional Reps are getting the IRA forms now first and then get forwarded to National Vice Commander. Ensure content is correct (MV).

NVC Linwood Moore (VA) – Offered friendly banter to stoke competition with other regions.

Central Region Reports

Chairman Harl “Butch” Ray (IL) – Have they received last year’s form for this year? Don’t want to miss someone that filled out the wrong form. In “fun time” where membership is running on autopilot. Getting harder real quick and encourage them to get membership in.

NVC Robert Bristo (MN) – Retention is one of the key factors in making our membership successful. Getting new members is just as important, with the understanding that is not just to replace the ones that did not renew. This is the message everyone needs to hear and know. People who are already members need to spread the word about our Sons of The American Legion and its rewards of being a member. Stop the secret and let the people know who we Report of Activity as of October 2, 2023, Daryl Verstrete, Jr., Chairman are. This is the message which brings about great results. Goals are not met by being silent, only by being outspoken.

Midwest Region Reports

Chairman Mike Monserud (IA) – Shared a personal story about his grandfather’s military service in WWII. Encourage renewals by reminding members WHY they belong to the SAL, it is because of our family member’s military service. Ask about officer reports when talking with squadrons about membership. Offer help to complete officer reports while visiting squadrons.

NVC Terry Harris (KS) – Friendly banter with other regions trying to stoke competition.

Western Region Reports

Chairman Dan Ashley (AZ) – Shout out to those at 100% nothing else to report.

NVC Jimmy Fisher, Sr. (CA) – Absent. No report.

Old Business:

Status of Paid-Up-For-Life (PUFL) Program for the SAL – PNC Chris Carlton (IN) appointed, and the NEC approved, a PUFL ad-hoc committee, chaired by PNC Kevin Winkelmann (TX) (who has a PUFL program in his Detachment). Please express your opinions and constructive feedback to PNC Winkelmann about PUFL so he and his committee can consider those items in their deliberations.

A QR Code is being considered and developed to assist members with renewals of their SAL membership. National SAL Public Media and Communications Chairman Kevin Chaplin (VA) has taken this task on. The QR codes will be on the 2024 renewal postcards. Daryl VerStreate, Jr. (NY) questioned the QR code compatibility with Apple products and other Internet technology providers. Past Membership Chairman Thom Skelley (TX) was confident the QR code provides universal access to the online SAL renewal portal. Daryl's concern was with iPhone pay applications (Google Pay, etc.) or with PayPal. Chairman Skelley pledged to investigate further and provide a follow-up later but believes it will require a credit card.

Past Membership Chairman Thom Skelley (TX) showed a new PowerPoint video aimed at promoting SAL membership (recruitment, renewals, and revitalization). He sought feedback on the presentation. Members in attendance captured their feedback on notecards that were then submitted to Thom for consideration. The video had been beta tested with a few detachments and constructive feedback was received. The end goal is to place this video on social media for widespread exposure and/or distribute via email to local squadrons for their use.

The Committee is seeking approval to create a membership video (4 to 5 minutes infomercial) that showcases the SAL and can be shared through social media. The Committee knows of a professional production company in Georgia. The script has been proposed. A sample of this company's work has been sent to the Advisory Committee. Video budget is about \$8,000 and \$500 for a new voice-over narrative.

Dan Ashley – main thing showing - \$9 due to per capita.

New Business:

Schedule for Fall Meeting (7:30 to 9:00 PM, Friday, October 6, 2023)

Committee Dinner at Weber Grill on Friday afternoon.

Commander Challenge flyer – awarded to (clarify criteria so flyer is correct)

Be The One – Casey article

Commercial/Presentation (Thom Skelley and George Gray) – National working on getting a contract done at the conclusion of Fall 2023 meetings. Tim Abradeou and Kevin Mook are working on the contract estimated at \$8,500.

Resolution:

No. __ To make eligible all Detachments for all National Membership Awards

Motion by Thomas Skelley (TX) to approve the Resolution as worded. Harl "Butch" Ray (IL) seconded. Discussion: Questions and comments from William D. (Bill) Kelly (FL) and Juan A. Cruz (PR). Thomas Skelley (TX) noted only \$50.00

would be needed for the additional plaque or award created from this resolution. Vote: All in favor (Chairman VerStreate (NY) abstained), none opposed. **Motion carried.**

For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion:

None at this time.

Closing:

With no further business to consider, Chairman Daryl VerStreate, Jr. (NY) adjourned the meeting
at 8:44 pm .

(Applause)

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CLANCY: I'd like to introduce Chairman Cotten from MT&D.

Report of Member Training and Development Committee

Michael Cotten, Delaware, Chairman

Thank you. First of all, this so cool being up here in front of the microphone in front of everybody. I just want to let you guys know; it has a whole new perspective from being out in the audience.

First of all, our reports were submitted electronically to the adjutants and will be included in with the minutes of this meeting.

I first want to let you guys know who is on the MT&D committee. Shawn Davis, could you stand up back there in the back? Scott Baker, Pennsylvania. Where's Scott? Mike Obremski, Maryland. Frank Meraz, California. We also have Mike Monserud as an advisor, and I don't see Mike out here anywhere. We have Ron Roberts as a consultant. Where is Ron? We

have Ray Jarvis as a scribe. We also have Dennis George from New York as NEC liaison. We have Carl Radosevich from New Mexico. Where is Carl? Is he here? Awesome. And a very, very important person who we're going to consider our dean for SAL University, and that's Past National Commander Doc Gibbs.

(Applause)

So, I want to let you guys know, we did something that hasn't been done for a while from a committee. We got our early call-in. We got here Tuesday night. Wednesday we had an all-day work session; Thursday, all-day work session; Friday, half-day work session. Today, I want to let you know that my committee has done an incredible amount of work. I'm very proud of everybody on my committee. We're working for you; we're working for the organization. I think my committee did an outstanding job while they're here as well as before they were here.

So, we had our meeting, official meeting last night from 6:30 to approximately 6:15. We had a recap of all the accomplishments we did for the past two days. 6:15 to 6:30, reverse that. Yeah, 6:00 to 6:30.

(Laughter)

6:00 to 6:15. Okay. We met last night.

(Laughter)

Like I said, it's been a long, long day. Long, long days.

We reviewed the NEC training that's going to be going on this evening in this room. Now, this NEC training is open to everybody, especially the NEC.

(Laughter)

We are going to present to you a lot of very useful tools that you will be able to use to help streamline these meetings and take a lot of heartburn off our commander. And I believe that starts at 5:00.

UNIDENTIFIED NECMAN: 7:15.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN COTTEN: Or 7:15.

(Applause)

Starts at 5:00.

Now, this is a summary of what we have so far. NEC training is this evening.

Now, SAL University, this is what we have spent so much time and effort on. Just to let you know, over the process of the past two and a half days, we've had input from the commander, we've had input from the Advisory Committee, we've had input from financial, we've had input from national. All have met with us and have given us their approval to move forward with this. I'm sure we've got a few tweaks; we've got a few things we have to work out. We covered a few of those with Past National Commander Gene Sacco this morning who is in approval with what our path forward and methods are.

So, SAL University will be conducted this spring. It's going to be a Wednesday, Thursday, half-day Friday class. Those invites will go out from national by November 5th to the department adjutants, detachment adjutants, detachment commanders, NEC. Now, what we are looking for and what we want to develop is an SAL superstar. Now, NMI 1, 2, and 3 has been a very successful program in developing the personal attributes of an SAL member. SALU is taking aspects from NMI 1 as well as other resources to develop SAL history, SAL information,

SAL tools to work within our organization. So, we're getting a combination and an improvement and an extension of what we've already built on.

The selections of people that we want you to provide us: detachment commander and lower. Not to say we're not going to take somebody who is already an NEC. But we want the detachments to send us the future leaders of your detachments, people who you're going to look to in the next five to ten years. Because look around. Ten years from now, not as many of us are going to be here. Twenty years from now, a lot less. We're looking for you guys to send to us your future leaders, the ones who are going to take you into the 100th anniversary and beyond. And we want those people to go back and support your detachments, your organizations at home.

Applications are going to go out by November 5th. We need them back by February 1st. By March 1st, we're going to send announcements out to those lucky participants. Now, these announcements are going out to all the detachments. Now, there are some technical difficulties because some detachments don't exist but they have SAL members, so we're going to work through that.

Now, as Chairman of Finance Bill Hill mentioned, we're working with finance to make sure this is affordable. So, there will be a tuition fee, but it will be affordable.

Now, NMI 3, the last graduating class of NMI 3 will be at the spring NEC 2024. The attendees will be contacted.

The goals of the MT&D committee, we have four. First, NEC training. So, after this evening, we'll scratch that one off, hopefully, unless we have anybody that doesn't pass.

NMI 3, conduct that in the spring.

SAL University.

And the fourth is develop specifically oriented towards a training program, and that will be for the parent and youth involvement project that our commander wants us to do. We have several ideas on that that we've developed. We'll be submitting those ideas to Centcom for review.

Now, I also want to take this moment to thank everybody that has in the past supported NMI 1, 2, and 3, and all the past members of the MT&D committee over the years and MT&D chairmen. We have taken a lot of information that's been presented before, regurgitate it, reorganized it for this SALU, and we couldn't have done it without all the people that have been here before us.

Chairman, that's my report.

Does anyone have any questions? Good. That's my report.

...Committee Chairman Cotten submitted the report of the Member Training and Development Committee.

Member Training and Development Committee

Opening:

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm on October 6, 2023 in the Michigan Room
of the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel by Chairman Michael S. Cotten (DE) .

Roll Call:

Chairman:	<u>Michael S. Cotten (DE)</u>	Secretary:	<u>Raymond Jarvis (NY)</u>
Vice Chairman:	<u>Shawn Davis (MN)</u>	Consultants:	<u>Ronald E. Roberts (MS) – Excused</u>
Members:	<u>Scott Baker (PA)</u>		<u>Timothy D. Aboudara, Sr. (CA) – Excused</u>

Frank Meraz, Jr. (CA)	Advisor:	Mike Monserud (IA) – Excused
Mike Obremski (MD)	NEC Liaison:	Dennis George (NY) – Excused

Guests: Tom Marsden (NJ); Scott Thornton (OH)

Reading of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

Shawn Davis made a motion to approve the minutes of the Committee's conference call on September 4, 2023 as published, seconded by Scott Baker. The motion carried.

Reports of Members:

Chairman Mike Cotten confirmed the PowerPoint for tomorrow's NEC class has been modified and approved by the Advisory Committee. It was sent to National Adjutant Tony Wright and Brian Compton.

SAL University

- The outline and topics have been reviewed and approved by the Advisory Committee.
- The budget has been reviewed by Commander Hall and will be forwarded to the Finance Commission for further review.
- The draft program has been approved by the Advisory Committee; the final version will be complete by December 31st.
- The application form is being developed and will be sent out once the national American Legion has approved it.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

All the committees and commissions have been asked to find a way to increase youth participation in our programs. All committee and commission members are further asked to find ways to increase awareness of the National Commander's project.

Shawn Davis made a motion to purchase the shirts, pins, padfolios, and 5-Star and 10-Ideals medals for the Spring 2024 SAL University program, with the funds to be taken from the Committee's budget line item, seconded by Frank Meraz. The motion carried.

Resolutions:

None

For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion:

Chairman Cotten personally thanked all the Committee members and the guests for their efforts in developing the SAL University program. An outstanding job by all involved!

Closing:

With no further business to consider, Chairman Michael S. Cotten (DE) adjourned the meeting
at 6:45 pm .

(Applause)

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CLANCY: The Convention Committee chairman, Mr.
Byrd, is excused for the moment so we will not have a report on conventions at this time. We'll
jump right into Internal Affairs.

Report of Convention Committee

Opening:

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm on October 6, 2023 in the Ohio Room
of the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel by Vice Chairman Tommy Vassar (LA) .

Roll Call:

Chairman:	<u>Christopher Byrd (NC,2023) - Excused</u>	Secretary:	<u>Anthony W. Wright (PA)</u>
Vice Chairman:	<u>Tommy Vassar, Jr. (LA, 2024)</u>	NEC Liaison:	<u>Larry Ford (MD)</u>
Members:	<u>Allen J. Watry (WI, 2022)</u>	Members:	<u>Joseph Guidice (NY)</u>
	<u>Gerard Sambets (FL, 2025)</u>		<u>Peter Booth (NY)</u>
	<u>Brandon Curry (KY, 2026)</u>		<u>Ben M. Baldwin, Jr. (NM)</u>
	<u>Charles E. "Chuck" Treat, II (AZ)</u>		<u>Steven R. Navarrete (NM)</u>

Guests: SONA Liaison Bob Brown (GA)

Reading of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

There being no objections, Vice Chairman Vassar declared the minutes of the Spring 2023 meeting approved as published.

Reports of Members:

Chairman Christopher Byrd (NC, 2023) – Excused

Vice Chairman Tommy Vassar, Jr. (LA, 2024) – Has had good contact and coordination with the Department Legion Convention Corporation. The National Convention Corporation will be in New Orleans on October 27th.

Our pin design is almost complete which will look similar to the emblem they have on their shirts they wear at National Convention.

We're in the planning process of working on a Friday night social which may be at a post close to the convention center or possibly across the river in the area.

Allen Watry (WI, 2022) – Here to lend support to the future convention cities representatives and share ideas.

Gerard Sambets – (FL, 2025) – Discussion and planning with our department has begun. We would like to develop a coin instead of a pin. I am here to learn and receive ideas for use to have a successful convention in 2025.

Brandon Curry (KY, 2026) – Kentucky will soon have a new individual for the National Convention Committee.

Ben Baldwin, Jr. (NM) – New members who is excited to participate.

Steven Navarrete (NM) – Looking forward to being engaged in the future conventions.

Bob Brown (GA) – SONA Liaison stated many changes are coming.

Old Business:

There was none.

New Business:

2nd Tuesday 730 pm eastern for convention zoom.

Resolutions:

None

For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion:

Closing:

With no further business to consider, Vice Chairman Tommy Vassar, Jr. (LA, 2023) adjourned the meeting
at 9:00 pm .

Report of Internal Affairs Commission

William Clancy III, New York, Chairman

We held our meeting this morning. It was a very nice meeting, a lot of great discussions.

I'd like to start off with just the review of who is on the Internal Affairs Commission. We have two new members: Mr. Juan Torres from Texas and Mr. Wade Hudson from Illinois. And they will be joining the returning members Dickie Huntley from Maine; Ken Sutton from California; Mr. Christopher Michel from Delaware, who was excused; and myself from New York, Bill Clancy.

We began our meeting with some old business, a closeout of something we worked on last year, which is how people who get a national appointment are notified of their appointment and how they are recognized. So, I'm sharing here something that will be going out to all new

commission and committee members. It's an authorization document of national appointment; a little tough to see from far out, but it's handsome. You will each be receiving two of these, one for yourself personally, you keep at home or do with it what you like. But another which we recommend you take to your post, to your squadron, and post it somewhere so people know you're working for the national that level, getting work done for our organization. We think that this will be a nice touch to recognize people in their home post, home squadron, get them more motivated to do work and to serve.

We went over a review of our goals for the year. Obviously, Internal Affairs will continue to deal with resolutions as they come our way, but we'll continue to work on projects as they come our way.

A few projects that we hope to wrap up in the next few months, before the year end, is a welcome letter. We had begun at the end of last year developing a welcome letter, which will be a document that will be designed for detachment, squadron, district -- you name it, wherever you're acting -- but to give to people when they're new that join the organization, and give them some scope and information about what we do, how big we are, and how impactful we are. I'd like to have that out before Thanksgiving on our website. That would be a major focus for our next phone call which is in three weeks.

We are going to -- we worked last year on a concept of SAL television which was discussed previously several times. We talked about having a YouTube channel. The American Legion doesn't quite have a YouTube channel, but The American Legion does have videos on their website, and they will welcome videos from the Sons to put on their website after they are edited by national headquarters. We can't just put up something there that no one's really looked

at for the content and quality and to make sure everything is, you know, picture perfect. So, we're putting that down as work in progress but also almost close to completion.

The next bit is what's ahead for the new year, new initiatives. Commander Hall had asked all of the committees and commissions to see what they can do to support Family Day. We will be working to include Family Day on the CSR report. We will also be looking to work with Emblem Sales to see if we can get some items that would support Family Day. Maybe some games like the beanbag toss we've rolled out in the youth academy, maybe some shirts that represent Family Day. Something that people can order to engage, you know, make it a little bit more fun with some action at the squadron level.

In addition to these, we will be working throughout the year as projects are assigned to us by Advisory and anything else that happens to come to Internal Affairs.

We received two resolutions. One resolution came out of the Membership Committee, and the intent of that resolution was to include detachments of less than 200 people, 200 members, in the awards process, that is based in part on percentage increases. And that resolution was referred back to Membership for further study with the thought that, if you're allowing, say, a detachment like Mexico to be judged in the same category as a detachment like Pennsylvania based on a percentage increase, it gives these tiny detachments an extreme advantage to win the award, and that wouldn't be fair. So, we've asked them to think about that further and come back to us in the spring.

We additionally received a resolution from the Detachment of Arizona. It was an endorsement resolution. It was received, however, within less than 30 days of this date, so it's going to be just tabled for spring. It's not returned, there's nothing wrong with it; it just came in

a little bit too late. So, we're trying to follow the rules and we'll just push that off to our next meeting.

That was our meeting this morning. A lot of good discussion, particularly about the membership award, and I'm looking very much forward to a year ahead with some new members, new blood, excitement, and we're going to have a great year.

Our phone calls, Zoom calls are on the fourth Thursday of every other month. There will be one this month and everyone is welcome to attend. I thank you all.

Mr. Commander, this is my report.

...Commission Chairman Clancy submitted the report of the Internal Affairs Commission.

Internal Affairs Commission

Opening:

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am on October 7, 2023 in the Meridian East Ballroom of the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel by Chairman William M. Clancy, III (NY).

Roll Call:

Chairman:	William M. Clancy, III (NY, 2025)	Secretary:	Anthony W. Wright (PA)
Vice Chairman:	Chris Michel (DE, 2025) (E)	NEC Liaisons:	
Members:	Kenneth Sutton (CA, 2024)		
	Richard “Dickie” Huntley (ME, 2024)		
	Juan R. Torres (TX, 2026)		
	Wade Hudson (IL), 2026)		

Guests: Daryl VerStreate, Jr. (NY), Carl Alber, Jr. (NJ), Eddy Seegers (TX), Earl Ruttkofsky (MI), Wayne Madson (IL), Chris Cook (OK), Cliff Boyer (PA), Bill Towns (OH), Bill Kelly (FL) and Kevin Collier (AK).

Reading of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

There being no objections, Chairman Clancy declared the minutes of the Spring 2023 meeting approved as published.

Reports of Committees:

Convention Committee – Chairman Chris Byrd (NC) was excused from the NEC meeting.

The Internal Affairs Commission referred the resolution back to the membership committee for further study to investigate and recategorize the membership categories. Motion by Ken Sutton, Second by Dickie Huntley to refer the resolution back to the membership committee for further study to investigate and recategorize the membership categories.

Member Training & Development Committee – Chairman Mike Cotton (DE) not present at the Internal affairs meeting.

Membership Committee – Chairman Daryl VerStrete, Jr. (NY) gave his report. The membership report has been pre-submitted to the National Adjutant. The membership committee presented a resolution titled “to make eligible all Detachments for all National Awards”. The membership committee unanimously passed this resolution during their committee meeting. IA voted to return this resolution to Membership for further study so as to not lend any unfair advantage to Detachments that are under 200 members.

Reports of Members:**Old Business:**

Execution of New Appointee Notification Process: All appointees will receive a certificate within the next few weeks via USPS to certify that they’ve been appointed to a National Committee and/or Commission. These certificates will be distributed through the National Headquarters.

Welcome Letter Initiative: The commission will develop a welcome letter available online for squadrons to download to send to new members. The form will be editable to make it adaptable to local squadrons.

SAL TV Initiative: YouTube videos of National events as well as local events. National Headquarters has this in place and will work with the SAL to make sure we do things within copyright guidelines.

New Business:

IA Supporting AL Family Day

- Inclusion of Family Day on CSRs
- Liaise with Emblem Sales to Offer Items that complement American Legion Family Day
 - SAL Branded games - beanbag toss / Fuzzball etc
 - Posters Highlighting 10 Ideals and 5 Point Program
- Include mention of Family Day in the Welcome Letter
-

Restructure of IA Responsibilities

- All Commission Members will be assigned responsibilities and expectations. It will be expected that members will provide a written report during the Zoom meetings as well as in-person meetings.
-

23'/24' Meeting Schedule - 4th Thursday of the Month (6PM EST)

- 10/26, 12/28, 2/22/24, 4/25, 6/27, 8/22

Resolutions:

No. SAL Resolution 1 – Fall 2023
Title: Endorsement of Dan Ashley (AZ) for National Vice Commander
Origin: Detachment of Arizona
Action: Received less than 30 days before the NEC meeting; held for the Spring 2024 meeting.

For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion:

Bill Towns (OH): As we allocate funds from the reserve funds every few years, can we look into providing funds to the library and museum to assist with archiving the SAL items at National Headquarters? It was suggested that the process begins with a resolution being developed to indicate the purpose and financial analysis.

Additionally, the 100th anniversary committee is trying to secure items for the book that will be made available for the book.

Closing:

With no further business to consider, Chairman William M. Clancy, III (NY) adjourned the meeting
at 9:10 am .

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: I will entertain a motion to accept the Internal Affairs Commission report minus any resolutions, which there was none to have to vote on.

We don't need a motion, I'm sorry. We will move it, Internal Affairs along with Membership and MT&D, to be filed.

(Applause)

At this time, we'll have Blair Miles come up for Legislative. VA&R, you're on deck.

Report of Legislative Commission

Blair Miles, Alabama, Chairman

Good afternoon.

...Chorus of "Good afternoon."

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN MILES: The Legislative Commission met last night at 6:30. We had three key issues of our commission we wanted to discuss, the first being VoterVoice sign-up.

As you saw outside the double doors down here, we had a couple commission members sitting there, grabbing you as you came in. For those of you that stopped and signed up for VoterVoice, thank you very much. As you saw, it took about ten seconds to do. We have a goal in our commission to get to 2500 members signed up, and I've got a feeling we're going to increase that along the way. Last year we started with 256 people, and by Charlotte we had 1,418 SAL members signed up. So, it's growing, it's doing good, and it's thanks to you people. If you see what we're doing out there, we're simply passing around a QR code, we got a guy on a laptop, he hits it, and you're in.

What we'd like to ask from you is to take that concept back to your detachments with you, and at your fall meetings, your midwinter meetings, your conventions. Even if you get 15, 20 at a time, every little bit helps, and it helps our commission reach our goal. It helps our

organization grow in the knowledge that we're getting from what VoterVoice provides, and it allows us to be a bigger, stronger advocate for our veterans' needs, which is what we're here for; right?

So, thank you, if you're on VoterVoice, thank you very much. If you're not on VoterVoice, we're going to grab you before you get to the elevator today, we're going to try anyway, so thank you again very much. If you got a few seconds, take your time out, stop by and we'll get you in there.

Another thing we talked about was the George B. Evans Award. Before we go ahead to that part, I'd like to once again congratulate the recipient of the George B. Evans Award in Charlotte, North Carolina, NECman Bill Kelly from the Detachment of Florida. Thanks, Bill.

(Applause)

We introduced a new system to put in the application packet. We tried to simplify it in hopes of getting more. There was a lot going on in that initial package; we slimmed it down a little bit. And the commission will be working on the scoring system. We're going to tweak that just a little bit more, and we're going to get to that right after we finish with the big job of the Washington Conference that's coming up, which I'm going to lead into that right now.

The Washington Conference, we finally received approval from Arlington National Ceremony for the SAL wreath-laying ceremony. It will be Sunday, February 25th, 11:15 a.m. Again, that's Sunday, February 25th, 11:15. There is a registration form that we discussed last night that we will be editing and, within the week, everybody, everybody in this country should have the new form. It will have the new times, the new dates. The deadline date to get that form

back to us is February 3rd. That gives us a couple of weeks to get things lined up and taken care of.

There's a lot that goes on between that deadline and the actual wreath-laying date. I'm going to use this time now to do this. We've got a great commission that handles this, and we get way, way so many comments and compliments from everybody that actually does attend this, how seamless and how effortless that whole thing looks, and that's because this commission is fantastic and they work their tails off for it.

And that commission, the vice chairman is Mr. Bernie Kessler from Ohio; we have David Lee from New York; our newest member, Wayne Madson from Illinois; and our computer there for VoterVoice, Charles Curtis from California. Again, thank you very much. You'll see them. They make that Washington Conference fantastic.

If you remember, when COVID hit they killed the conference for that one year. The next year we came back and we wound up getting one bus. Historically, it's a two-bus affair. We only got the one because we were still limping back from the COVID. Last year we got, for the first time ever, three buses, and we don't ever, ever foresee getting less than that. We enjoyed it, we can't wait to do it. And again, that goes smoothly because of those commission members.

That form that has the dates, times, places, all the things that you'll ever need to know about that, will be out shortly. The biggest element on that new form is, like everything else, there's a raise in prices on everything. The biggest one to note this year will be the price of the wreaths. For those of you who bought detachment wreaths in the past at \$150, those are now \$200 from the florist. The tram tickets and the lunches that we served, those went up just a couple of bucks, that's not really that big. But all of these prices, along with times and

deadlines, will be on this new form. Those forms will be submitted out through the national vice commanders. Again, thank you, guys, for what you do.

I can't thank these national vice commanders enough because we are relying on them for these regions to get this information so these regions can get it to their detachments. So again, in advance, thank you, guys. I appreciate you.

So, we're hoping for three buses. You know, we'll take five or six. I'll deal with Kevin Mook on that one. But thank you, guys, for helping us out on that.

Now, the commander's youth initiative that we were introduced to in the Monday meeting in Charlotte, at first we wondered, how can we do that with Legislative? And then our vice chairman came up with a great idea. What we did is, we didn't reinvent the wheel. We just kind of went back in time a little bit.

I don't know how many people in this room remember this, but about 30, 40 years ago, they used to have a thing on Saturday morning cartoons, it was called "Schoolhouse Rock." Yeah, look at them all. There's a lot of people have no idea what I'm talking about in here. But it was a commercial, it wasn't even a show, it was a commercial between cartoons that played music, and it actually educated children on our history, like the Civil War. And I'm not going to sing any of these songs for you guys. And I know you guys know which ones I'm talking about.

(Laughter and applause)

I'm going to wait and let Jeff Gibson do that at the spring NEC. Okay?

But no, it's very educational. It's geared for children. Bernie came up with a great idea. And now listening to the other committees and commissions, I'm thinking, you know what, we

can share. Because there's elements of what we're working on I'm thinking that Youth Academy might be interested in. So, I will be getting with those guys, and we might be able to come together on this and just really bring back something they had 40 years ago.

The flyer that Bernie found was an American Legion document dated in the '90s. And for some reason, they stopped doing it, for whatever. But now we're in an age of social media. Kids aren't anything without a cell phone in their hand or laptop or tablet. We're going to try to bring today's environment into something that's 40 years old and reintroduce it for our youth. We're actually getting a little excited about it. I might even sing that at the spring NEC.

(Laughter)

Commander, that's what we're working on there, and we're almost there as far as exactly what we're going to do. I just got new ideas on listening to other committee reports on how we work together with their youth programs, so we're actually looking forward to that.

Okay. With that, again, I wanted to thank one more time the national vice commanders. We need you and we're looking forward to working with you.

Last night we were given an assistant adjutant to sit in our meeting and take our notes. Harold, wherever you are, thank you very much. Very much appreciated for what you guys did and what you did for us.

I wanted to remind everybody that our conference call, our first Zoom meeting is this Thursday, 7:30 Eastern. Everybody is welcome on that call. With nothing further, we adjourned the meeting.

And Commander, that's my report.

...Commission Chairman Miles submitted the report of the Legislative Commission.

Legislative Commission

Opening:

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm on October 6, 2023 in the Circle Centre Room
of the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel by Chairman Blair Miles (AL) .

Roll Call:

Chairman:	<u>Blair Miles (AL, 2024)</u>	Secretary:	<u>Harold Thompson, Jr. (NE)</u>
Vice Chairman:	<u>Bernie Kessler (OH, 2026)</u>	NEC Liaisons:	<u>Rev. Thomas Glander (AL)</u>
Members:	<u>Charles Curtis (CA, 2024)</u>	PNC Liaisons:	<u>Byron Robichaux (LA)</u>
	<u>David Lee (NY, 2025)</u>		
	<u>(vacant) (____, 2025)</u>		
	<u>Wayne V. Madson (IL), 2026)</u>		

Guests: Carl Radosevich (NM), David Hanson (IN), Robert Bristo (MN), Samuel Johnson (IA), David Mennel (MI), Carl Albern, Jr. (NJ), William D. (Bill) Kelly (FL), & Ned Fox (CA).

Reading of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

There being no objections, Chairman Miles declared the minutes of the Fall 2022 meeting approved as published.

Reports of Members:

CHAIRMAN BLAIR MILES – GOALS

GBE AWARD – LAST YEAR WE HAD A GOAL OF 8 CANDIDATES FOR THE GBE AWARD. WE ONLY HAD 5 APPLICANTS. LAST YEAR, WE COMPLETELY OVERHAULED THE APPLICATION PROCESS TO THE WHOLE THING. THE INTENT WAS TO SIMPLIFY THE PROCESS, THUS, ATTRACT MORE APPLICANTS. WE WERE ALSO WORKING ON COMPILING A CONTACT LIST CONSISTING OF DETACHMENT LEGISLATIVE CHAIRMEN FOR THE WHOLE COUNTRY. WE DID CREATE A MUCH BIGGER CONTACT LIST, BUT VERY FEW WERE ACTUALLY LEGISLATIVE CHAIRMEN. THEY WERE NOTHING MORE THAN A DETACHMENT CONTACT THAT WE HOPED WOULD PASS ON OUR INFORMATION. WITH THE IDEA THAT THE NVC'S WILL PASS ALONG ALL INFORMATION SENT FROM THE COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS, WE'RE CONFIDENT THAT THE NUMBER OF GBE AWARD APPLICATIONS WILL INCREASE THIS YEAR. WE ARE ALSO GOING TO "FINE TUNE" THE SCORING PROCESS WITH OUR NEXT FEW MEETINGS SO THAT WE'RE READY TO SELECT A WINNER NEXT SUMMER. FOR THIS REASON, WE ARE SETTING A GOAL OF 9 GBE AWARD APPLICATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION.

WASHINGTON CONFERENCE - COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY!!! FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, WE HAD 3 BUSES FOR THE WREATH LAYING OUTING. THE PREVIOUS GOAL WASN'T A SPECIFIC NUMBER OF BUSES, AS MUCH AS IT WAS TO REALLY PROMOTE THE INTEREST OF THE CONFERENCE ITSELF. AGAIN, WITH THE HELP OF THE NVC'S DISTRIBUTING OUR INFORMATION, OUR ACTUAL GOAL WILL ALWAYS BE NOT TO HAVE LESS PARTICIPATION THAN THE YEAR BEFORE. WE UNDERSTAND THE COST CONCERNS AND HAVE BEEN PROVIDED AN AVENUE TO STAY INFORMED OF COST RESTRAINTS. THERE ARE ALWAYS MANY PHOTOS TAKEN BY THE NATIONAL HISTORIAN AT THIS EVENT, BUT NOT MANY PEOPLE GET TO SEE THEM. IF A REQUEST CAN BE MADE OF THE HISTORIAN TO SEND ALL OF HIS PHOTOS TO THE NVC'S FOR MASS DISTRIBUTION, MORE PEOPLE WILL SEE WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED, AND MAY BECOME INTERESTED IN THE NEXT ONE. THE 2024 WASHINGTON WREATH LAYING CEREMONIES ON FEBRUARY 25, 2024 AT 11:15 AM. THE COST HAS GONE UP THIS YEAR. THERE WILL BE AGAIN A GROUP TRAM PASS AT ARLINGTON. THE WREATH LAYING RESERVATION FORM MUST BE FILLED OUT AND SUBMITTED BY FEBRUARY 3, 2024. THE GROUP RATE FOR THE TRAM PASS IS \$16.00 PER PERSON. WREATHS CAN BE PURCHASED BY EACH DETACHMENT OR SQUADRON AND COST IS \$200.00 EACH. BOX LUNCHES ARE \$10.00 IF NO FORM OR CHECK, NO WREATH, NO LUNCH, NO SEAT ON BUS. BOTH SQUADRONS AND DETACHMENTS CAN PURCHASE WREATHS AND PLACE THEM IN WASHINGTON.

VOTER VOICE - LAST YEAR BEGAN WITH A TOTAL OF 256 SIGNED UP FOR VOTER VOICE. BY THE TIME CHARLOTTE ROLLED AROUND, THERE WERE 1,418. 3 OF THE REASONS FOR THIS WERE:

1. COMMISSION MEMBERS WERE TAKING THE IDEA OF SIGNING PEOPLE UP, BACK TO THEIR DETACHMENT MEETINGS.
2. COMMISSION MEMBERS SET UP A TABLE OUTSIDE THE MEETING ROOMS OF THE NEC AND GRABBED PEOPLE COMING AND GOING TO THEIR MEETINGS. (WE ONLY DID THIS AT THE SPRING MEETING)
3. AGAIN, WITH COMMUNICATION BEING THE KEY, THE CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION CHAIRMAN, THROUGH HIS COMMISSION MEMBERS, REACHED MORE PEOPLE THAN IN THE PREVIOUS YEARS.

BY SETTING UP A TABLE AT BOTH NEC MEETINGS, AS WELL AS THE NATIONAL CONVENTION, WE SHOULD SEE A NICE INCREASE IN NUMBERS BY NEW ORLEANS. WE WILL ALSO BE SUGGESTING THAT ANY BUDDY CHECK PHONE CALLS BEING MADE, TO INCLUDE THE STATUS OF VOTER VOICE. WITH ALL OF THESE THINGS BEING CONSIDERED, WE BELIEVE A GOAL OF 2,500 IS VERY OBTAINABLE.

AT THE MONDAY MORNING TRANSITION MEETING, WE WERE TASKED WITH CREATING A NEW FACET TO OUR COMMISSION, TARGETING 16-YEAR-OLDS AND BELOW. WE HAVE A COMMISSION MEMBER WHO HAS A GREAT IDEA THAT WILL BE EXPLAINED IN-DEPTH AT THE FALL NEC LEGISLATIVE MEETING. IT'S TOO INVOLVED TO LAY OUT HERE IN THIS EMAIL, BUT IF YOU ATTEND OUR MEETING IN INDY, YOU'LL LEARN MUCH MORE. IF YOU CAN'T ATTEND OUR MEETING, I WILL HAVE AN IN-DEPTH REPORT SHORTLY AFTERWARDS. SOME RESEARCH NEEDS TO BE DONE TO ENSURE WE'RE ABLE TO DO THIS. I AM HOPEFUL THAT WE WILL BE UP AND RUNNING WITH THIS VERY SOON.

RESPONSIBILITY ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. THERE WILL BE AT LEAST 2 COMMISSION MEMBERS, AS WELL AS THE CHAIRMAN STATIONED OUTSIDE THE MAIN DOORS OF BOTH THE FALL & SPRING NEC MEETINGS IN ORDER TO CAPTURE NEW "VOTER VOICE" MEMBERS. WE ALSO HOPE TO OCCUPY A TABLE IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM AT THE NATIONAL CONVENTION IN NEW ORLEANS. THIS REQUEST WILL BE MADE TO MR. MOOK FOR THE TABLE AND SPACE.
- B. EACH COMMISSION MEMBER HAS BEEN ASSIGNED A SPECIFIC REGION TO ATTEND THEIR CONFERENCE CALLS. IF THEY CAN'T ATTEND, THEY WILL LET ME KNOW AND SOMEONE WILL STEP IN, IN THEIR PLACE. THE GOAL IS TO ALWAYS BE REPRESENTED ON NVC CALLS.

C. AS ALWAYS, EACH COMMISSION MEMBER WILL HAVE A SPECIFIC TASK WITH REGARDS TO MAKING THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE LOOK EFFORTLESS. I.E., WREATHS, LUNCHES, ETC.

Vice Chairman Bernie Kessler– Are you aware that the Legislative Commission is probably the most important Commission this organization have? It is because you fill out CSR's and CPR's that allow the National Legislative body to take to Congress and say, "This is what we do, now, do your part and support our military and their families."

What I love about being a member of the Sons of The American Legion is meeting people that don't know me at all and as time passes I try to get them to trust in me and believe in themselves. That effort leads to our success and makes us a witness to your stories, passion, insecurities and dreams.

When The American Legion's "Get Out the Vote" program was initiated, they said this.

"All Legionnaires are encouraged to renew their commitment for continued service to this country by being politically active as individuals. By working together as an organization, we can make a difference by promoting an informed populace, participation in our government, and involvement in its electoral process. We cannot forget that in this country, our government is "of the people, by the people and for the people." It cannot survive as a democratic republic unless the people participate. That is our task."

We, as the Commission, have been tasked with finding avenues to educate our youth 16 years and younger. While they are not yet of voting age, there are still a few avenues we can explore...and we are looking for ideas from you.

How many of you remember an after-school TV show called 'Schoolhouse Rock'? It was basically cartoons. Do you remember "How a Bill becomes a Law"? It is a 3-minute cartoon on YouTube. I have a few of the handouts that were done by the National Organization in 1996 that I can share but not enough for all of you. This is what was done 25+ years ago. That is all I want to say about legislation.

What can we do about the youth of our Country? I have been to Washington, DC enough to know that taking care of our Veterans, is, as it should be, the most important pillar of our organization. We also support Americanism and Children and Youth. Sadly, I don't read a lot about that in the Commanders testimony to Congress. We have child exploitation, sex and drug trafficking. Our borders are not secure enough to protect the youth of our own country and the one that are being forced to come here. So, what are your ideas that you would like to see this Commission explore that is geared towards our youth?

We need to hear from you to put together a plan that is beneficial to all of us. Our information is out there, or we can give it to you after the meeting. I believe you are welcome on our Zoom Conference calls to submit your thoughts.

In conclusion, I like the fact that there are six 'I' in the words, "inspiring individuals". That's the goal of everyone at the head table and should be the goal to move you to action.

So...Be informed...Stay informed and have a passion for who you are and what you represent.

Charles Curtis – No report at this time.

David Lee – No report at this time.

Wayne Madson – No report at this time.

Old Business

There were no items presented.

New Business

CHAIRMAN MILES (AL) REMINDED THE MEETING ATTENDEES ABOUT THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION'S CONFERENCE CALLS ARE BI-MONTHLY ON THE SECOND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH AS FOLLOW, OCTOBER 12, 2023, DECEMBER 14, 2023, FEBRUARY 8, 2024 APRIL 11, 2024, JUNE 13, 2024, AND AUGUST 8, 2024. CALL -IN NUMBER ARE 877-533-5257 MEETING ID 937 1376 7924 PASSCODE 172 912. START TIME 7:30 PM EASTERN TIME:

Resolutions:

No Resolutions:

For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion: None

Closing: Hand Salute

With no further business to consider, Chairman Blair Miles (AL) adjourned the meeting

at 7:15 pm .

(Applause)

(National Commander Hall played a recording of "Schoolhouse Rock.")

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: That's it. "I'm just a bill on Capitol Hill." I hope everybody remembers that. It's right there. You can look it up.

Who can't wait to hear Blair sing that?

(Laughter)

That goes way back. Rick Cook in the back said he remembered that song, so that's a good thing.

At this time, Bruno will come up with our VA&R report. Next, VE&E.

Guys, if you can stand up, Bruno can get no higher.

(Laughter)

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN WILLIAMSON: Look at this, I finally have a microphone that I don't have to adjust.

(Laughter)

Report of Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

Bruno Williamson, Illinois, Chairman

Good afternoon, my brother Sons. A little while ago you heard from the largest commission, give a report. I want to talk to you about the most important commission of our organization.

Your VA&R Commission met Friday evening at 6:30 in the Meridian East Room. I'd like to thank the members of the commission for their work prior to the NEC and Friday

evening. Seth Rippe from Nebraska; Jeffrey Gibson from Alabama; and our consultant, Gabe Cinquegrana from New York, who were all excused. Man, I know I screwed that last name up. And Eddy Seegers from Texas and Bill "Buster" Sutterlin from Ohio. Are Eddy and Bill still here? Please stand or wave if you're here. I'd also like to thank our immediate past chairman, Seth Rippe, for getting me up to speed this year.

We had 12 guests in our meeting along with our three NEC liaisons, Maxwell Rice from France, Bill Phillips from New Jersey, and Jamey Halloway from Georgia, in attendance. And I'd like to thank them and our guests for your input and participation in the meeting. And a huge thank you to National Adjutant Tony Wright for helping me out Friday night, for keeping our minutes, and for trying to keep me on the straight and narrow during our meeting.

All of the commission members have been given a region of responsibility, and our vice commanders have all received that information. I believe you have all contacted your guys to take part in your Zoom meetings.

We started off the meeting talking about last year's goals. The commission is going to continue to promote Veterans and Children Foundation, the foundation that supports our veterans' families that are in need, and also to help with training of our service officers. The VA&R Commission is also going to work with the VE&E Commission in promoting Be the One and the VA S.A.V.E.: Signs, Ask, Validate, And Encourage training.

By now you know that the Sons of The American Legion national are their own certifying officer for VAVS. You have to understand how huge a deal this is. For those of us who chaired this commission in the past, Ronnie, maybe Joe, David Dew, this was never a thought that we would see this happen. To now be our own certifying officer for our VAVS

representatives, we no longer have to go through a middleman per se. Our applications go straight to our certifying officer, Gabe in New York, and he submits those straight to VACO, VA Central Office in Washington, D.C., for approval. This is going to streamline our application process and get our people into our hospitals considerably quicker.

So, I have a goal. Currently we're in 29 VA medical centers. With Gabe working on the inaccuracies that we currently have and new applications, we will be in 44 medical centers. So, it is my hope and goal that, at the end of the year, we are in 55 hospitals.

Gabe had a brilliant idea, that our representatives should recruit regularly scheduled volunteers. So that is our secondary goal for VAVS, to not only increase our standing in the hospitals, but to recruit more RS volunteers.

The job of the rep not only is to be a liaison to your detachment, but I was reminded by a VAVS rep from Roudebush VA Medical Center in Indianapolis, PNC Giehl, who said, you know, "The rep's also supposed to recruit volunteers." So, Ray, thanks for reminding me of that. I completely forgot.

The Charles B. Rigsby Award, we're going to be submitting a resolution in the spring to add all VA&R volunteering to be accepted in this award. Currently, the Rigsby award only takes into consideration what the volunteer is doing at VA medical centers. And that's great, that's fine. But VA&R is huge, and we've got guys doing incredible work across the country. And VA hospitals aren't close for a lot of people. I drive an hour to mine, and it's farther for a lot of guys. So, they're doing VA&R work at state VA homes, at Fisher Houses. They're doing work for OCW, WWP, Right of Recovery. So, we're going to bring forth a resolution adding a paragraph into the application that encompasses everything VA&R related.

We went into new business. Commander has a VA&R program, Operation Comfort Warrior, an amazing program that brings comfort items to our veterans, to our active duty, those in and out of VA medical centers. He has a goal of \$1 per member, and that will encompass the Four Pillars challenge.

Another program that we are going to promote is the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, a program that's become near and dear to me. I've been lucky to go to five of the festivals, to the stage and arts shows in the center part of the country. And I was lucky enough last spring to volunteer for the week in St. Louis. In April of next year, it will be in Denver, Colorado. And there is a pretty strong rumor that it's going to be in Indianapolis in 2025. That have seen and unseen injuries.

The commission members have all been asked to come up with a program to promote this year's VA&R program, and we look forward to what they come up with.

How many of you have heard of the NAC? There's at least a couple guys, National Advisory Committee. For those that don't understand, the NAC is a committee of over 100 VSOs that meet once a year across the country; the locations change each year. And ideas are brought forth and resolutions are brought forth to this committee to vote on for the betterment of our veterans, and these are then submitted to the secretary of Veterans Affairs.

There is an executive board of 25 of those VSOs that meet in the fall, and Gabe will be at that meeting in a couple of weeks. The Sons have been lucky to be on the e-board over the last few years.

Our national VAVS representative goes to these meetings every year, and currently we do not have a resolution that supports this. We always receive the call from VA, we submit that

to, in prior years, John Kerestan, and I believe it goes to Kevin now, and then a call is then generated. We're going to bring forth a resolution to streamline that, if you will, so that will now be a line item -- would that be the right term -- for this.

I'd like to thank Scott Thornton, the research guru, for helping me with looking into the NAC resolution and the Rigsby resolutions.

National Veterans Assistance Day is something we've been promoting for, oh, since Ray Giehll was the national commander. This year it is May 18, 2024. You're not going to always be able to see it from here; I always bring props. This is the old Fisher House poster, for those of you that can see it. In 2010, we worked with Fisher House and they developed a joint Fisher House-SAL poster for us that has a logo and has then-Commander Cisna's slogan. We'd like to update that with either continuing our logo or the branding and then putting Commander Hall's slogan on this. So that is a goal that we're working on.

J.R. brought a relic up here so I brought more relics. Some years ago, we developed a mission plan. This is not the be all to end all on VA&R.; we've updated it. This helps our blue cappers, pretty much everybody. It has a lot of our programs of what we promote. It has the new VAVS handbook in it, the new VAVS application in it, and the current Rigsby award application in it. You can get it electronically.

And this segues me into the next thing. I will be putting it on our Facebook site and hopefully we can put it on the national site.

We have a national VA&R site. I've renamed it Sons of The American Legion National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation. I know it's long. I'm not a social media guy. But it is a closed site. You have to be invited or asked to be put on it. We did this for a couple of reasons; because

I had to put a moderator on it, and we've had stuff on this site and an Illiana VA site. Stuff was being put on it that wasn't VA related or VA&R related. So, if you're interested in being on that site, we'd like to have you on it. Because I want to know what's going on in California, Wyoming, Jersey, Pennsylvania, to see what might work in Illinois or what will cross the country and work in other parts of the country.

You've heard off and on during the day about PAY, the Parent and Youth Initiative, that Centcom has asked all the commissions to come up with a program for 16 and under. The commission is working on that. We've kicked around a few ideas. Some of them have been bingos or doing cookouts at our VAs or state homes, but those are age regulated, if you will. With the VAs, typically, if you're under 14 you can't go in. Sometimes we've been able to get away with that at cookouts because we're outside and not inside the building. We're working on that. Our NEC liaison Jamey Halloway talked about a program that Georgia does, a weeklong campout. Is Jamey around here? Hey, what's up?

NECMAN JAMEY HALLOWAY (GA): What's up?

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN WILLIAMSON: Jamey told us about a weeklong campout that they have that started six years ago with eight kids and is now up to 30. So along with what you typically do in campouts -- fishing, canoeing -- they're also teaching the Four Pillars of our American Legion family.

The commission's first Zoom, believe it or not, is this Monday, and we'd like to see you on it.

Thank you, Commander. That's my report.

...Commission Chairman Williamson submitted the report of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission

Opening:

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm on October 6, 2023 in the Meridian East Ballroom
of the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel by Chairman Bruno Williamson (IL) .

Roll Call:

Chairman:	<u>Bruno T. Williamson (IL, 2026)</u>	Secretary:	<u>Anthony Wright (PA)</u>
Vice Chairman:	<u>Eddy Seegers, Jr. (TX, 2024)</u>	NEC Liaisons:	<u>Bob Phillips, Jr.</u>
Members:	<u>Bill "Buster" Sutterlin (OH, 2023)</u>		<u>Maxwell Rice</u>
	<u>Jeffrey L. Gibson, Sr. (AL, 2024) – Exc.</u>		<u>Jamey Halloway (GA)</u>
	<u>Seth A. Rippe (NE, 2025) – Excused</u>	Consultant:	<u>Gabriel Cinquegrana (NY, 2024) - Excused</u>
	<u></u>		<u></u>

Guests: Sean Deiter, Sr (PA), Ernie LaBerge (MA), Gerard Sambets (FL), Jim Marier (NM), Bill Kuehner (TX), Jon Kingston, Steve Pintarich (CT), Patrick Gyskiewicz (WI), Jamey Holloway (GA), Charles Keith (WY), James Lastovka (IA), Ray Giehll (IN), and Jim Coates (NY)

Reading of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

There being no objections, Chairman Williamson declared the minutes of the Spring 2023 meeting approved as published.

Reports of Members:

Chairman Bruno Williamson –I would like to thank the members of the Commission for their work prior to the NEC & Friday evening. Seth Rippe; Eddy Seegers; Jeff Gibson & Bill "Buster" Sutterlin.

We discussed last year's goals & if they were not accomplished what we needed to do to get that done.

The first goal from last year was to have Veteran Administration Voluntary Services (VAVS) Representatives (Reps) & and Deputy Representatives (Deps) of the Sons of the American Legion certified by the Sons of the American Legion National VAVS Representative (REP). And to increase the number of VAVS Representative & Deputy Representatives in our Veterans Administration Medical Centers (VAMC's). A resolution was brought forth at the Fall 2022 NEC to make this so. It was approved by SAL Oversight, IA & and the NEC. This became effective at the Spring 2023 NEC. So, the first part of this goal was met. We are now our own certifying officer. The second half of the goal, while technically not met; will shortly explode due to us controlling our VAVS rep/dep destiny.

I cannot begin to explain what a game changer this is for the Sons That we control our destiny in this regard. The rep/dep application was reworked, and we only need to have our Detachments VAR chair/vice & Detachments Adjutant/Asst to sign off prior to sending the application to our Certifying Representative who will then forward that on to the Veterans Administration Central Office (VACO) in Washington D.C. for approval.

Moving Forward - the SAL is a voting member of the National Advisory Committee (NAC). Veterans Service Organizations (VSO's), approximately 100 members meet each year in the spring to bring forth ideas and resolutions to be submitted to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs advocating for our veterans. The executive board of the NAC is comprised of 26 of those VSO's and they meet additionally in the fall. It took a bit of work, but the SAL has been on the E board several times as it is a 3-year term. I bring this all up because you must be a voting member of the NAC. This means you **must have** representation in at least 30 Veterans Administration Medical Centers (VAMC). We currently stand at 29 VAMC's with 35 rep/deps, as of the National Convention. And now that Gabe Cinquegrana is our Certifying Officer (CO) he is working on all the inaccuracies from prior certifications; 11 rep/deps in 6 facilities and he is waiting on VACO approval for 15 rep/deps in 9 facilities. This will give us 65 rep/deps; but more importantly, we will be in 44 VAMC's. So, my **goal** for the year is for the SAL to be in **55 VAMC's**. Our National Certifying Officer Gabe has a brilliant idea of each VAVS rep/dep recruiting 1 Regularly Scheduled (RS) volunteer for their VAMC. The hope in that: is you would possibly be training your replacement down the road.

The second goal was to establish a second VAR volunteer award. The Charles Rigsby Award only recognizes the work being done at VAMC's. In many cases, those facilities are not close for our members to volunteer. So, they are working elsewhere at post homes, State VA Homes, Fisher Houses etc. The thought was to create a 2nd award to recognize those great works that we Sons do in other places. After much consideration, the commission decided against this and instead add to the Rigsby award to also include all VAR volunteering done elsewhere. The commission last year the commission made a draft of the new application by adding a paragraph above section I, giving credit for all VAR volunteering. **And we are working on a Resolution to submit in the spring to make this happen.**

The 3rd goal was to promote TAL Veterans & Childrens Foundation (VCF); this foundation feeds and houses children of military personnel & veterans facing urgent, unexpected hardships. It prevents eviction, keeps the power on and fulfills basic needs. The foundation also covers training & accreditation for service officers.

And last year's 4th goal - to promote The **Be The One** (BTO) initiative which was promoted by both the VAR & VEE commissions last year. Having served as vice chair of VEE last year. I have talked with VEE chairman Jim Coates about both commissions working together with the issues of veterans' suicide awareness. Together we are also working with Rudebusch VAMC in Indianapolis with the expectation of having a VA S.A.V.E. (signs, ask, validate, encourage); Estimate Time of Separation - Sponsorship Program (ETS -SP) training at a future NEC.

We discussed the goals for this year: promoting & raising awareness to Commander Hall's VAR project **Operation Comfort Warrior**, & the chairman's program **National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF)**.

Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services - VAVS – to increase our representation to 55 VAMC's & to increase our Regularly Scheduled (RS) volunteers.

Rigsby Award – having the changes made to the application in time for this year's national convention.

NAC – There is no past resolution saying that our National VAVS Representative will receive a call to go to one or both meetings. So, the commission will be presenting a resolution that our National VAVS Representative receive a call for these meetings. I would like to thank Scott Thorton our resolution research guru for his work on both the Rigsby award & NAC resolution hunt.

Youth/Parent initiative – working on programs for our youth 16 and under

Social Media – I have restarted the National VAR Facebook site that we first started in 2010 and I've renamed it: Sons of the American Legion National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation.

Commission Members – we have all been given a region of responsibility. I have the west; **Seth Rippe** the mid-west; **Bill "Buster" Sutterlin** the Central; **Jeff Gibson** the Northeast and **Eddy Seegers** the Southeast. After the fall NEC each member will have a program to research and report on.

National Veterans Assistance Day (NVAD) – continue to promote this day, May 18, 2024

Women Veterans- women veterans are becoming the fastest-growing population we need to promote and support them.

www.va.gov/womenvet/

Chairman Williamson stated that the members will be assigned tasks for the Commission tonight.

Old Business:

Charles Rigsby Award – will need to do a **resolution** to add the new paragraph in the application & I would like for us to be able to present it at the Spring NEC.

Veterans & Childrens Foundation - continue to promote.

Be The One – continue to promote.

New Business:

Operation Comfort Warrior – Commander's project

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival – Chairman's project

National Advisory Committee (NAC) - there is no existing resolution approving our National VAVS Representative to receive a call for up to 2 meetings each year. So, we will need to do a resolution to send our National VAVS Representative to those meetings each year. And I would like us to have that ready to go for the spring NEC.

VAVS – Gabe Cinquegrana - Excused

Youth/Parent Initiative – cent/comm has asked all the commissions to come up with a program to include youth 16 and under.

National Veterans Assistance Day (NVAD) – is May 18, 2024

Be The One / V.A. S.A.V.E. (signs, ask, validate, encourage/expedite) - Working together with VEE we are hoping to do a seminar at a future NEC.

Fisher House poster – this joint poster has been out since 2009 & was designed by Fisher House and was approved by IA. We need to update it.

Mission Plan – is for information purposes for our blue cappers who aren't what and or where to start with VA&R.

Face Book – I've restarted the National VAR site & and renamed it: Sons of the American Legion National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Discussion ensued regarding ideas for 16 and under members. Jamey Hallway discussed that the Detachment of Georgia has a youth campout.

Resolutions:

None

For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion:

Closing:

With no further business to consider, Chairman Bruno Williamson (IL) adjourned the meeting
at 7:30 pm .

(Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: At this time, I would move the VA&R report to file.

I call up Jim Coates for the Veterans Employment & Education report. Ned Fox, you're on deck.

Report of Veterans Employment & Education Commission

James Coates, New York, Chairman

Good afternoon, everybody.

...Chorus of "Good afternoon."

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN COATES: Before I begin, I'd like to thank Commander Hall and the SAL leadership. I consider it an honor and a privilege to be reappointed as chairman of the VE&E Commission. And I would also like to thank the members of the

commission, both incoming and outgoing, for your commitment to support our veterans and the success of our VE&E Commission.

And I'd like to say congratulations, Bruno, you're doing a great job. Kind of pissed off because they took you away, but, you know, that's the way it goes; right?

(Laughter)

The VE&E Commission meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. on October 6th at the Meridian East Ballroom right next door here. The people that attended our meeting, I'm going to read off your names and if you're present I'd like you to please stand up and be recognized. Myself of course. Then we have James Stewart from Delaware, vice chairman; Fred Vaccarella is not here, he's excused, from Virginia; Dennis Henkemeyer from Minnesota, I don't know if Dennis is still here or not; William Stem; James Noble. And our secretary, Cliff Hall. And then our NEC liaisons, Jon Kingston from Texas; and Jacob McCarty, West Virginia; and Eddie White from Montana. And then also, let's see, Eddie White was excused and so was Chuck Treat, our consultant. So, thanks a lot, guys, for being part of the group and appreciate for all the help that you've been giving us, you gave us last year, and we hope to continue moving things along this year.

We also had some guests. Real quick, I'm going to recognize them. This first one here, I'm going to apologize ahead of time because I'm really going to mess this up. Pat Gryskiewicz -- Pat, are you around? Okay. Thank you -- Wisconsin. Jimmie Martin, Indiana. Bear Weinzirl, Maryland. Bear, are you around? Our consultant from Sony, Eddy Seegers, Texas. Henry Hasselhan, New Jersey. There's Henry. And let's see, Bill Kuehner, Texas. And then also Bruno Williamson from -- I don't know where he's from -- Illinois. Oh, I got that, I had it.

The meeting was opened in proper form. The reading of the previous minutes, there being no objections, Chairman Coates declared the minutes of the spring 2023 meeting approved as published.

Reports of the members. We discussed the need for our commission members to report back to the commission on feedback that they get through their regional calls and also the VE&E activities that are going on in their regions.

For old business, the vote to endorse the trifold brochure passed during the NEC pre-convention meeting, and 500 additional copies of the trifold were distributed during the convention in Charlotte. We can now focus on having the brochure put up on the American Legion website and made available for downloading by detachment, district, county, and squadron levels.

Moving forward, we'd like to see more work toward creating a short video promoting VE&E, but this is going to depend on photographs, short videos, et cetera, provided by the membership, and it is certainly going to take some time to put together. But we're going to continue to work on it, get things together so that we can reach that objective. I can't say it's going to be done this year.

Our Marvin Nay Award plaque and cap have been received and given to Fred Vaccarella to present to Evan Glendinning, the winner of the Marvin Nay Award this year. We discussed a draft letter that we developed for nominees of the Marvin Nay Award that did not win. And the purpose being to acknowledge them and thank them for the work that they're doing and the contributions that they're making to our organization and to supporting our veterans, and also to

encourage them to resubmit. So, feedback from that letter has been really very positively received, and so we're hoping we can move along and start to make that happen.

New business, our goals for this year, for the coming year. Following direction during the transition meeting to improve the messaging and communication to the detachments through the conference calls and summary reports. Coordinate with the national organization and all detachments better;

Promote Commander Hall's challenge to squadrons of \$1 from each member for the following programs, and I think you've all heard them: VA&R and VE&E, Operation Comfort Warriors, Americanism, to donations towards our detachments' Boys State; Children and Youth and Child Welfare Foundation;

And then, of course, supporting or conducting at least one blood drive for National Security.

Included in our goals for the coming year will be to promote the Be the One Program, the S.A.V.E. program, and the ETS-SP, as Bruno has already said. We've already talked, Bruno and I, we're kind of, I don't know, working together a little bit or trying to work together on veterans projects that kind of overlap from VE&E to VA&R. So hopefully we can do that and provide some positive results.

Also, to continue to build our networks and contacts with The American Legion VE&E Commissions at national and detachment levels.

You know, it's slow progress, but I really do believe that we're making that progress. I won't go into it now, but I think that things are happening, so we're starting to get the National

VE&E Commission people looking at us and maybe wanting us to help them do some things, so we're going to continue to work on that and see what can become of it.

For the good of the Sons of The American Legion, once again, we have each member assigned to a region, repeating the activities of our VE&E Commission, and get feedback from the detachments on their VE&E activities. That's, you know, working with, during their regional summaries, to communicate to them what we're doing in the VE&E and also to find out what's going on in those detachments regarding the VE&E.

So, the VE&E Commission meets the third Thursday of every other month. Currently we're scheduled for 7 p.m. Eastern time start. I'm not sure whether that's cast in concrete or not. Last year we started at 8:00 Standard Time because we have people in the Western Region who are joining in and time, you know, what the time differences are there.

We also discussed potential programs for youth, thinking about the programs we can use for Children and Youth, such as the youth camp and education programs over the summer that Maryland and Georgia were talking about last night. They spoke also on doing flag etiquette and Americanism programs during those events. Also, suicide prevention.

We discussed the possibility of starting a VE&E Facebook page, and really, this is primarily catering to youth programs. But today I found out we already have a Facebook page for Children and Youth and one for Americanism. So, there's a lot more research that needs to be done there and looking into what's needed, what can be the most useful.

Possible fundraisers for squadrons and detachments, to benefit suicide prevention, Honor Flight, Wreaths Across America, bottle and can drives, car washes, a walkathon, breakfast or dinner at the post.

The last thing we talked about here was that Chairman Coates needs to send out the calendar with all of the schedules for the commission and committee meetings and get it out to the commission members, so that's on my list.

So, with no other business to consider, I adjourned the meeting at 8:47 p.m. last night, and that concludes my report.

...Commission Chairman Coates submitted the report of the Veterans Employment & Education Commission.

Veterans Employment and Education Commission

Opening:

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm on October 6, 2023 in the Meridian East Ballroom
of the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel by Chairman James M. Coates (NY).

Roll Call:

Chairman:	<u>James M. Coates (NY, 2023)</u>	Secretary:	<u>Clifford Hall (GA)</u>
Vice Chairman:	<u>James H. Stewart (DE, 2025)</u>	NEC Liaisons:	<u>Jon Kingston (TX)</u>
Members:	<u>Fred Vaccarella (VA, 2024) - Excused</u>		<u>Jacob McCarty (WV)</u>
	<u>Dennis Henkemeyer (MN, 2024)</u>		<u>Eddie White (MT) - Excused</u>
	<u>William Stem (MD, 2025)</u>		
	<u>James A. Noble (NJ, 2026)</u>	Consultant	<u>Chuck Treat (AZ) - Excused</u>

Guests: Pat Gryskiewicz (WI), Jimmie Martin (IN), Bear Weinzirl (MD), Eddie Seegers (TX), Henry Hasselhan (NJ), Bill Kuehner (TX), Bruno Williamson (IL)

Reading of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

There being no objections, Chairman Coates declared the minutes of the Spring 2023 meeting approved as published.

Reports of Members:

Have ready at the October 19th Meeting

Old Business:

The vote to endorse the trifold Brochure passed during the NEC Pre-Convention Meeting. Five hundred additional copies were distributed during the convention.

We can now focus on having the brochure put up on the TAL website and made available for downloading by Detachment District County and Squadron levels. Moving forward we would like to work toward creating a short video promoting VE&E. but this depends on photographs, short videos, etc, provided by the membership.. Contact Kevin Mook, the National Liaison for more copies.

Marvin Nay Award plaque and cap have been received and given to Fred Vaccarella to present to Evan Glendinning.

Discussion of the draft letter from the chairman to nominees for the Nay award who did not receive it. The purpose is to acknowledge and thank them for their work and contributions, and to encourage them to resubmit. Feedback from those receiving these letters has been positive. Hope to get more applicants for this award.

New Business:

Goals for the coming year:

- Follow directions given during the Transition meeting to improve messaging and communications to the detachments through the conference calls and summary reports. Coordinate with the National Organization and all detachments better.
- Promote Commander Hall's challenge to squadrons of \$1.00 from each member for the following programs:
 - VA&R /VE&E: Operation Comfort Warriors (\$1.00 per member)
 - Americanism: Boys State in your Detachment. (\$1.00 per member to local Boys State)
 - Children and Youth : CWF (\$1:00 per member to CWF
 - National Security: Each Detachment to hold at least one Blood Drives Support of conduct at least 1 blood drive)
- Potential is over \$300,000.00 for 3 Pillar and a blood drive for each Detachment (55)
- Promote the Be the One Program . the S.A.V.E/and the ETS-SP (Existing Term of Service Sponsorship Program)
- Continue to build our networks and contacts with the TAL VE&E commissions at National and Detachment levels

Resolutions:

None

For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion:

Once again; we will have each Member assigned to a region to contact the VE&E members in that region and coordinate with them.

Consider which region you will represent and report on it at the October meeting.. (Oct 19th at 8PM)

(Third Thursday of every other month at 8 PM)

Should have at least 1 representative from each region on the Zoom meetings

Look into Veteran and VE&E program on line in your state and region

Potential Programs for youth Think about programs we can use for the C&Y such as:

Youth camp and education programs over the summer.MD and GA spoke on their

Flag Etiquette and Americanism

Bust Bullying

Suicide prevention

Possibility of starting a VE&E Facebook page and catering to youth and youth programs. Items that will make youth curious and come to see what it is all about . Must have a moderator to control the contact and insure it is appropriate for the Legion Family and youth

Contact media and communications for additional guidance

Possible Fundraisers for Squadrons and Detachments to benefit Suicide prevention, Honor Flight and Wreaths across America

Bottle and Can Drives

Car Washes

Walk a thon.

Breakfasts or dinner

If you do not have a listing, of all the National Commission and Committee schedule, contact Chairman Coates to get one!!!

Closing:

With no further business to consider, Chairman James M. Coates (NY) adjourned the meeting

at 8:47 pm .

(Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: We will move the VE&E report to file.

At this time, we'll call up Resolution Committee Chairman Ned Fox.

Sir?

UNIDENTIFIED NECMAN: I said you were sorry.

He said the meeting was every other month. I didn't know which month that started with. So, this month?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: This month.

UNIDENTIFIED NECMAN: Okay. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Then two months from now, Mike.

Report of Subcommittee on Resolutions

Ned Fox, California, Chairman

Greetings. This will be very short.

I'd like the Subcommittee on Resolutions members to stand up. They're from every region. So, vice commanders, these are your guys for Subcommittee that will be on your calls, or they'll at least let you know.

We have Jay Marsden, from Missouri, Camille LeJeune Jr. from Louisiana, Steve Ward out of Kansas, Brandon Curry from Kentucky, and Mark McCue from Massachusetts. Thank you, gentlemen.

(Applause)

I'd like a special thank you to our recording secretary, they brought him out of retirement, Harold Thompson Jr. Thank you, Harold. Where is he hiding? Is he here? Thank you. Thank you very much.

The meeting began at 8 a.m. There was only resolution that's already been discussed through IA, but basically it wasn't -- it wasn't here. It didn't get here until two, three days ago, so it will be acted upon at the spring meeting.

I do ask all the committee/commission chairman that, I hear there's a lot of resolutions coming, you know, just based on your reports. Please, if you give us a heads-up and maybe send us a copy, if we see something, we'll get it back, you know, at least commented. That doesn't remove the requirement of sending it to the adjutants office so that they can have it properly numbered and dated when it's received, but we're here to help, and we're learning.

I've reached out to a couple of people that are subject matter experts on resolutions. I'm in no way an expert, but I'm here to learn. And we can learn together so everybody is more versed on resolutions. That will be covered a little later.

So, SAL Resolution Number 1, that will be coming back, then, on the spring meeting.

I'd like to recognize our guests -- see, I'm filling time because our commander said, "You've got lots of time."

(Laughter)

But Chris told me I only had 75 seconds.

UNIDENTIFIED NECMAN: 75 seconds is over.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FOX: -- PDC Michael Fox, Chris Sherman, Gary Leach, Bill Sutterlin, Bob Phillips, Kevin Chaplin, and Robert "Bob" Brown.

Commander, that concludes our report.

...Committee Chairman Fox submitted the report of the Subcommittee on Resolutions.

Subcommittee on Resolutions

Opening:

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am on October 7, 2023 in the Ohio Room
of the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel by Chairman Nedley C. Fox (CA).

Roll Call:

Chairman:	<u>Nedley C. Fox (CA)</u>	Secretary:	<u>Harold E. Thompson, Jr. (NE)</u>
Members:	<u>Jay Marsden (MO)</u>	PNC	<u>Michael Fox (CA)</u>
	<u>Camille LeJeune, Jr. (LA)</u>		
	<u>Steve Ward (KS)</u>		
	<u>Jeffrey Shannon (SD) - Absent</u>		
	<u>Brandon Curry (KY)</u>		
	<u>Mark McCue (MA)</u>		

Guests: Chris Sherman (WI), Gary Leach (CA), Bill Sutterlin (OH), Bob Phillips (NJ), Kevin Chaplin (VA), Mark McCue (MA), Robert "Bob" Brown (GA)

Reading of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

There being no objections, Chairman Fox declared the minutes of the Spring 2023 meeting approved as published.

Resolutions:

No. SAL Resolution 1 – Fall 2023
Title: Endorsement of Dan Ashley (AZ) for National Vice Commander
Origin: Detachment of Arizona
Motion: To hold until the National Adjutant put the time and date received SAL Resolution 1 – Fall 2023

Maker: Camille LeJeune
Second: Steve Ward
Discussion: That it was received less than 30 days before the meeting.
Action: Held to the spring 2024 meeting.

For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion:

Closing:

With no further business to consider, Chairman Nedley C. Fox (CA) adjourned the meeting
at 8:29 am .

(Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Ned's done talking today.

(Cheers and applause)

We're going to move to have that filed now for Subcommittee on Resolutions.

Gentlemen, as you know, the last couple of years, things have changed. This weekend, you might have noticed something that we did a little different in talking with the leading candidate and trailing candidate was, for years we've been going to meetings and interrupting meetings two or three times, stopping them, and everybody gets up. It stops the flow of it.

But over the last several years, last year we started having hospitality rooms so you can go meet the candidates. And we also, the last couple of years, have brought the candidates up on stage starting Michael Fox's year, and he let us talk to you when I was a candidate.

We're going to continue doing that, and with doing that, letting those candidates speak to you, letting those candidates have you come over and shake your hand and talk to them, those

candidates no longer need to interrupt meetings anymore. So, it didn't happen last night and it didn't happen today, so the meetings went better. And the candidates stood out here and shook more hands and got to interact with people than they ever did by walking in your meeting, talking for ten seconds, and getting back out. So, progress has been made, I believe, to make the meetings better and not interrupted.

So, at this time, we're going to bring forth both of our candidates: our trailing candidate, Bill Clancy, and our leading candidate, Joseph Navarrete, and let them address you guys for just a couple of minutes. Let's bring them up in style.

(Standing ovation)

Remarks

Joseph R. Navarrete, New Mexico, Leading Candidate

Good afternoon.

...Chorus of "Good afternoon."

LEADING CANDIDATE NAVARRETE: You know, I was going to go through that story and tell you why we weren't going out to the rooms, but J.R., you stole my thunder there, so this is going to be short. Just kidding.

First of all, I just want to start with a little bit of a story about me and my family and why I'm here and why I'm representing those that made it possible for me to be here. And that's my father, Tony Navarrete, who served in the Vietnam era, and my grandfather who served in World War II.

I was born into this family, into the Legion Family, at a very young age. Being a kid, running around the post, growing up running bingo, helping distribute food, forgetting who

ordered what. But my grandparents, who ran the concession stand, and my grandfather, who called the numbers, I always had something to look up to and look forward to with my family.

As time grew on, I started to see more and more of what it meant to support our veterans and their families. Having a mother being a national past president of The American Legion Auxiliary showed me the unwilling pride and joy of what it meant to serve at such a high level and what an honor it was to give thanks to everybody that was providing support along the way. I would have never, never have thought that that support or that family would extend beyond the boundaries of not only my town, but my state.

And I'd like to take a quick moment of personal privilege here and thank three individuals that are amazing and that have been helping out. I know they're not in the room but their husbands are. Joan Radosevich, who is our NEC Carl's wife; Carol Manzo, who is Bob Manzo's wife; and Margie Hall. These people have come to our aid. Everybody out here offers, "Give me a call if you need something, give me a call." And being the proud people that we are, each and every one of us, we tend not to make that call, we tend not to reach out, we tend not to ask for help. And we have to remember that sometimes we need a little bit of a push. We need somebody to tell us, "No, we're here to help."

These individuals stepped up. They helped stuff some of the bags that we're going to be giving at the hospitality suite this evening. Please stop by and enjoy some food, some adult beverages. We'll be at the Embassy Suites room 2002. I know Mr. Clancy is going to be right next to us, 2003. So, we'll be enjoying company.

As J.R. said, you know, given this opportunity that we have to talk to you and to make our evening even better and our weekend even better, helps us become a better organization, and that's what we look to do.

With that, I'd just like to say thank you. Thank you for everything you do. And again, *(speaking in Spanish)*. Everything is possible with God and family. Thank you.

(Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: You know, this isn't something that just started this year. If you could feel the passion in Joe, it was great. But this started a couple of years ago when we really started reaching out to each other.

Michael Fox, you know, he would call me and tell me and talk to me about what he was doing, how he was doing. Chris last year and I spent hours on the phone. We never had a conversation that was less than an hour, I don't think, but we kept them going. And I know he talked to Joseph. Now it's moved on to Clancy; right? This is a brotherhood. What we have in this room is a brotherhood. There's people here that want to help all the time. They're always here for us. We're here for each other. We are family.

The Navarrete's are part of my family. I wouldn't have known them if it wasn't for the candidates room that we're having and all that. But now I know them very well. So, it's a great thing we're doing. Support our candidates, let's help them all get better so we continue to make this organization greater and greater.

Trailing candidate, Mr. Bill Clancy.

(Cheers and applause)

Remarks

William Clancy III, New York, Trailing Candidate

Thank you, Commander. I'll thank you, Commander, first as my leader in the Americanism Commission when I was the Children and Youth chairman, and we had a great rapport, and it's carried on. Same rapport is carrying on with Joe and myself. He's been a tremendous resource for me of encouragement and knowledge and telling me what I should be doing and getting prepared, getting everything in order. There's a lot of work involved in kicking off a campaign, and we are doing just that.

Perhaps the most impactful thing is how many people, literally hundreds of men have come up to me since our convention, both here and at home, and offered personal support, advice, excitement, encouragement. It's uplifting, it's just uplifting when so many people, people you hardly know sometimes, are coming up and just saying, "Hey, we're with you. Let's get it going."

My eligibility is through both my grandfather and father. My grandfather was a Navy veteran. He worked in a shipyard on city island, where I live, as a carpenter, a wood carpenter building boats. Then when the war broke out, they built minesweepers. Then they recruited or drafted one carpenter for each ship as it launched. So, he had a very unique career. He then got in his boat that he helped build, sailed it across the Atlantic, and cleared mines in the Mediterranean and then off the coast of Normandy. I'm very proud of him. He was my best friend growing up, and we were involved in everything in my American Legion post from when I was born. I was christened in the hall. After the church, brought back to the hall for the party, that is, wasn't christened in the hall.

(Laughter)

But I could have been, because that's where I lived as a little boy. And the same thing for my two brothers. I have two younger brothers. One's a West Point grad, just retired as a colonel from the Army. The other is an Annapolis grad who just retired a few years back as a major in the Marine Corps. So, they don't lead my eligibility, but I'm immensely proud of them.

My mom was a president of our Auxiliary unit, my grandmother was a member of our Auxiliary unit. I have a great-uncle Jack who was a World War I veteran from central Pennsylvania, Mahanoy City, PA, Schuylkill County, which is my second home, where I grew up a lot of time.

My dad was a Vietnam-era veteran who became very involved in The American Legion, very involved in the POW/MIA movement and the POW/MIA flag. He was a leading candidate for department commander, but about four or five weeks before his convention he died. He died while taking down the flags on our main street in the weeks after Fourth of July weekend. On our post we put up flags, and he was taking them down. It was a hot day; he had a heart attack and God took him home. So, he's very much in my heart. He was also my best friend and he's going to be with him the whole way. And many of the guys from New York knew him. He was just a great guy.

We're having a hospitality suite tonight, you'll learn a little bit more about my family there, definitely some fun and excitement. And we have a great neighbor right next door up on the top floor of the Embassy Suites.

I'm looking forward to getting around the country, seeing so many people at their homes, in their posts, in their states, in their detachments. God bless all you guys, God bless The American Legion, and God bless the United States.

(Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: As you know my slogan, "Representing more than me." My favorite part of what they both said was talked about their grandfathers and their fathers; right? That's what we all should be doing; right? How many people in the room, the person that you're under has passed away and gone. They can't tell their story. Go ahead, raise your hands, that's good. Mine is, mine's gone. So how do they live on? They live on by us telling the story. They live on by us telling why we do what we do.

If you notice, in the newsletter that went out, one of the things I talked about was that membership card that we all sign. You know, every veteran signed up. And when they signed to say they would give their life if we had to, we should make our commitment to that membership card mean the same. The same commitment that they gave is we should have the same commitment to make sure our cards that we carry is representing our family service, because that's why we're here. And that's why we can put down all the politics and we can pick up the programs and make them the best if we want to, because representing your family service is greater than any petty thing that you can talk about. Let's represent our family service the best we can. Please always represent your family service.

(Applause)

Gentlemen, the goal for this afternoon was to get the reports read. We did that. We've also seen our candidates, and now we're going to move to adjourn for the day and reconvene tomorrow morning at 8:45. The service is first.

Go ahead, Kevin.

NATIONAL STAFF LIAISON MOOK: Can I ask a question? Kevin Mook, SAL
liaison.

We changed the format a little bit on the meetings from Friday and Saturday. I would like some honest opinions from y'all, please. I don't mind getting emails from you telling me whether it was good, bad, or indifferent, and if it can work better. Please let me know. And this room, putting the pipe and drape up there, just trying to make it better for all of you. Just give me some feedback, I'm looking for some feedback. Okay? Thank you. Thank you, Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Anybody that liked the way it went, it's something that me and Tony talked about. If you don't like what happened, it's all Kevin Mook's fault; talk to him.

(Laughter)

Joe?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER GLADDEN: Joe Gladden, Detachment of
Maryland, past national commander.

On April 12th and 13th, we will be having a homecoming for our national commander, Mr. J.R. Hall, right near BWI airport in Maryland. We have a packet put together. That weekend will include, on Friday we'll be having a dinner at the commander's post. On Saturday we will be going to the Naval Academy for a tour of the Naval Academy and lunch at the officer's club at the Naval Academy. And on Saturday night we'll be having a homecoming banquet.

So, we'd like you all to come to Maryland, have an incredible time. If you come in early, you can actually go to Fort McHenry. It's probably only about ten miles away. You can visit the place where our national anthem was created.

So, if you're interested, we have packets. Right now, we only have 100 packets. So, if you're truly interested, my guys will be in the back out here, so take a packet. We will have it up online at mdsal.org. So, it will be up there probably by the end of this week, and you can go there and download it as well. So, thank you, everybody, and look to see you in Maryland.

(Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: John?

ANECMAN JOHN LAWRENCE (LA): Mr. Commander, John Lawrence, alternate NEC from Louisiana.

Prior to coming to the meeting, I was looking at the rules of NEC. It appears there was an oversight on those rules, is that it states that the NEC -- the Sons NEC approved those in October of '22. I reviewed the meeting minutes from there and it doesn't state that in there.

To correct this oversight, I would like to make a motion that we approve the rules of NEC today and that the revision sheet be updated to show that we approved those rules today.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: We have a motion on the floor, gentlemen.

NECMAN BRANDON CURRY (KY): Mr. Commander, Brandon Curry, NEC, Kentucky, seconds.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: We have a motion on the floor to accept the rules of the NEC and a second. On the question?

Hearing none, all those in favor, say aye.

Any opposed?

Motion carries.

NECMAN RONALD ROBERTS (MS): Mr. Commander, Ron Roberts, NEC from Mississippi.

The same thing applies to the other two documents that say they were approved in October of 2022. We never got to vote on them. That's the -- look under the Sons pamphlets you should have. One explains the rules for national convention, says we approved that; we never approved that one. The rules of the NEC we've already covered. And I left my book and I can't remember the other one. It's in the middle of my book over that. Uniform Code of Procedures.

I make a motion we accept both of those at this meeting.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: We have a motion on the floor.

NECMAN BRANDON CURRY (KY): Mr. Commander, Brandon Curry, NEC, seconds that motion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: We have a motion and second on accepting the Uniform Code of Procedure and, I'm sorry, Ron, what was the other one?

NECMAN ROBERTS: Constitution and Bylaws.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: National Constitution and Bylaws. Do we have any questions?

NECMAN CHRIS COOK (OK): Yes, Commander, Chris Cook, NEC, Oklahoma.

I would request that you ask your parliamentarian, is that a proper placement for us to be doing that here in this body?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: With all our business today, what he's saying is that we can do it now, it's not an issue of not having to be able to do it under new business. We were just getting ready to close down for the day. We have the time, so we can get the work done.

Does that answer you, Chris?

NECMAN COOK: Acceptable, thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Thank you.

Any other questions?

Hearing none, all those in favor, say aye.

Any opposed?

Ayes have it.

Mr. Nave?

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN NAVE: Commander, Mark Nave, CWF chairman.

We have 50/50 raffles out in the hall, \$5. We'll be doing the drawing tomorrow morning.
Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Mr. Brown?

PAST NECMAN ROBERT "BOB" BROWN (GA): Commander, Bob Brown, past NEC from the Detachment of Georgia.

With your permission, I'd like to take a moment or two to thank a lot of people in this room. Some of you may have noticed that I'm wearing a different cover. Let me start off by thanking my parents who gained my eligibility to serve: My father, a World War II in Korea, a Navy veteran; my mother, also a Navy veteran of World War II; and a grandfather that was an Army veteran had served in the Oregon in World War I. Thank them all.

I want to take a moment, some of you heard me at national convention, some here this weekend. I want to thank all of you for all the kind words and for all the help and support you've given me for the last 16 years as NEC. It has been my privilege and my honor to work with each and every one of you. I apologize for getting a little emotional, but that's how deeply I love this organization. Thank you so much.

Some of you got some coins that I produced as a matter of saying thank you at national convention, some of you got one today. If you didn't get one and would like to have one, please see me before this weekend's over. I have some remaining, and they're to be given out until I run out.

But thank you so much for allowing me to serve with you and giving me the honor of working with some of the greatest gentlemen in the finest organization I've ever been involved in.

Thank you, Commander.

(Standing ovation)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Anyone else have anything?

If not, I ask everyone to please rise to salute the colors. Join me: One, two.

Gentlemen, we now stand in recess until 8:45 in the morning.

...At 3:30 p.m., Saturday, October 7, 2023, the National Executive Committee recessed, to reconvene at 8:45 a.m., Sunday, October 8, 2023.

SECOND DAY

Sunday, October 8, 2023

...At 8:45 a.m., the National Executive Committee reconvened, National Commander Hall presiding.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Sergeant-at-Arms, please close the doors.

With the colors of our country being in place, render a right-hand salute: Two.

Please uncover as the chaplain opens in prayer.

Invocation

Ernest Laberge, Massachusetts, National Chaplain

Heavenly Father, thank You for time together again today. Guide us in our decisions at this meeting to help grow the Sons of The American Legion and The American Legion Family. Please protect us, and in our travels home this afternoon, do the same. Please remember those who have departed recently and those that are still defending our nation. May God bless. Amen.

...Chorus of "Amen."

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Recover -- I'm sorry, uncover.

(Laughter)

This new change is still getting some of us.

At this time, Vice Commander Terry Harris will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of Allegiance

...The National Executive Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Now you can recover.

At this time, I call upon national adjutant Anthony Wright for roll call.

Roll Call

NATIONAL OFFICERS

National Commander

Donald L. "JR" Hall Jr., Maryland

National Vice Commanders

Northeast: John R. Cook, New Hampshire

Southeast: Linwood A. Moore, Virginia

Central: Robert L. Bristo, Minnesota

Midwest: Terry A. Harris, Kansas

Western: James R. Fischer Sr., California

National Adjutant

Anthony W. Wright, Pennsylvania

National Assistant Adjutant Emeritus

Harold E. Thompson Jr., Nebraska

National Assistant Adjutants

James E. "Ed" Sheubrooks, Florida (Excused)

Robert J.F. Avery, New York

Scott A. Williams, Virginia

Scott J. Thornton, Ohio

Jeffrey E. Hicks, New Jersey

Clifford E. Hall, Georgia

National Chaplain

Ernest E. "Ernie" Laberge, Massachusetts

National Parliamentarian

Gary B. Leach, California

National Historian

Jeffrey Thorne, Maryland

National Sergeant-at-Arms

Mark T. Fayer Sr., Maryland

National Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms

Brian K. Waters, Pennsylvania

Gregory A. "Greg" Falco, New York

Lyle G. Larson, Kansas

Matthew W. Griffis, Arizona

Timothy S. Brower, New York

National Commander's Aide

Thomas G. "Tom" Deal, Maryland

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDERS

Immediate Past National Commander

Christopher A. Carlton, Indiana

Past National Commanders

J.R. Stillwell, Illinois

Robert H. Faust, California

James R. Hartman Jr., Maryland

Charles E. Gannon, Maryland

David P. Stephens, Indiana

Christopher R. Cerullo, New York

Frederick L. Hartline Sr., Ohio (Excused)

Douglas P. Bible, Minnesota

David R. Faust, Wisconsin (Excused)

Robert A. Worrel, Indiana

Eugene L. Sacco, California

Joseph M. Mayne, Minnesota
William E. Matoska, Maryland
Byron J. Robichaux, Louisiana
Richard L. Cook, Oklahoma
Kevin N. Winkelmann, Texas
Clifford A. Smith, Massachusetts
Michael J. Deacon, Iowa
Earl R. Ruttkofsky, Michigan
Thomas E. Cisna, Illinois (Excused)
James K. Roberts III, Florida (Excused)
Joseph W. Gladden, Maryland
Michael W. Moss, Colorado (Excused)
Kevin L. Collier, Alaska
Jeffrey C. Frain, Arizona (Excused)
Greg K. "Doc" Gibbs, New York
Joseph A. Paviglianti, New York
Michael C. Fox, California

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMEN

Alabama, NEC
Alaska, Alternate
Arizona, Both
Arkansas, Alternate

California, NEC
Connecticut, NEC
Delaware, Both
Florida, NEC
France, NEC
Georgia, Both
Hawaii, NEC
Idaho, Both
Illinois, NEC
Indiana, Both
Iowa, NEC
Kansas, Both
Kentucky, NEC
Louisiana, NEC
Maine, Both
Maryland, Both
Massachusetts, Both
Michigan, Both
Minnesota, NEC
Mississippi, Both
Missouri, NEC
Montana, Alternate
Nebraska, NEC

Nevada, NEC

New Hampshire, NEC

New Jersey, Both

New Mexico, NEC

New York, Both

North Carolina, NEC

Ohio, Both

Oklahoma, NEC

Oregon, Both

Pennsylvania, Both

Puerto Rico, NEC

South Dakota, NEC

Tennessee, NEC

Texas, Both

Vermont, Both

Virginia, Alternate

West Virginia, NEC

Wisconsin, Both

Wyoming, Alternate

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Commander, we have 46 detachments represented out of 53. You have a quorum.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Good morning.

...Chorus of "Good morning."

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: I now declare this 2023 National Executive Committee back in session.

We're honored to have with us today a special guest. I'll read a bio here for you.

Daniel J. Seehafer was elected national commander of The American Legion on August 31, 2023, in Charlotte, North Carolina, during the 104th National Convention. Seehafer likes to say, "It's personal" when it comes to The American Legion's mission of serving veterans and their families. He continues the theme of "Be the One" to prevent veteran suicide.

An ordained minister from Wisconsin, he has earned his American Legion eligibility through his service in the U.S. Navy and Navy Reserves, where he served as a military chaplain. A member of American Legion Post 157 in Horicon, Wisconsin, Seehafer served in a number of American Legion offices at every level, including national chaplain and commander of Department of Wisconsin.

Born and raised in Merrill, Wisconsin, he lettered in cross-country track while in high school and later received a bachelor's degree in pastoral ministry from Concordia University and a Master of Divinity at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Seehafer was installed as assistant pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran church in Horicon in 1997 and continues to serve as the administrative pastor of the church and its school.

His American Legion post was recognized for 100 percent and all-time high in membership during his term as commander and adjutant. Other honors include district commander's New Post Achievement Award, Silver Brigade, and Post 157 Legionnaire of the Year.

In 2023, Seehafer earned the Outstanding Heroism Award for administering the Heimlich maneuver to a choking victim at an American Legion dinner.

National Commander Seehafer and his wife, Stacey, who is a member of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 157, live in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. Dan's son, Jacob, and daughter, Emma, are also members of the Post 157 family. Dan is the son of the late Lester Seehafer and Jean Sabatke.

Ladies and gentlemen, a man who is used to talking on Sunday mornings, please rise and join me with a welcome for our national commander, Dan Seehafer.

(Standing ovation)

Greetings

Daniel J. Seehafer, Wisconsin, American Legion National Commander

As I'm also used to saying, please be seated.

(Laughter)

Yes, Sunday morning it is. Commander, thank you so much. You know, we talk about purpose; right? The good Lord bringing us together for a purpose. And to have J.R. as my counterpart as part of the family, I thank him every day, the good Lord, and of course you, because we're a team, we're a family. And we have that one message. And I believe we all know it; right? And that's this number.

That is the mission. And if anybody would say what The American Legion is about, what do we do, I want that phrase, and I know J.R. has heard it many a time and I want you to embrace that and put it right here. And it is an organization -- no, I take it back. We are a family that changes lives and saves lives. Just think of that concept for a moment.

I know there's numbers and there's budgets and there's all those things. But when it comes right down to it, we are a family that changes lives and saves lives.

You know, I can do the thank-you tour, but for us here, I'm going to have some asks. As I have been listening to certain meetings and on the road and traveling and spending basically from 12 to 15, sometimes a little more hours a day on my travels, I'll probably be home maybe about 20. And out of those 20 days, half of that is Christmas. And now my numbers are decreasing because I have to come back for a special meeting here, there's some things in D.C., obviously you've been seeing the news with an attack on Israel.

So again, those asks. I want you to seriously think about this and watch for it, because I want it to change the face of this organization. And I'm looking at you, NEC, and of course even our guests who are with us, our past commanders. And that change is this: Servant leadership. Write it down, think about it. Servant leadership.

And under that leadership caption, I need to have three, and I talk about the Cs in leadership, and those three Cs are competence, character, and commitment.

When someone -- in my passing, there were actually, these were women soldiers, and one was expecting and going on leave soon, but of course we're like mosquitoes. You know, "You're not a member," you know, kind of thing, you know? But she had a valid question. "So, what am I going to get into?" You know, she's expecting a family and all that.

So, the response was, "Well, We raise money and we give it away."

What? That's not the answer, that's not the response.

So, competence is very important, isn't it? What do you do? What are we about?

Then I go to character. Character says a lot, doesn't it? You know, I don't look like I should be the national commander; all right? So sometimes I go incognito -- say that 500 times.

(Laughter)

So anyway, I'm in the back of this one post. They had some event going on and they brought in the equipment and they kind of parked by the door and they were on the grass. Ooh. Okay? This commander went ape. He lost control because of the grass. So, then it shook up the guy. And I'm looking at it afterwards, and this guy's back and forth. He destroyed the grass because he got so shook.

All he had to do was say, "Hey, next time, we want to keep our lawn pristine," or whatever, "it's important to us. So could you please park in the parking lot next time" or something. Do you see how that works? That's just a little example.

But people are watching. And I say that talking about servant leadership. Last night if you had the chance to go to my homecoming, talk about how people do watch you, not maybe just inside but also out, people watch. And so, one person came up to me and said, "You know something? I appreciate your leadership."

And I'm, "Oh, thank you. And just general?"

He goes, "No. I saw you. You were the last one to come up and eat."

Interesting, isn't it? So, think of that in character.

And then, of course, commitment; right? Are we just here together because J.R. is the commander? Woo. No?

(Laughter)

That's good, right? But we understand, we go back in the trenches again. And we're still in the trenches, don't get me wrong. But it's commitment, even, yeah, it's fun when it's here. But what happens when it comes here? Commitment.

So, with that servant leadership, think about it, watch out for it, be hungry for it. Because we're in the process of really changing the face of our organization with that concept.

One other take-home that I want, and I know I don't have a lot of time, I know you have a robust agenda, but I do want to say something about making us relevant. That's relevant with servant leadership. But one more is that grassroots legislative campaign. Heard of it? Yes. Are we on it? Okay.

So J.R., Commander, I want this double and triple fold, quadruple, the whole family involved in it. It's simple. Legion.org/action. Talk about action. Our voice need to be powerful.

Who knows what's going to happen come that November 17th and 18th? That's when this stopgap is over and the government shutdown could happen. And you heard about the chaos that's happening obviously; right? So, with that, if they stop, once again, the Coast Guard will not get paid on a timely manner. It could even be the military, could be.

So, when we talk about passing a bill or pushing and having our Congress respond to our voice, we need to have lots and lots of responses. Again, legion.org/action. Fill it out. And then just don't do it one day. You can do it every single day. Again, every single day. Because they don't look at: Oh, this is Dan Seehafer again. What the heck is wrong with this guy? Or J.R. Right? Congress is about what? Numbers. So, let's give them some numbers.

But more importantly, let's give them a loud message: We're watching. We're watching too. And anything that hinders our national security, our way of life for our veterans, anything with the veterans and their families, we will respond. We will.

And my last but not least on that, I know this is a powerful family. And we talk about right here. So, when I look at all of the foundations, I know my Wisconsin delegation is here. I'm going to call you out because last time I got chewed, "You didn't even say anything about Wisconsin." All right. Hi, Wisconsin. All right?

(Laughter)

But I'll tell you what, together we can truly make a difference. I know my project, I know J.R. has a project, and it's not just asking about moneywise. But one is that VCF, the Veterans and Children Foundation, that needs to be right up here or at least on our radar.

You know, Wisconsin gave me the whole impact report of all that you do. And sometimes when I go around and I talk and I say, "Just think of it, what would happen if we were not here?" Think of that. I think even just in Wisconsin, right, gents, \$1.8 million of impact. And that was only a little bit that reported. So, let's all report.

NEC, trickle down. Empower those officers. And as a servant leader, make sure they report. We need to have that full number to really make that difference. Right? Not 44 percent or whatever percent it is. Let's even hit it. I'm looking, I'm challenging my family, 100 percent. And don't tell me we can't do it. But I'm going to be there helping. I will. So, watch my numbers.

You know, when you have a pastor with a microphone, even on a Sunday morning, it becomes dangerous.

(Laughter)

But I'll tell you what. I think that's enough. Again, those are my points, though. Those are my asks. Because sometimes we go into the thank-you mode, which is good, we all need to be thanked. And believe me, sometimes we don't get it, do we? And we kind of think, hmm, is this worth it? Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. When you deal with life, the difference between death and life, it's totally worth it. Or, as J.R. said, what I like to say, "It's personal."

Family, thank you so much for giving me your time to speak to you today. Keep up the great work. I do love you too. You're my brothers, part of my family. Let's journey together.

Yes, J.R., Commander, absolutely.

(Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Gentlemen, clap louder. You just heard from a great commander that came in here to talk to you about what he wanted. He didn't come in to say thank you, he didn't come in to give you a speech. He came in to talk to you about what he wants. So, let's hear an applause for him that says "We got your back. We got your back. We're family, we're going to get it done."

(Cheers and applause)

TAL NATIONAL COMMANDER SEEHAFFER: And eye of the tiger, eye of the tiger, let's do it.

(Standing ovation)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: He's going to shake hands on his way out, let the music play, because that's who he is.

Can you sense a difference? Can you sense a difference? You've heard about it from the Sons of The American Legion saying that there's changes. You've heard about a culture change. It's not just us; it's the Legion Family. There's been so many people who have earned the spot to be in a position they're in, and then sometimes the work stops.

Take his message home. Servant leadership. If you want to wear a gold cap, make sure you're doing the work to wear that gold cap. Make sure. Make sure that you're being the leader. Make sure you're being a servant leader, a working leader who is getting the work done.

What an honor to have him come in and speak to us. What an honor.

(Applause)

And he's the youngest member of the family. I'm not going to say who is next or anything. I'm going to tell you I'm the middle child.

(Laughter)

But going with that, we have another guest with us.

Lisa Williamson of Fairbanks, Alaska, was elected national president at The American Legion Auxiliary during the organization's 102nd National Convention held August 25th in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Williamson has held numerous leadership positions in the organization at the unit, district, department, and national levels. At the national level, she has served as chair of several programs, including VA&R, Children and Youth, Education, Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Legislative, Constitution and Bylaws, Public Relations, Community Service, Junior Activities. She also was national Vice President in the 2022-2023 administrative year.

Williamson is a member of the C. Russell Huber ALA Unit 57 in Fairbanks. She is eligible for her American Legion Auxiliary membership through her father, Ray Allington; her adoptive father, Keith LaChance; and through the military service of her son, Kyle, who serves in the Alaska Air Guard. Williamson is also an American Legion Rider.

Born in Southern California, Williamson moved to Fairbanks when she was seven years old. It has been her home ever since. However, she does escape the winter months to Arizona with her husband, Darrel. She has two children, Danielle and Kyle, and two grandsons, Dawson and Micah.

Everyone, please rise as the Sergeant-at-Arms escorts up our national president, Madam President Lisa Williamson.

(Standing ovation)

Greetings

Lisa Williamson, Alaska, American Legion Auxiliary National President

I don't have the powers as our reverend does, but please be seated.

(Laughter)

And so, since there's three of us, we know who is the oldest now, and J.R. is in trouble.

(Laughter)

He also knows I'm having -- I'm just not grasping the Madam President thing. So, if I don't answer, please just call me "Lisa." If you see me in the hallway and I don't answer, it's not that I'm being rude; it's just that I look around for Vickie Koutz.

(Laughter)

You know, on a Sunday or any day, it is extremely difficult to follow National Commander Dan Seehafer, as you can tell. He does it for a living from the pulpit, but I speak from the heart.

First of all, it is about family. I would like to, right off the bat and not forget, recognize my Alaskans, Kevin Collier, past national commander for the SAL. It looks like Dale is here for Alaska, representing Alaska here down in the chairs. I thank you very much for having me.

Family, it is all about family. Not a lot of you know, several do but not everybody, I got my start in The American Legion as a bartender at our American Legion post at home. And then when I -- we moved to Anchorage and I was getting a little bored, and I ended up seeing a job in the newspaper as administrative assistant for The American Legion. So, I worked at our American Legion for nine years, got to know the ins and outs of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion as a family.

While I was there, I got pregnant with my son. My son served under Kevin as national sergeant-at-arms here with you guys. When he was 18, he said "Hey, Mom, I need you to go out to Eielson Air Force Base with me."

I said, "Okay. Why? Why are we going out there?" Very proud to say my son took his oath of enlistment with the Alaska Air Guard.

(Applause)

My daughter was raised with the Juniors. She's attended many national Junior meetings, served as honorary department Junior president, served as honorary national Junior chaplain. So again, it's all about family.

And if it weren't for this family, when I worked as the administrative assistant, I wouldn't have met the love of my life, Darrel, who also is a member of the Sons of The American Legion. So, it's all family.

(Applause)

And this family is in trouble for telling you all I'm the oldest.

(Laughter)

So, it's not been -- I know in recent history it has never happened, and I don't think that it probably has ever happened, but all three leaders have embraced the same mission, and that's "Be the One." We're all focusing on our military and veteran suicide epidemic and what we can do to help. The Be the One, you know, there's three letters it helps -- we know we're an acronym organization -- ALR: Ask, ask them if they're having problem; listen; and then reach out, so ALR.

There's one thing I'd like to say. When it comes to destigmatizing them asking for help, not even asking for help, but just to let them know it's okay to not be okay. And I think that all of us have those days that maybe we may be just a little down and not thinking super positive about ourselves or a situation. And just remember, it's okay to not be okay. Because you have to have those lows to know when you have the highs.

I can tell you; I've been running a high since August 30th in Charlotte, running, running, running. I've had a few down days, and boy, when those days are down, I am out. But I am super passionate about our organization. I can't think of what I would be doing otherwise. And I love our mission. Let me tell you about our mission.

So, the very first trip that I was offered as the national president, I was able to be a guardian for an Honor Flight. My husband and I were both guardians for a Lone Eagle Honor Flight. If you don't know what a Lone Eagle Honor Flight is, that's for those veterans who don't live near hubs, where we have the hubs with the big groups that go. So, what they do is they fly everybody in to Baltimore. We had three busloads of us. My husband and I happened to luck out, we had a husband-and-wife veteran team. And we now have new members of our family that, actually, we text or call pretty much on a weekly basis.

But while I was traveling and Dan kind of touched on it, it's servant leadership. While I was traveling I kind of went -- here, Dan, I can beat you at this one -- incognito.

(Laughter)

And I wasn't branded because, you know what, it wasn't about me and it wasn't about even our organization. It was about the mission of helping this veteran, the wife of the veteran, who was a tough one to keep up with, I'll let you know. She's a nurse and she was over helping push wheelchairs. I'm like: No, no, no, no. Anyway, it wasn't about me. It was about the mission; it was about the veteran.

And that's what I think sometimes we get sometimes trapped up in the politics of any organization, you know, our squadron, unit, post level, district, department. And we've got to put that aside. It's not about us. And I truly believe that. I've said it a million times. It's not about me. It's about our mission, and I am mission-driven.

And I hope that, with the three of us as a family combined to take on military and veteran suicide, that we can have triple the effect, triple the impact. And I don't care who gets

credit for it. As long as we help one veteran, I'm good with that. And I know that you guys are all in it with me.

I have a special spot in the Sons of The American Legion, considering my son and husband are both members, still continuing to be members. My son is a triple threat, he's also an Auxiliary member, one of the first male Auxiliary members, as he had married a Legionnaire. I hope he never rides a motorcycle.

(Laughter)

I'm a Rider, but I don't want him on a motorcycle. But anyway, that's the mom in me.

I thank you all for everything you do. I know you guys are killing it, like always, for the Child Welfare Foundation. I am super thrilled to be a part of our organization. Thank you very much. Just remember, Be the One. Be the One to save one. Thanks.

(Standing ovation)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: So, you can see, we got great leadership as partners with us. I've been in that crowd for so long and watched presidents and commanders come in and see them out together and see how they get up and they say how much they love being together and how much fun it is. I can tell you, when you're with Lisa Williamson, you're having fun. I can tell you, Dan takes it very seriously, but he can have fun also.

But we all believe, we all believe in Legion Family. We all believe in getting it done and getting the work done. You heard both of them say about the politics, putting the politics down and working the programs. I said that yesterday. It's not something that we've ingrained to put in each other. It's ingrained in ourselves that we do that because we want to make this the best

organization to support veterans that we can. When I say the best organization, I mean the Legion Family.

They are great leaders. I think we have a great team to work with. I can see that people don't get up here and get that Legion Family and just say, "Oh, we're great friends because we're great friend." I love those two and what they mean to me. It is awesome.

We have another guest here with us, if I could ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to bring up the CWF chairman, Mr. Bob Morrill.

(Standing ovation)

Greetings

Robert Morrill, New York, American Legion Child Welfare Foundation President

Sit down.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: That's spoken like a New Yorker.

(Laughter)

FOUNDATION PRESIDENT MORRILL: Yeah, right.

Well, thank you, all, for that warm welcome.

Commander Lee Hall, members of the NEC, my fellow Sons of the American Legion, and guests, thank you for the invitation to be with you this morning. Let me start by congratulating you, Commander, and all of you in the audience that are newly elected NEC members and detachment commander. Congratulations on your elections. You have been given the honor of leading our national organization as well as your detachments. I hope the trust that has been placed in you results in a very successful year for you and our great organization.

I read with much interest a letter that was recently posted on Facebook. It was a letter addressed to the Detachment of New York, spelling out the goals and expectations our national commander has for us for a successful year. I am sure each of the detachments represented here today also received a similar letter.

In that letter, the commander gives us his slogan for the year, "Representing more than me." In other words, when we all joined the SAL, we were not only representing ourselves, but we were also representing the person that made us eligible to belong.

We are asked to honor that one special veteran by working to support the Four Pillars of The American Legion:

National Security: Support and organize a blood drive;

Americanism: Support and volunteer for your department Boys State program;

Veterans Rehabilitation: Support and help raise \$1 for OCW, Operation Comfort Warriors;

Children and Youth: Help to raise \$1 per member to support and help sustain The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

All of these challenges are great, and I would ask that you support all of those goals, all except for one. There is one that I do not agree with, and that is \$1 per member for the Child Welfare Foundation.

In 2022-23 campaign year which ended on May 31st, the total money raised for the foundation was \$679,264, and of that, The American Legion raised \$163,564, or 24 percent. The Auxiliary raised \$62,267, or .91 percent. The Sons raised \$425,061, or 62.6 percent.

(Applause)

62.6 percent. Amazing.

If just \$1 is raised per member this year, you will be doing a lot less than you did last year. What was the membership that you ended with last year? Does anyone know? It was 376,154 members. If you raise \$1 per member this year, you will fall about \$48,900 short of what you did this past year. You raised approximately \$1.13 per member this past year.

Another reason why I ask that you do better than \$1 per member? Did you know that you only need \$407,033 to reach the \$10 million mark? That's less than you did last year. Breaking the \$10 million mark, wouldn't that be a great gift to give to your commander?

And the last reason I ask that you do better than \$1 per member? 2024 marks the 70th anniversary of the foundation's existence. I am asking each Legionnaire, family member to do their part to make this a banner year. I challenge all of you here today to go back to your detachments and encourage them to raise \$1.35 per member to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the foundation. Do you think it's possible?

...The National Executive Committee responded, "Yeah!"

With your voice, leadership, and enthusiasm, I'm sure we can do it. That's only 22 cents more per member than you did last year. You can start by promoting the 100 percent per capita banner program. That will get you better than halfway to your goal. Then work with some programs and fundraisers that have been successful in the past.

And lastly, I ask that you work with other Legion family members -- the Auxiliary, the Legion, and the Riders -- through one additional fundraising project. Make it a great entire family involvement.

I will be speaking to the new Legion commanders tomorrow afternoon and will be asking them to do the same thing: One family project that hasn't been done before, to help children with physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs. That is what the foundation is all about. You could do a walkathon, a bingo night, bike ride, chicken barbecue, 50/50 raffles at all of your meetings; enthusiastically support the piggy bank program by putting out banks at all your events, dinner events, and at your post bar, if you have a post bar, with a sign, "Feed the pig, help the kids." These are just a few ideas that you might do to support the foundation. I'm sure you know many other ideas that have worked in the past.

Is fundraising hard? It can be. But if you plan ahead, it can be fun.

While working the CWF booth at national convention, a SAL member by the name of Henry, all dressed in a suit and a nice tie, from the state of New Jersey, presented the foundation a check for over \$2,000. Henry was only six years old. He raised all the money by himself. If Henry can do it, we all can do it. And Henry had a great time doing it and he was very proud of his accomplishment.

At this time, I'd like to recognize once again the detachments whose hard work last year earned them some nice recognition.

Detachment of Florida won the Udie Grant Award.

The Detachment of Arizona won the Garland Murphy Award.

The Meritorious Achievement Award went to Nevada.

The Excellence Award also went to Nevada.

And the nine runners up in the Excellence Award were Colorado, Hawaii, Wyoming, Mississippi, Arizona, Virginia, Arkansas, New Mexico, and Texas.

The competition for all of these awards were very close and, with a little more effort and a few dollars, any detachment could have jumped to the top of the list and won one of these prestigious awards. Each week Stacy Cope, our program administrator, puts out a report on the donations that came in during the week. It is called the cross tabs report. If one person from each detachment asks for this report, the Children and Youth chairman or maybe your detachment commander, and then that person creates a distribution list informing you, all your members, where the detachments stands, you will know your competition and how much you need to jump to the top of the list and win some of these great awards. I hope you will consider doing this and will create a good competition and healthy spirit to increase CWF awards.

In closing, I would like to leave you with the words of our great leader, Past National Commander Jake Comer. He always said at the end of each speech, "When we hear, we forget. When we see, we remember. But when we do, we understand."

I hope you all ask your members to get involved and inspire some of them to do something to help the youth of our nation to live better lives.

Mr. Commander, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to our members this morning. I know many of you will be going home today, so I wish you all safe travels and I look forward to seeing you all in the spring meetings next May. Best wishes to you and your

families for the holiday season and much success in the new year. God bless you all for the work that you do. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN NAVE: All right, gentlemen, at this time pull out your red tickets. We're going to have President Morrill here pick out the winning ticket. The prize is \$415 that will go to the winner.

The winning ticket: 042693. 042693.

Got a winner. Congratulations.

(Applause)

At this time, I want to give a special thanks to my committee: Sandy Lipman, Jon Coakley, George Fleming, John Sansoucie, Lyle Chapman. These gentlemen sold merchandise this weekend and did the 50/50. We made over \$1,300 in selling merchandise this weekend, plus the \$415 today from the 50/50, and also the donations that will come later on for the CWF.

(Applause)

And Mr. President, you mentioned that you wanted to see us do better than last year. Well, so far this year, sir, we are \$25,000 ahead of last year's pace, so we're well on our way, sir.

(Applause)

FOUNDATION PRESIDENT MORRILL: All right, all right.

(Standing ovation)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: All right, gentlemen, let's start to finish up our business. We may have one more guest that pops in just a little bit later on. But if they don't make it, we won't wait. We want to get done and get everybody out of here as soon as we can.

Appointments to National Commissions/Committees

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: So, we're in October. In the post-NEC, we made appointments for those that were empty by changes, with people moving on. This morning I'd like to give the rest of the appointments. As soon as we're done, the Sergeant-at-Arms -- when we're doing with the meeting, they'll hand them out to all NEC. So, stay where you're at when we adjourn and they're going to come give you these appointments.

On the sheets, the only thing that they did was, on some of them the date is wrong. The chairmen that are being put up, they're going to 2026, they're all three-year appointments.

So, with that being said, all these are the appointments to take place at the drop of the gavel:

Americanism: Chris Casey, chairman through 2026.

Richard Humphrey from Colorado, Legislative, 2026.

Public & Media: Chairman, Kevin Chaplin, 2026. Member, Doug Heiser, 2026.

VA&R: Member, William Sutterlin, 2026. Consulting, Nick Arceo, 2024.

Veterans Employment & Education: Chairman, James Coates to 2026.

Finance: With the move, if you've seen the OOAs they all give one-year appointments from now on to match with the Legion. So, all members of Finance: Bill Hill, Jeff Van Horn, Steve Honigfort, Robert Thompson, Jeremy Revell, all through 2024.

Children and Youth: Member, John Lawrence, 2024.

Child Welfare: All to 2024, Mark Nave, Lyle Chapman, George Fleming, Sanford Lipman, Jon Coakley, Phil Stander.

And with the discussion yesterday of putting together a celebration, as the commander's special appointment, Bill Hill will go on there to work for a celebration.

Subcommittee on Resolutions: All 2024, Ned Fox, Jay Marsden, Camille LeJeune, Steve Ward, and Chris Sherman.

Membership: As a consultant, James Walter, 2024.

Convention: William Doyle from Kentucky to 2024.

MT&D: All members, Mark Kilstrom, Scott Baker, Frank Meraz, all to 2024.

Century Committee: Joe Gladden, chairman, 2026; and Gene Sacco will be moved to a consultant.

Paid-up-for-Life Ad Hoc Committee: Scott Garrett, 2024; and Juan Rodriguez, 2024.

I entertain a motion to accept the appointments. That's servant leadership at its best.

NECMAN DENNIS GEORGE (NY): Dennis George from the Detachment of New York, NEC.

Make a motion to approve the nominations.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Appointments.

NECMAN GEORGE: Excuse me, appointments.

NECMAN BRANDON CURRY (KY): Mr. Commander, Brandon Curry, NEC, Kentucky, seconds.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: We have a first and a second motion to appoint all appointments that was handed down from SONA and also one through SALCA. On the question?

Hearing none -- I'm sorry.

UNIDENTIFIED NECMAN: Mr. Commander, question. For Bill Doyle for Convention Committee, shouldn't that be through 2027?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: It's the committee, it's one-year appointments. All committees are one-year appointments.

UNIDENTIFIED NECMAN: Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Any other questions?

Hearing none, all those in favor, by aye.

Any opposed?

We move on. Thank you.

Gentlemen, we would like to go back and revisit the minutes yesterday. Everybody's laughing. How many people went back and read and tried to find that ten-day rule? Because I've heard about it from everybody.

So, there was a mistake made and we can make it right. First, we'd like to see if somebody would make a motion to accept the minutes as they were distributed, please.

NECMAN CHRIS COOK (OK): Commander, Chris Cook, Oklahoma, NEC.

I make a motion to accept the minutes as presented.

NECMAN RONALD ROBERTS (MS): Ron Roberts, NEC, Mississippi.

I second that motion to accept the minutes as published.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: We have a motion and second to accept the minutes as presented and published. On the question?

NECMAN JACOB MCCARTY (WV): Jacob McCarty, NEC, West Virginia.

Does that include the updates that were submitted prior to the NEC, for amendments and changes to the minutes as presented?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: That can be done administratively.

NECMAN MCCARTY: Okay. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Any other?

Hearing none, I'll call for a vote.

All those in favor, say aye.

Any opposed?

Ayes have it.

I'll also entertain a motion to rescind yesterday's motion so we do not have to have a Zoom meeting. We need to rescind the motion because it was approved by the NEC.

NECMAN MARK MCCUE (MA): Mark McCue, NEC, Massachusetts.

I make a motion to rescind the motion to have the Zoom meeting to approve the minutes.

NECMAN DAVID HANSON (IN): David Hanson, NEC, Indiana.

I second that motion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: I have a motion and second to rescind the motion from yesterday to have the Zoom meeting to approve the minutes. On the question?

Hearing none, all those in favor, aye.

Anyone opposed?

Thank you, gentlemen. We can move on.

Old Business

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Now we'll go to any unfinished business. Is there any unfinished business to be brought before the NEC?

Any unfinished business? We love it. Let's roll.

New Business

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Is there any new business to be brought before the NEC?

Any new business?

We are on a roll, gentlemen.

For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Anything for the good of the Sons of The American Legion?

NECMAN BRANDON CURRY (KY): Mr. Commander, Brandon Curry, NEC from Kentucky.

September 9th was my retirement ceremony after serving 22 years in the United States Air Force and Kentucky Air National Guard.

(Cheers and applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Thank you for your service.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER C. SMITH: Mr. Commander, Past National Commander Cliff Smith from Massachusetts.

You'll see a lot of people running around with the pinkies up here, put them up. Glad to report that we raised \$2,000 this weekend doing that.

(Applause)

That brings our total right now -- this money is going to breast cancer. It brings our total right now to \$28,000. At this time next year, we're going to well go over the \$30,000 mark. Thank all you guys for contributing to breast cancer.

(Applause)

ANECMAN H. LARRY STEELE (MT): Larry Steele, alternate NEC from Montana.

Mine has got to do with the VA system. I think there's an improvement that needs to be made.

For the last four years, I've been working with a girl that's tried to commit suicide quite a few times. And she's also, when she was in the Marines, she came down with a bad brain concussion and they medical discharged her at 100 percent. But she's been going to VA facilities and the VA sends her to other facilities, but they do the mental part but they can't do the medical part. So, they keep moving her all around the country.

I went and seen her here a couple of months ago, she was down in Tucson, they had her down there. I seen her on her way going to California. They just keep moving her all around because they don't have -- the VA, they should have it in place, that if somebody's got mental problems and has got medical problems, they ought to be able to care for them in one place.

This girl here, I've worked with her quite often. I used to be a pastor myself. I've been counseling her; I've been using the Bible. And she has been going real good for a couple of years. I even did the funeral for her husband.

But the bad thing is, went down to Arizona, my wife got hurt down there. We've been basically down there two years now with her seeing the doctors and stuff. I haven't been up to have been working with her, and that's when she started again going through the cycle of the suicide. She's been trying it probably about every six months or so now.

So, I think the VA should be able to get a medical facility that could treat all her illnesses.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Amen to that. I don't think there's anybody in the room that would disagree that the VA needs to take care of our veterans more.

And I thank you for being the one, sir.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER PAVIGLIANTI: Mr. Commander?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Yes, sir.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER PAVIGLIANTI: Joe Paviglianti, Detachment of New York.

I believe this falls under the good of the Sons of The American Legion, quite honestly, because I would not recommend that we try to unravel it from yesterday's discussion.

But I want to address and really just, I guess, inform and educate the NEC that yesterday we had three motions on the floor. Two of them were to approve the Uniform Code of Procedure for the convention and the rules of the NEC because they were stated as not being previously approved, in written previously approved.

It is important for us to understand, those approvals that occurred in October of 2022 were actually that of The American Legion and that which was the output of the Ad Hoc Committee of The American Legion on the reorganization of the Sons of The American Legion. It took until that time for The American Legion organization headquarters to conduct a cross-reference between American Legion and Sons of The American Legion documents and then have a united document come out. Just a point of information.

It is right and appropriate that the Sons of The American Legion also pass that approval, but that date was also accurate because it was the date that The American Legion NEC, we as a program of The American Legion, approved those.

Third piece was the Constitution and Bylaws. We also passed a resolution approving our Constitution and Bylaws. That's not appropriate for the NEC. The only organization, only level that can pass a motion and an approval for the Constitution and Bylaws changes, and there were also changes that would result of the cross-reference of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion to make them uniform and aligned. That is responsibility of the national convention.

So, I would recommend, again, that we not unravel any of the activities we've done, but we do remember that the national convention is the only body of this group that can approve changes to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Sons of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Thank you, Joe.

Does anybody have any questions on that?

Thank you, we're going to move on.

Also, under the good of -- Ron, I'm sorry. While Ron is making his way there, I'm going to say under the good of, the National Update, our newsletter is coming back, it's being worked on now. You'll hear more information about that very soon.

NECMAN RONALD ROBERTS (MS): Mr. Commander, under the good of the Sons I'm going to take a personal privilege. I want to thank all the Sons for supporting VA benefits. I've thanked all the Auxiliaries when I've traveled around. And I'll give you an example of VA benefits.

You saw me using last year a walker, this year a cane. VA benefits. I had a heart procedure done, a little over \$200,000. I had the artery in my right leg replaced twice, \$1.6

million. My copay was zero. How did that happen? The Sons, the Auxiliary, and the Legion Family fought to maintain veterans' benefits. So, thank you very much.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Thank you.

(Applause)

Is there anything else under the good of?

Remarks

Donald "J.R." Hall Jr., Maryland, National Commander

Gentlemen, at this time I want to give a couple of words.

You know we made some changes again this weekend. It was nice yesterday when we got done, we walked out of here, a lot of people came up and said, "I think we can get used to this." This wasn't too bad to do this and have all the reports out of the way, so we're here this morning and here we are, getting ready to wrap up by 10:00, hopefully, and get on the road to our travels back home.

There's business to be done and there's still some more things to move on, but I thank you all for giving it a chance. I think that there's tweaks that will be made in meeting times and other things, but we can make ourselves better by accepting change and not always trying to fight against it. It's for the good of. It's what we ask at every meeting: Is there something for the good of? If there's anybody that comes in here with ill intentions, we don't want to hear them. We want to hear the good of, we want to hear the positive.

I love to end a Sunday on a great note. We've had great speakers here in morning. Everyone sitting there saying "great" and "I'm loving it" and all that. And I want to send you

home with a couple of things, like remembering what the slogan is this year, because it means more to me than just the slogan. It's what we do. We represent more than ourselves.

You heard Commander talk about servant leadership. I really want you to go home and think about that. I want you to think about that. Go home and think. Are you worthy of the gold caps you're wearing? Are you putting in the work for that gold cap? Are you? Are you still working at the squadron level? Are you really representing your detachments? Are you doing the work? Because I would have questioned that a couple of minutes ago when nobody wanted to run up to the mike, and why it's the same people running to the mike. You're NEC. Be ready to do your job. Be ready to do your job.

If we make mistakes because we're overanxious and want to get something done about minutes or something like that, it's crazy that we just can't fix it. We fixed it; right? It's over with. We move on. That's what we do. We get better. As long as we don't back up, we're moving forward. That's what we need to do.

We're a strong organization that's here to represent our veterans, our families, our states, our home posts. That's what we need to do. We're coming to the NEC to make changes, as Dan said, to be ready to be the one, to change lives and save lives. We can change a lot of things for the better if everybody stops trying to find a reason why we shouldn't. Sometimes we look for a reason why we shouldn't rather than just accepting it. Accept it. When things are good, they can get better. When things are better, they can get great. I believe that most of the people in this room are here to make this organization better or you wouldn't have wasted your time coming out here.

(Applause)

I don't think a commander should ever have to get up here and ask everybody to get on VoterVoice and to get on the action plan, because everybody here says, "I'm here to honor my family service"; right? Is there anybody here that's not here to represent their family service?

Then get it done. Get on there. If there's one way we can help our veterans, you just heard talk about the VA and everything else, is to make sure they're getting what they need. To make sure where there's bills that affect them get done, we do it. That's the way we do it. You can do it by backing legislation.

Please, please, represent your family service and get something done. If my grandfather was alive, he'd kick me in my butt if I didn't get on VoterVoice and I didn't get the action alerts to help him. That's how we help our veterans. Don't say you want to help them and you'd do anything if you won't take ten minutes to get signed up for those things. Please go home and get it done. Be a member of the Sons, but be a proud member of the Sons that's doing everything you can do. Please do that.

And I ask everybody to go home, and if you haven't thought about American Legion Family Day, get somebody together to be the head of it at your detachment, at your post, at your squadron, and make sure it gets done. There's a day where we're going to ring our bell, folks. That's what it's all about.

No two American Legion Family Days are going to be the same. Everybody is going to do it different. Everybody should open up their post doors, throw it out there, and just ring the bell on what great things that you're doing. If you're not doing great things, maybe that's the problem. Let's do great things and let's get out and celebrate them.

American Legion Family Day will be a day that we can get across this country where everybody's celebrating what we do together. So, I encourage everybody to please do that. Please do that. Get American Legion Family Day, take it seriously. Appoint somebody. Let's get it moving forward and let's get it going for the right things. All right?

I did see somebody else walk up to the microphone while I was talking, so I'm sorry.

Commander?

DETACHMENT COMMANDER DEANGELIS (NY): Commander, Pete DeAngelis, Detachment of New York.

Are you not going to do the presentation of the donations?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: We're getting ready to do that right now, sir. If anybody wants to start lining up, you can start making your way over.

So, folks, you know, we're getting close to \$10 million, we all know that. For many years we had somebody up here talking to us about it, I consider a friend to the Sons of The American Legion. I've been with him a couple of weeks and talking to him, a friend that we all like to see, a smile that we like to see, and somebody that loves us. At this time, I ask everybody to please rise as Dennis Boland comes to say hello to the Sons.

(Standing ovation)

Greetings

Dennis Boland, Florida, American Legion National Children & Youth Committee Member

Good morning.

...Chorus of "Good morning."

COMMITTEE MEMBER BOLAND: As we say in Southwest Florida, how y'all are?

You know, it's indeed an honor, Commander Hall asking me to come before you and say a few words. Many of you know how I feel about the Sons of The American Legion, and I've had a lot of thank you's from you, and I can never thank you enough.

But today, I would like to talk about -- (puts on SAL cap) --

(Applause)

-- my truck.

(Laughter)

Have many of you seen my truck? Have you seen the back of it? The back says, "Duty. Honor. Country."

What is the duty to you? Your duty is proud possessors of a priceless heritage. We male descendants of veterans of all wars associate ourselves together as Sons of The American Legion for the following reasons: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America, to maintain law and order, in the Legion we say to foster and preserve 100 percent Americanism.

I look at you and the Americanism that you do, as your commander was just stating, that we need to continue on doing. Other organizations have tried to duplicate us, and they haven't done it. Not that they haven't probably the energy, but they don't have the structure that we do amongst the National Executive Committeemen here today. And that is our destination as always is in our preamble. Honor.

I look at the Facebook that I'm on, I got 5,000 friends, and I see Sons of The American Legion cleaning gravesites. Right, Chris? You're in our color guards. You're in our honor guards.

Do you know what that means to me as a veteran and I'm sure many others? It's predicated on your honor of your fathers, your grandfathers. That is such an awesome thing that you can relate to others, that they should be honoring.

Country. It's a sad situation we're in right now because our country, in a survey that was taken, 40 percent believe in patriotism. Your patriotism shows. As John F. Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." Look at the things that you do, how you save lives, the Children's Miracle Network, Special Olympics, autism. I can go on and on and on what you do.

At times we just feel that it's just an automatic thing, but sit back and look at each other and actually thank each other for what each one of you have done to carry on the tradition of the Sons of The American Legion. You are such an awesome group.

You know, when I used to be the other guy, I always used to say, "It should be such and such Sons of The American Legion program adverse to The American Legion program." I still believe that. I hear there's good things coming today, someone spilled the beans to me yesterday but I won't say anything. I will just say thank you because I know what is forthcoming after I leave here and donations are made.

God bless you. It's an honor to be here. I hope you know that. You are special people, and special people deserve rewards. Thank you so much for allowing me to speak, Commander. I'll always remember it.

(Standing ovation)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: You know passion sells. Passion sells. When you hear somebody talk about something with passion, people buy into it. I've never heard that man speak about Sons of The American Legion without passion. I consider him a friend to the Sons of The American Legion.

We were talking with him in Alaska last week and everything else. He misses not coming here and seeing his friends, his brothers and who he believes in. I thought it was appropriate to allow him come in and say good morning to us, a man who's been with us for so many years. So many years and did so many things.

At this time, we'll move forward with donations. Everybody can start coming on up. Let's hear what Dennis was talking about.

DETACHMENT COMMANDER COX (PA): Commander, on behalf of the Detachment of Pennsylvania, I have two checks for the CWF in the amount of \$761 and a check for the NEF in the amount of \$500.

(Applause)

DETACHMENT COMMANDER DEANGELIS (NY): Commander, from the Detachment of New York, it is my pleasure to give you this donation for the Child Welfare Foundation for \$3,500.

(Applause)

NECMAN DAVID MENNEL (MI): Morning.

...Chorus of "Good morning."

NECMAN MENNEL: To my wonderful extended family, I'm Dave Mennel from Michigan.

I have three checks here: One to The American Legion Child Welfare Fund in the amount of \$500; another to the Emergency Fund for \$500; and lastly, to the Legion Riders, Legion Charities for \$500.

And on a personal note, my wife's sister just passed away on Friday, so I'd like to donate \$50 on behalf of her name, Lydia Stewart, to the Veterans and Children Foundation.

(Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Thank you.

With that, if you don't know Anita, she's a great person, she just lost her sister. Please keep her in your prayers.

This is James Stewart, not Jim Stewart.

NECMAN James Stewart (DE): On behalf of the Detachment of Delaware, we will be sending you two checks, because my finance officer forgot to bring them, \$500 for Child Welfare Foundation, \$500 for Veterans and Children Fund.

(Applause)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Thank you.

ANECMAN DAN ASHLEY (AZ): All right, all right, all right. Good morning, Sons.

...Chorus of "Good morning."

ANECMAN ASHLEY: If you all know me, CWF is one of passion. The reason why, my dad, the reason why I joined, was CWF chairman in Arizona. Unfortunately, he passed away seven years ago and I've had the honor to take it over.

This year, my commander, Chris, his project is CWF. We want to hit the \$10 million mark this year and I know we're going to do it. So, on behalf of Arizona, we're issuing a challenge to every detachment out there for dollar amount. And that is, anyone that beats us, raising more money than us this year in New Orleans -- NEC, alternate, commander, and the CWF chairman -- we're going to buy you a shot and a beer if you can beat us.

(Laughter)

And with that said, it is our honor from Squadron 27 from Apache Junction for a check for \$30,000 to CWF.

(Standing ovation)

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Anybody want to go play bingo? That's coming from the bingo fund, so come on up and play bingo.

(Laughter)

Great part about that was, you know what he did? He got up there first and he represented his father's service, and that's why he's doing what he's doing, representing more than himself, but always remembering the veteran that he's there for.

And I also want to tell you guys, if you don't make that goal and beat Dan, I know him, there's a good chance he's going to buy you that shot and beer anyway.

(Laughter)

I know who he is.

No other donations.

If there's no other business to come before the National Executive Committee, we'll ask National Chaplain Ernie Laberge to come lead us in a closing prayer.

NECMAN ROBERT PHILLIPS JR. (NJ): Commander?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Sorry. Bob?

NECMAN PHILLIPS: Bob Phillips Jr., New Jersey.

As per National Vice Commander John Cook, he would like to call a caucus over here in the left-hand corner for the Eastern Region after the meeting. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Yes, sir.

Here comes the caucuses. Western Region over here.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BRISTO: Central Region right over here.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: They're already over here. Robert, stand up.

(Laughter)

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER BRISTO: In the back.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: There's a big back. What corner do you want?
Robert's getting that corner over here.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER HARRIS: Midwest.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: This corner.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MOORE: We'll do the Southern Region right here in the center.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: There you go. Everybody got it? If not, look for your vice commander.

Ernie?

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LABERGE: Please uncover. Before I give the benediction, a quick story for you.

I wasn't able to go to convention because of my mom, but my cover was there, and our department people had the cover. They forgot it. Arizona found it, so I owe them a case of Yuengling.

(Laughter)

So, I've got to get that out in the mail to them.

Benediction

Ernest Laberge, Massachusetts, National Chaplain

Going to God. Father, we thank You for this time of unity during this meeting. We thank You for the building of friendships and those You have positioned perfectly to work together for the success of The American Legion Family. Thank You for the ideas that have been spoken and for those who willingly contributed their thoughts to this meeting. Heavenly Spirit, please fan into flames the gifts which is in each of us, and reveal Your truth to us each day. May You watch over us forever and forever. Amen.

...Chorus of "Amen."

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Please cover.

Until we meet again, let us remember that our obligation to our country can only be fulfilled by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state, and nation be ever a main objective of the Sons of The American Legion. Let us ever be watchful of the honor of our country, The American Legion, our organization and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of justice, freedom, loyalty, and democracy.

With the colors of our nation being in place, join us in offering a right-hand salute: Two.

I now declare this Fall 2023 meeting of the National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion adjourned.

...At 10:10 a.m., Sunday, October 8, 2023, the National Executive Committee meeting of The Sons of The American Legion was adjourned. Sine die.