

PROCEEDINGS

THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

51st Annual Convention

Charlotte, North Carolina

August 25-27, 2023

Charlotte Convention Center - Exhibit Hall C2

Charlotte, North Carolina

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Captions Unlimited of Nevada

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... At 10:00 a.m., the members assembled for the 51st Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were had:

... Gavel.

CALL TO ORDER

Christopher Carlton (IN), National Commander

Sergeant-at-Arms, please secure the doors. Thank you.

Good afternoon, everyone. Please rise.

... Gavel.

The Color Guard will now post the Colors.

The Colors are posted.

Hand salute.

Two.

National Chaplain Jeff Gibson, Sr. will invoke the blessing of God. Please uncover.

Invocation

Jeff Gibson, Sr. (AL), National Chaplain

Listen up, y'all, before we get started, I want to make sure you're all motivated. You all sound kind of quiet this afternoon. Did you all

eat a good meal?

FROM THE FLOOR: Yeah!

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GIBSON: Are you all motivated?

FROM THE FLOOR: Yeah!

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GIBSON: Passion and purpose?

FROM THE FLOOR: Yeah!

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GIBSON: You all sound kind of weak. Do I need to turn around, put on my drill sergeant hat and come back?

You all know, SAL, we're strong. And listen up, guys. We're proud of you all.

We pray that God gave you all traveling grace and mercy, you and your loved ones, to come to the 51st convention.

Before I get started, I have a couple of things I want to discuss with you all real quick. We have some members and their families that need prayer.

Mr. Willie Dupree passed away. He served 28 years as Sergeant-at-Arms for the Detachment of

Alabama. The Dupree family asks for prayer.

Willie Morgan wished he could be here. He and his wife came down sick, asking for our prayers.

Jeff Evans had a couple of surgeries, Detachment of Virginia, asking for prayers.

Travis Jones, he's going through some things. They are asking for our prayers.

National Vice Commander that's not here, his mother is really sick. She's asking for prayers.

So, when we pray today, and I pray, I want you to pray to the god of your understanding that all our members that's going through some trials and tribulations, some ups and downs, that God would touch them, because if we put God first everything else will fall in its proper place, amen?

... Chorus of amens.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GIBSON: Listen up, y'all, I've got a couple of thank you's to give really quick.

You all don't know, a lot of times the

chaplain is supposed to motivate you. We don't just come up here and do the prayer, we're supposed to lift up your spirits, give you some motivation, give you some encouragement and uplift so you can enjoy this meeting. Amen?

... Chorus of amens.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GIBSON: Listen up. I'd like to thank you all for allowing me the opportunity to serve two years as y'all's National Chaplain.

It's been my honor and my privilege. If you all don't see me no more, I want to leave you with one thing. I love you and ain't nothing you can do about it. Amen.

... Chorus of amens.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GIBSON: Second of all, SAL, give yourselves a round of applause. Give yourselves a round of applause.

... Applause.

It was a veteran who served, United States Navy veteran served 24 years in the United States Navy. His wife was 60 years old. He had to

make a decision to pull the plug on her.

He called me at 5:00 in the morning. I called Kevin Mook. He went to the job, and I called Willie Morgan, went to do the job, and thank God, that veteran today is alive.

Thank you, all. That's why it's so important we do what we do, and thank God I was able to have somebody to call and reach out to.

Kevin Mook, and you and tell Willie Morgan back in state of Virginia, thank you so much. When I needed someone to be the one, they stepped up and be the one

That's why I say always give yourselves a round of applause. A lot of things we do might go unnoticed, but you know what, somebody said high, look low knowing everything what we do and nobody observe us. Amen.

... Chorus of amens.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GIBSON: You all don't know, the little donations, things you help me with, I was able to build a Veteran Memorial Park in Seale, Alabama. It's called Russell County

veteran Memorial Park. I have some pictures; anybody want to see it. Thank you all so much for allowing me to, giving me the opportunity to serve and do that.

Listen up, y'all. Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Almighty God, we ask you to look down on this meeting and help us to make the right decision, to keep this great organization growing in goodness and forever striking for truth. We ask this in your name! Amen.

Give yourselves a round of applause, guys.

... Applause.

POW/MIA Empty Chair Remembrance

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

To maintain a high awareness that a constant vigil should 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 the 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 those missing.

Let us rededicate ourselves for this vital endeavor. The POW/MIA flag is in place at this time.

I call upon National Sergeant-at-Arms Greg Wagner to lead us in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of Allegiance

Greg Wager (IN), National Sergeant-at-Arms

... The delegation recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Cover.

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

Preamble to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion

David Mennel (MI), National Vice Commander - Central

... The delegation recited the Preamble to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Serving as a constant reminder that 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 the 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.

... Gavel.

National Adjutant Anthony Wright will now read the Call to the National Convention.

Call to the National Convention

Anthony Wright (PA), National Adjutant

Pursuant to Article V, Section 2 of the National Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion, the National Commander of the Sons of The

American Legion hereby calls for the Fifty-first National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion to be held August 25th through August 27th, 2023 in the Charlotte Convention Center, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Purpose: National Convention sessions, in accordance with the Uniform Code of Procedure for National Conventions, will be convened at 1:00 pm on Friday, August 25, 2023. The 51st Annual National Convention shall be convened for the following purposes:

1. To complete all business of the Sons of The American Legion for the fiscal year 2022-2023;

2. To vote on all resolutions which are properly presented to the National Convention;

3. To consider and/or make amendments to the National Constitution and/or By-Laws of the Sons of The American Legion

4. To elect a National Commander and five (5) National Vice Commanders, in that sequence, for the ensuing year, 2023-2024. Elections shall take

place on Sunday, August 27, 2023.

Representation: Representation in the National Convention shall be allotted in accordance with the provisions of Article V of the National Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion which states in part:

Article V, Section 3. In the National Convention, each Detachment shall be entitled to three (3) delegates and one (1) additional delegate for each 500 Members, or major fraction thereof, whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer of The American Legion, thirty (30) days prior to the meeting of said National Convention, and whose registration fees, as fixed by the National Executive Committee, for its total authorized delegate strength, have been paid, and to one (1) Alternate for each delegate.

Article V, Section 4. Each duly registered delegate shall be entitled to one (1) vote. The vote of any registered delegate absent and not represented by an Alternate shall be cast by the majority of the registered delegates present

from one's Detachment.

Alternates for registered delegates shall have all the privileges of registered delegates except that of voting. A registered delegate is one who has received one's credentials and has paid such registration fees as may be required.

Article VI, Section 6. All Past National Commanders, while in good standing in their respective Squadrons, shall be members for life of the National Executive Committee, without a vote, and shall also be life delegates to all National Conventions of the Sons of The American Legion, with a vote, to be exercised by them with their respective Detachments.

Article VII, Section 3. Members of the National Executive Committee shall be delegates to the National Convention with a vote, which vote shall be exercised with their respective Detachments, except that the vote of the National Commander, shall be exercised only in their capacity as chair of the National Convention.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: National

Adjutant Anthony Wright will now call the roll.

ROLL CALL

Anthony Wright (PA), National Adjutant

National Commander

Christopher A. "Chris" Carlton.

National Vice Commanders

East: Ernest E. "Ernie" Laberge, Massachusetts -

Excused.

South: Ronald E. "Ron" Roberts, Mississippi.

Central: David J. "Dave" Mennel, Michigan.

Midwest: Michael L. "Mike" Kirschner, Colorado.

West: Jack A. Youngs, Idaho.

National Adjutant

Anthony W. Wright, Pennsylvania.

National Assistant Adjutants

Harold E. Thompson, Jr., Nebraska (Emeritus)

James E. "Ed" Sheubrooks, Florida.

Robert J. Avery, New York.

Scott A. Williams, Virginia.

Scott J. Thornton, Ohio - Excused.

Jeffrey E. Hicks, New Jersey.

Clifford Hall, Georgia

National Chaplain

National Chaplain Jeffrey L. "Jeff" Gibson, Sr.,
Alabama.

National Parliamentarian

Gary Leach, California.

National Historian

Stephen J. DeFeo, Indiana.

National Sergeant-At-Arms

Greg J. Wagner, Indiana.

National Assistant Sergeants-At-Arms

Brian K. Waters, Pennsylvania.

Greg Falco, New York.

Lyle G. Larson, Kansas - Excused.

Mark T. Fayer, Sr., Maryland.

Matt Griffis, Arizona - Excused.

National Commander's Aide

David A. Miller, Indiana.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDERS

Immediate Past National Commander

Michael C. Fox, California.

Michael K. Seaton, California - Excused

Robert A. McBride, Ohio - Excused

J.R. Stillwell, Illinois - Excused

Robert H. Faust, California.

James R. Hartman, Maryland.

Charles E. Gannon, Maryland.

David P. Stephens, Indiana.

Christopher R. Cerullo, New York.

Douglas P. Bible, Minnesota.

David R. Faust, Wisconsin.

Robert A. Worrel, Indiana.

Eugene L. Sacco, California.

Joseph M. Mayne, Minnesota.

Byron J. Robichaux, Louisiana.

Richard L. Cook, Oklahoma.

Kevin N. Winkelmann, Texas - Excused.

Clifford A. Smith, Massachusetts.

Michael J. Deacon, Iowa.

Earl R. Ruttkofsky, Michigan.

Raymond P. Giehll, Jr., Indiana.

Thomas E. Cisna, Illinois - Excused.

Mark E. Arneson, Georgia

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 Paviglianti, New York.

Roll call of Detachments

Alabama.

Alaska.

Arizona.

Arkansas.

California.

Connecticut.

Delaware.

Florida.

France.

Georgia.

Hawaii.

Idaho.

Illinois.

Indiana.

Iowa.

Kansas.

Kentucky.

Louisiana.

Maine.

Maryland.

Massachusetts.

Michigan.

Minnesota.

Mississippi.

Missouri.

Montana.

Nebraska.

Nevada.

New Hampshire.

New Jersey.

New Mexico.

New York.

North Carolina.

North Dakota.

Ohio.

Oklahoma.

Oregon.

Pennsylvania.

Puerto Rico.

Rhode Island.

South Carolina.

South Dakota.

Tennessee.

Texas.

Vermont.

Virginia.

West Virginia.

Wisconsin.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Commander,
that completes roll call. You have a quorum.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I now
declare this 51st National Convention of the Sons
of The American Legion convened.

As a point of housekeeping business, I
would remind everyone addressing the Chair to
please use one of the microphones located in the
aisles on the floor instead of just calling out
from your seat.

Please ask the Chair to be recognized
(telling us where you are on the floor helps), then
identify yourself by name, title, and your
Detachment before speaking. This will help ensure
that we maintain order and give our court reporter
a better opportunity to document the proceedings
correctly. Thank you.

And also, we do have a well-trained
Sergeant-at-Arms team. If your phones are not on
silent, they will come and collect.

Also, on your ways to and from,
throughout the convention, there are surveys

located on the back tables; if you would be so kind to pick one up, fill it out and then return it, we would greatly appreciate that.

I have appointed the following delegates to serve as chairmen of the various National Convention committees: Americanism, Chris Casey. Children and Youth, Jim Noble. Constitutional Amendments, Ned Fox. Credentials, Harold Thompson Jr. Finance, Bill Hill. History Contest, Stephen DeFeo. Internal Affairs, Bill Clancy III. Legislative and Rules Tom Deal. Membership, Tom Skelley. Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, Seth Rippe.

Further, our Detachments have recommended delegates to serve as members of the National Convention committees. I have approved these recommendations and they were communicated back to the Detachments by the National Adjutant.

Sons of the American Legion have been saddened -- I'd like to take a moment of privilege.

OPENING REMARKS

Christopher Carlton (IN), National Commander

Gentlemen, we have had a great year. This is the beginning of the end of this year. And so, take this time to celebrate with your Detachments and with other Sons members on all the things we've done.

Also, there was a quote I came across when I was in junior high and I still remember it. It said, "Don't walk in front of me because I might not follow. Don't walk behind me because I might not lead. Walk beside me so we can do great things together."

At this time, I'd like to ask the National Sergeant-at-Arms to please bring my wife.

You see, gentlemen, I've heard a lot --
... *Applause.*

You see, I've heard people say that behind every great man is a great woman, but I'm here to tell you that beside this great man is a great woman. Everything I've done throughout my SAL career and ever since we've been together has

been because of her. I thank her, and I wanted to make her the first Distinguished Guest of our convention.

... Applause.

The Sons of The American Legion have been saddened this year with the passing of Past National Chaplain Fr. Gary Gummersheimer from the Detachment of Illinois. He served the National Organization with distinction and honor.

Right now, I'll call upon NEC Harold Ray from the Detachment of Illinois for the purpose of presentation of a resolution.

RESOLUTION

Harold "Butch" Ray (IL)

Good afternoon. As stated, my name is Harold Butch Ray. I'm the NEC from Illinois and a delegate to this convention.

It is a deep honor and privilege that I stand before you right now to honor one of our very own. A friend to us all, a mentor to me and many.

Please allow me to read this resolution.
No: SAL Resolution 6 - National Convention, 2023

Title: Recognition of Father Gary Gummersheimer

Origin: Detachment of Illinois

WHEREAS, the late Father Gary Gummersheimer was a proud and dedicated member of the Sons of The American Legion with continuous membership for 53 years;

And WHEREAS, during the years of his outstanding service, he demonstrated self-commitment and incredible organizational skills while serving as Detachment Commander in 1981-1982;

And WHEREAS, Father Gary served as National Executive Committeeman for the Detachment of Illinois, and served on many National Committees and Commissions, including the Internal Affairs Commission and Sub-Committee on Resolutions;

And WHEREAS, Father Gary served courageously with the highest level of professional stature as National Chaplain, positively impacting the organization and all of its members;

And WHEREAS, Father Gary showed selfless service to the Illinois Premier Boys State program,

the California Boys State program, and the Boys Nation program for over 30 years, representing not only the Sons of The American Legion, but also supporting The American Legion through his dedicated service;

And WHEREAS, Father Gary's service to the Sons of The American Legion was significant and substantial, warranting recognition in the form of "Detachment" and "National" convention dedications during the corresponding 2023 events in his honor;

And WHEREAS, a resolution representing the same intent and contents was duly presented, approved, and passed by a meeting of the Lawrence Riddle Squadron No. 88, conducted on May 9, 2023;

And WHEREAS, a resolution representing the same intent and contents was duly presented, approved, and passed by the Detachment of Illinois during its Detachment Convention on July 14-16, 2023; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the Sons of The American Legion in Annual Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina on August 25-27, 2023, that this

51st National Convention of the Sons of The
American Legion be dedicated in memory of Past
National Chaplain, our friend, Fr. Gary
Gummersheimer from the Detachment of Illinois. As a
delegate to this 51st National Convention of the
Sons of The American Legion, I hereby make, and am
proud to make, this motion to adopt Resolution
NC2023-6.

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The Sons of The American Legion
51st National Convention
Held on
August 25-27, 2023
Resolution

No.: SAL Resolution 6 – National Convention, 2023
Title: Recognition of Father Gary Gummersheimer
Origin: Detachment of Illinois

WHEREAS, the late Father Gary Gummersheimer was a proud and dedicated member of the Sons of The American Legion with continuous membership for 53 years; and

WHEREAS, during the years of his outstanding service, he demonstrated self-commitment and incredible organizational skills while serving as Detachment Commander in 1981-1982; and

WHEREAS, Father Gary served as National Executive Committeeman for the Detachment of Illinois, and served on many National Committees and Commissions, including the Internal Affairs Commission and Subcommittee on Resolutions; and

WHEREAS, Father Gary served courageously with the highest level of professional stature as National Chaplain, positively impacting the organization and all of its members; and

WHEREAS, Father Gary showed selfless service to the Illinois Premier Boys State program, the California Boys State program, and the Boys Nation program for over 30 years, representing not only the Sons of The American Legion, but also supporting The American Legion through his dedicated service; and

WHEREAS, Father Gary’s service to the Sons of The American Legion was significant and substantial, warranting recognition in the form of “Detachment” and “National” convention dedications during the corresponding 2023 events in his honor; and

WHEREAS, a resolution representing the same intent and contents was duly presented, approved, and passed by a meeting of Lawrence Riddle Squadron No. 66, conducted on May 9, 2023; and

WHEREAS, a resolution representing the same intent and contents was duly presented, approved, and passed by the Detachment of Illinois during its Detachment Convention on July 14-16, 2023; now, therefore, be it

Subcommittee on Resolutions Recommendation

- Approved
- Rejected
- Referred to:
- Other Action Received and filed

Committee/Commission, Chairman Name, and Signature

WILLIAM M. CLANCY (NY), Chairman
National Convention Internal Affairs Committee

Finance Commission Chairman Name and Signature

WILLIAM G. HILL (MD), Chairman
National Convention Finance Committee

The Sons of The American Legion
51st National Convention

Held on
August 25-27, 2023

Resolution

Page 2 of 2

No.: SAL Resolution 6 – National Convention, 2023

Title: Recognition of Father Gary Gummersheimer

Origin: Detachment of Illinois

RESOLVED, by the Sons of The American Legion in Annual Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina on August 25-27, 2023, that the 51st National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion be dedicated in memory of Past National Chaplain Father Gary Gummersheimer from the Detachment of Illinois.

Subcommittee on Resolutions Recommendation

Approved

Rejected

Referred to:

Other Action Received and filed

Committee/Commission, Chairman Name, and Signature

WILLIAM M. CLANCY (NY), Chairman
National Convention Internal Affairs Committee

Finance Commission Chairman Name and Signature

WILLIAM G. HILL (MD), Chairman
National Convention Finance Committee

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's been
a motion made. Is there a second?

EDDY WHITE (MT): Mr. Commander, Eddy White, Montana, NEC. I second that motion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: The motion has been seconded. Is there any discussion?

Hearing none, all those in favor of adopting Resolution NC2023-6, signify by saying aye. All opposed by saying nay.

... *Gavel.*

The ayes have it. The motion carries.

... *Applause.*

The Distinguished Guest badge will be placed on the memorial table and remain there throughout the Convention in honor of Past National Chaplain Fr. Gary Gummersheimer.

... *Music.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: At this time, I call on Tom Deal for the first report of the National Convention.

ORAL REPORT

Legislative and Rules Committee
*Tom Deal (MD), Nat'l Conv. Legislative & Rules
Cmte. Chairman*

The Legislative and Rules Committee met

at 11:30 this morning. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Rules of the Convention by the Legislative and Rules Committee.

As a duly elected delegate to this Convention, I move for the adoption of the Legislative Rules for the Convention.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's been a motion made to accept the Standing Rules of the Convention as published. Is there a second?

DAVID LEE (NY): Mr. Commander, David Lee from the Detachment of New York seconds that motion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: The motion is seconded.

Is there any discussion?

Hearing none, all those in favor for accepting the standing rules of convention as published signify by saying aye. All opposed, nay.

... *Gavel.*

The motion carries.

At this time, I call on Robert Faust for the purposes of a presentation. Will the Past

National Commanders of the Sons of the American Legion please assemble at the back of the convention hall. Or right where you're at.

... Laughter.

... Music.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the Past National Commanders.

... Applause.

PRESENTATION

PNC Robert H. Faust (CA)

I'd like to introduce you all the Past National Commanders who have stood in this position before you. It is my honor to present to you the Distinguished Guest award for your convention.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I would ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to bring before me Bob Newman.

Be seated. Where's Indiana?

... Cheers and Applause.

Distinguished Guest

Robert E. Newman (IN), Chairman TAL Internal Affairs Commission

How are you doing? I love you, too.

Good afternoon, one and all.

I would like to congratulate the Sons of the American Legion for celebrating their 91st anniversary and 54th Annual National Convention here in Charlotte.

The Sons of the American Legion continue to impress and raise the bar with your hard work, dedication to your country and committees.

Your veteran fathers and grandfathers, as well as veterans and Legionnaires are proud of you.

Not only reaching but surpassing your membership goal is a testament to your dedication and commitment.

Of the 5,882 Squadrons, only 1,896 consolidated Squadron reports were submitted for a total of 32.2%.

Last year, we had 1,553 submitted for 26.7% completion rate.

So, there was an increase in submissions, but there's also a lot of room for improvement.

CRS data is vitally important and gets incorporated into The American Legion's National Commander's testimony before Congress.

How about next year I challenge you to do at least 50 percent?

Your dedication shows. This year's Sons Squadrons collectively donated more than \$7,366,547 and volunteered over 4,987,268 hours supporting the various Legion programs and VAs around the country.

It is you, the Sons, that continue to set the example on how veterans support organizations should be modeled.

While those numbers are amazing, I'm willing to bet it's much higher. This info is derived from just 32.2% of the CRS submitted.

Just imagine what that would be if we submitted reports for 100%.

You've also raised the bar on fundraising by consistently donating to Child Welfare Foundation.

Since 1987, the Sons have donated over \$9.1 million to CWF. And this year alone it was \$1,035,309. You lead the way with pride, honor and integrity.

The Sons have made great strides to mirror the procedures and processes of The American Legion on many levels to include taking fiscal ownership of the Sons programs in ensuring that members receive appropriate reimbursement for national meetings.

As you know, the SAL is now able to renew online using the Legion.org/SALrenew. To date, we've had over 2,300 members take advantage of this process. This capability is long overdue.

In the future, we will create Detachment, headquarter Squadrons and allow members to join online after a resolution is submitted. Have a great convention and continue to be the example for what a veterans support veteran organization should be.

And last but not least, I'm also a member of the SAL. I gained my eligibility from my

father, who was a combat medic in World War II and fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

... Applause.

At this time, I'll call the Director of Internal Affairs, Matt Herndon, for a couple of remarks.

PRESENTATION

Matthew Herndon, Director of Internal Affairs & Membership

Good afternoon. How are we doing today? Are you excited to be in Charlotte?

... Cheers and Applause.

There we go. That's what I'd like to hear.

The chairman brought up some good numbers, talked about some great things that the Sons are doing, and I can say on the National staff's side I really appreciate that.

And I know that the National staff appreciates everything you do.

You do a wonderful job. You're out there supporting The American Legion Family, which is awesome. We just came off the Legacy Run. How

many riders out there on the Legacy Run? Look at that. There we go. Really appreciate that.

... *Applause.*

You guys do awesome stuff. And everything that you're doing, it helps to drive what the organization does.

Now, chairman also talked about looking at your CSRs. And on the Legion side, we had the same issue. But we've got to get to a point where we're starting to report that information.

It would be awesome for our National Commander to go before Congress with numbers that really show what we're doing. So, take that time to think about that. Take that time to fill out those reports to ensure that we're able to have our National Commander truly talk about what The American Legion Family does in our communities.

So, I want to say thank you very much. Appreciate it. I hope you have a wonderful convention. As the chairman, also, just to make sure I'm not left behind or casted out because I'm not a Son, I'm also a Son of The American Legion.

... *Applause.*

I earned my eligibility through my grandfather, who also served during World War II and was at the Battle of the Bulge. Thank you very much, and I appreciate the time to address this convention. Thank you.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I call on Kevin Mook, National Liaison, do you have any comments?

REMARKS

Kevin M. Mook (MD), National TAL Liaison

What they said. Have a great day.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I'd like to make these gentlemen Distinguished Guests to our 51st National Convention and thank them for all they do for us.

... *Applause.*

... *Gavel.*

I ask you to remain standing. Would the Sergeant-at-Arms please escort the leading

candidate for the National Commander of The American Legion, Daniel Seehafer, to the podium.

... Applause.

ADDRESS

Daniel J. Seehafer (WI), TAL Leading Candidate for National Commander

Good afternoon!

FROM THE FLOOR: Good afternoon!

DANIEL J. SEEHAFFER (WI): It is good to be here, isn't it?

FROM THE FLOOR: Yes, it is.

DANIEL J. SEEHAFFER (WI): It's like a family reunion. I'm always talking about that. But if you can remember back, just one year ago, I addressed you in Milwaukee. It was about an hour from my hometown, and it goes like this (snapping fingers), doesn't it? And now we're here in North Carolina, Charlotte.

Commander, first of all, I want to say thank you for the work you've done this past year and will continue to do. All leadership.

Yeah, I'm listed as leading candidate. Hopefully within the short time that I have here

I'll be the next National Commander. And I'm going to address the fellow brothers and sisters, our family, for that important mission to continue.

And I have three things that I really want to hone into. I want to get that sense of urgency and passion and hunger and desire back in the family.

Membership. Not just a number. But what we do. I want that desire, that hunger and that same desire and hunger with that attitude, when we talk about legislative issues.

You, brothers, you can also be that powerful voice. After all, you're the family, aren't you? And it's personal. It's very personal. So, when we talk about legislative issues, you too can be involved. Right, Commander?

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: That's correct.

DANIEL J. SEEHAFFER (WI): Absolutely. And that last but not least, probably the most important, our top priority really homing in because this is who we are about, right? That is

life. No fellow veteran, brother or sister, needs to take their life. They have a family. They have us. We care. We have that passion.

We have that desire to have them involved with us. There's always a purpose. There's always a purpose. And so, I know there's a lot of numbers, when we talk about this, that are spread all over. But the only number I want us to be concerned about, not just for my term but for many years to come, is one. One at a time. And that's about life. Yes?

Do you think it's personal? Do you think this is relevant? Without a doubt. And you know something, not to be shown up by Matt Herndon -- and I always said this before as well -- blue is absolutely cool.

... Applause.

My dad's not here. He's in Post Everlasting, but I wear this in his honor. And I know I heard through the grapevine that the one following you, brother, is pretty good. But that's up to them. And we will be a team together. Thank

you. God bless. Let's keep up the great work.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: As leading candidate, I would like to make you a Distinguished Guest of our 51st convention.

... *Applause.*

... *Gavel.*

At this time, I call National Convention Committee Chairman William Slater to the podium. On deck will be the Child Welfare Foundation Committee report and awards and the National Convention Children & Youth Committee report and awards.

... *Music.*

ORAL REPORT

National Convention Committee
William Slater (NC)

Good afternoon, and thank you, each and every one of you, for being here with us today. We are pleased to be able to welcome those of you who have been with us for as long and those that are brand new to us, welcome to the organization.

For those needing any information about

any of the events, times, anything of that nature, please download the app TAL-NC Convention 2023 app. It has all the pertinent information.

If you need your convention pins, we have them located at the back table. They are available for everybody's opportunity to get them. We also have convention coins also. And thank you for your attendance. And let's have a great convention, people. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I'd like to make you a Distinguished Guest of our 51st National Convention.

At this time, I call on Mark Nave for the National Child Welfare Foundation Committee report and awards.

On deck: The National Convention Children and Youth Committee report and awards and National Vice Commander Mike Kirschner up next.

... Music.

ORAL REPORT

Child Welfare Foundation Committee
Mark Nave (PA), Chairman

Good afternoon.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good afternoon.

MARK NAVE (PA): Legion Family, special guests, Distinguished Guests, what a fantastic year it has been for the Child Welfare Foundation.

Last year, in Milwaukee, we were given our goal for the year, which was supposed to be \$1 per member. Well, we exceeded that by getting \$1.16 per member and raising \$424,000 this past fundraising year.

... Applause.

That represented 62 cents for every dollar that was given by The American Legion Family this year. So, gentlemen, a great job was done.

But this work is truly a team effort. At this time, I'd like to introduce my committee, who I worked with, and these gentlemen provide the energy, experience, and wisdom to help make this run.

Lyle Chapman is not here, but he's being

recognized.

George Fleming.

... *Applause.*

Sandy Lipman.

... *Applause.*

Jon Coakley.

... *Applause.*

Our consultant for the year was Phil
Stander.

... *Applause.*

And I want to thank our NEC liaisons who
were assigned. They also too provided advice when
necessary and also services throughout the year
without their input it wouldn't have been possible.
That is Chris Cook.

... *Applause.*

Henry Cleveland.

... *Applause.*

Joe Wysochanski.

... *Applause.*

And Bryan Hine.

... *Applause.*

Also want to thank our National leadership. Commander, I took over this committee from you a few years ago. You've always been there by my side, always giving us support, and I want to thank you.

... Applause.

I want to thank our National Vice Commanders for assimilating the information I presented every time and getting it out to the membership, which is very important, for your participations on our conference calls or Zoom meetings. Gentlemen, I thank you.

I thank the Detachment leadership that is here for getting the word back home to the Squadron members, to your Districts, to your sections. But most importantly, I thank the Blue Cappers throughout this organization, because without those Blue Cappers, those pennies, those dollars, those piggy banks, those fundraisers, this is not possible. So, I thank all of you.

... Applause.

Now we're going to get into the awards.

For the highest monetary donation award by region.

The Western Region - Arizona. \$46,849.00.

... *Applause.*

The Southern Region - Florida.

\$41,980.00.

... *Applause.*

The Central Region - Ohio. \$38,070.80.

... *Applause.*

The Eastern Region - Pennsylvania.

\$32,377.72.

... *Applause.*

And the Midwest - Colorado. \$26,105.20.

For the Highest Detachment Per Capita Award by
Region.

The Western Region - Nevada. \$24.83 per
member.

For the Midwest - Colorado. \$9.38 per
member.

The Southern Region - Mississippi. \$7.10
per member.

In the Eastern Region - Vermont. \$2.62
per member.

And for the Central - Ohio. \$1.26 per member.

The following Detachments achieved \$2 per capita. Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Hawaii, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Philippines, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and Wyoming.

... *Applause.*

At this time, we'll have the Dollar Per Capita Donation Award. The following Detachments are: Alabama, Alaska, Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio, Puerto Rico, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, and West Virginia.

... *Applause.*

At this time, can I have Henry James Hasselhan from the Detachment of New Jersey come up? Just real quick, if any Detachment has been named for an award could you please come up front to receive your award or have a representative from your Detachment come up and receive the award. Thank you.

Now, my buddy here, Henry, from the Detachment of New Jersey, last year -- step right on up here. Henry attended our youth convention last year, and one of his goals was to raise money for charity. And he chose Child Welfare Foundation. Now, Henry, you're how old, buddy?

HENRY JAMES HASSELHAN (NJ): Six.

MARK NAVE (PA): Six years old. Henry raised almost \$2,500 towards the Child Welfare Foundation.

... *Applause.*

So, when we talk about our youth and preparing for the future, the future is not the future. The future is now. And he's showing you that the work that can be done by our youth.

So, Henry, I thank you for your work that you did this year, man. It's a great job. Appreciate you.

... *Applause.*

And Henry, on behalf of Commander Chris Carlton, I'm going to make you a Distinguished Guest of the 51st National Convention.

... *Applause.*

Want to say anything Henry.

... *Laughter.*

Man of few words.

... *Laughter.*

Thanks a lot, Henry.

... *Applause.*

And finishing up here, just a reminder, if anybody has not been down to the convention center to the floor, to where the vendors are, please visit the Child Welfare Foundation booth. We have a lot of items for sale. Not that we ever hawk any items, but this year we have our Sons for Kids apron, which is going for \$25 for donation.

We have a phone charger which is going for \$10. The CWF board also has a charcoal gray shirt that's going for \$50. And also, a baseball cap that's going for \$25 and other items.

All donations that are given are going straight to the Child Welfare Foundation. So please come down, buy one, buy two, buy more.

And also, we have our piggy banks this

year which we're asking for \$1 donation for the piggy banks this year. And if you want a case, we're asking for \$80 donation. If you want the case mailed to you or shipped to you, we're asking for a \$100 donation. And trying to bide time for the Commander to get back up here.

... *Music.*

As a delegate to the 51st National Convention, I make a motion to accept the National Child Welfare Foundation Committee report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's a motion on the floor

SHAWN DAVIS (MN): To your right. Shawn Davis, NEC Minnesota, delegate to this convention, seconds the motion. Also, we would like, after the vote here, permission to make a challenge to the other Detachments. Quick.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's a motion on the floor. It's been seconded.

Is there any discussion? All those in favor, say aye. All those opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. If we could hold off

on that challenge until later.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make you a Distinguished Guest to our 51st National Convention.

... Applause.

Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola was elected National Commander of the nation's largest veteran service organization on September 1, 2022, in Milwaukee during The American Legion's 103rd National Convention.

His theme as National Commander is "V.E.T.S., Veterans, Education, Teamwork and Sponsor."

A life member of American Legion Post 1682 in Rockland County, N.Y., he served in the U.S. Navy and Navy Reserves from 1969 to 1974. He completed a tour aboard the USS Nitro, an auxiliary ammunition ship with the Sixth Fleet.

He was honorably discharged as a boatswain's mate third class. He is also a member of Sons of The American Legion Squadron 1682 based on the World War II service of Jim's father. Jim

spent his entire working career in the automotive service industry, where he began as a parts manager at a local Chevrolet dealership and went on to serve in many capacities of management.

At the time of his retirement in 2017, he was director of service and parts at a New York Metro Mercedes Benz dealership. After a brief time at home, he began an entirely new career as a school bus driver for the Falmouth School District and part-time motor coach operator.

Jim served in many offices at every level of The American Legion. He was elected department commander of New York for 2010-2011 and chaired several national commissions to include the Legislative Commission, Veterans Employment and Education Commission and the Membership and Post Activity Committee.

He served on the National Security Commission and was elected national vice commander for 2016-2017.

He married his wife Saveria in 1973. They have two daughters, Laura and Jeanette; a

son-in-law, Michael; and three grandchildren, Alexander, Abigail and Natalia.

The Troiola's include three generations of American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion membership.

Jim currently lives in Maine to be close to a daughter and his grandchildren, while still being within driving distance to the Department of New York.

Please welcome our National Commander for The American Legion, Jim Troiola.

... Applause.

ADDRESS

Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola, TAL National Commander

Good afternoon, Sons of the American Legion members.

Should I say fellow members? I'm a dual member as well. It's cool to be dual.

So, I just understand you gave me the Child Welfare Foundation report, and as always you're breaking records, you broke records in membership this year.

I want to tell you how our year has gone since I became National Commander and how we've evolved over the last three to four years.

Four years ago, we hired a marketing director at The American Legion. We immediately sponsored an Indy race car, which you all know about. That's brought a lot of exposure to us with our "Be the One" suicide awareness campaign, and we carried through COVID.

We did our "Be the One" checks and we saved a lot of lives, I believe, doing it.

Then we came into this year because "Be the One" was sort of out there but it wasn't really introduced yet.

And I became the Commander that spread the message around the nation and the world. And when we start talking about "Be the One," we all understand what it is: A peer to peer program, designed to have one veteran talk to another or a member of a Legion Post, Squadron, Chapter, Auxiliary Unit. Talk to another veteran and see if we can identify that veteran at risk and get them

the help they need.

But when you go on the road -- and I think Chris, he took on "Be the One" as well -- and I really congratulate him for that.

He probably met the same things that I met when it comes to emotional problems. There wasn't a state that I went to and talked about "Be the One" that I didn't have a family member come up to me and tell me about someone in their families or friends that tried to hurt themselves or tried to take their own lives.

And you're not quite ready for that when you go out on the road. You're sort of not used to something like that. And all you can do is sit and listen. Boy, I've got to tell you, it hit home. I had stories of a woman in Wyoming when I was campaigning that told me that her son lives three states away, and at least three times a week he calls her up and tells her that he's going to take his own life, and she's got to talk him off the ledge.

Think about that. Three states away.

How do you go to sleep at night knowing that that's going on? And this is going on all over the United States. Don't concentrate on the numbers of veterans that have taken their lives every day because you can't do anything for them, unfortunately.

We need to get to work and we need to be the one to save a life every single day.

You know, we've been successful this year. We got the Department of Veterans Affairs to sign on to co-branding with "Be the One."

Is everybody aware of that? So that's really special to us because they have 9 million registered veterans in the healthcare system. So that really helps a lot.

Then we signed on with USAA. They have a coalition, Face the Fight, it's called. And it's a coalition of veterans service organizations, nonprofits, corporations, mental health therapists, social workers, whatever it might be, to do the exact same thing that we want to do, and that's reduce veteran suicide.

And the same thing goes for the active duty servicemembers whose suicides, believe it or not, is on the rise, especially in the Army. This past quarter it's gone up tremendously and we're working along those people as well.

So that's something I think that's got the ball rolling, "Be the One" this year. We all did a great job putting it out in the open, and it is something that's not going away for the foreseeable future because we need to solve this problem by 2030. That's the goal we've set along with USAA to solve this problem.

How many of you rode in the Legacy ride this week? Please stand. That's fantastic.

... Applause.

I had the opportunity -- I didn't stay with the ride the whole week -- I had other obligations -- but I was out with them on Sunday and Monday. I flew home on Monday. And then I came back on Wednesday night and was with them yesterday.

And you know something when you go

around and talk to those riders and the perseverance they have of raising money for the Legacy Scholarship Fund, it's absolutely amazing to watch.

Yesterday morning we were in Bristol Motor Speedway, we asked for donations. All these riders come up to the stage, some with as little as \$5.

One walked up and said, "This is \$5 from a clerk that I was speaking in the store, asked me what we were doing and she handed me five bucks."

Another one from a Walmart employee, \$20. It's absolutely amazing.

But by the end of the day, last night, we finished up the Legacy Run in Hendrick Motorsports, if you're familiar with NASCAR legend. And the number last night, before we left, still going up, was \$667,000.

... Applause.

This morning I had the opportunity to interview with a member of Military Times. And his name is Leo -- I can't remember his last name --

but he got the Fourth Estate Award from us this year. He'll be at National Convention next week.

But the subject came up with a brand-new program that we have all based on visits that either myself or other staff members made around the world and around the United States based on quality of life of our military servicemembers.

And we've got some problems, some isolated problems. So, what the National Security Division did was they got a hold of the Pentagon and the Department of Defense and we started this program called BASE. It's Base Assessment Servicemember Experience.

And what it's designed to do is just like the System Worth Saving in the VA, it's designed to go into a military base, speak to the troops and commanding officers, it's not derogatory in any way, identify issues that are going on.

And there are many issues. There's housing. There's child care. There's mold. There's shortage of housing. Rents being manipulated by -- the rent part of it is you're an

E4, you want to go rent an apartment for you and your family, your apartment is \$2,000, whatever that is, whether it's good or bad depending on the area, but if you're an E-6 and you're an officer, maybe you want that same apartment, they raise the rent based on what your base housing allowance is and that's disgusting.

Those are the things we want to address. The whole idea is to advocate on their behalf so their quality of life is where it should be, especially in their family life.

And we consider it a national security issue, because if you have a family at home while you're deployed and they're facing quality of life issues that would really affect them in a health way, something like that, the spouse will be in the field and they'd be distracted and they'd be thinking about what's going on at home with their families' lives, which we all would do.

So, the idea of it is to try and eliminate it as much as possible so that the spouse can continue on with their mission and we can continue

on advocating for our servicemembers and our veterans that we have -- that's why we're here.

So, in closing, I want to thank you for everything you've done for the Sons of the American Legion and for The American Legion and our partners in the Auxiliary and the Riders, and I wish you a very successful convention, and God bless you, and please thank you so much for the hospitality that was afforded to me and my aide Gary.

I want to introduce him because I've got him on stage for a reason. You know, every National Commander chooses an aide, and the aide is based on -- what most people see is when we pull up to the airport, you see the aide unloading the car. But that's not really the purpose.

We got to a banquet and he's taking pictures. But the aide that I chose, I chose him for a reason. I'm trying to push that, number one, we need in The American Legion to have members coming into our ranks right now that are post-9/11 vets. I think it's very important. Nothing to say we're just old farts.

But I think that's the way we're going to grow. I chose Gary for that and because he's the past department commander of New York. He did a fantastic job while he was in that office. He was there during our 100th anniversary. And he did a lot of good things. He testified before the New York State Legislature.

He interviewed Teddy Roosevelt IV, which was pretty cool, and he's just an all-around great guy. And he thinks like I think.

Sometimes we don't think alike, but that's the whole idea of it. Ask him for advice before I come in and speak before an audience like this, whatever it is.

So, Gary, thanks for doing such a great job.

... Applause.

God bless all of you. Hold on one second. Chris, this is for you. It's a piece of tissue paper.

... Laughter.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: We've had a

lot of great times traveling. We weren't everywhere at the same time but the places we were at, I can tell you he's worn off on me a little bit because, Commander, I did try the tongue sandwich and it does speak for itself.

... Laughter.

VINCENT J. "JIM" TROIOLA, TAL NATIONAL COMMANDER: The turtle soup is pretty good; it's snappy.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I can't eat rabbit soup, I found that out because it makes me jumpy.

... Laughter.

But it's been a great year serving with you, Commander.

Sons of The American Legion, citation of appreciation is hereby presented to Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola, National Commander of The American Legion, in recognizing outstanding contributions and appreciation for dedicated service to the programs of the Sons of the American Legion, presented at the 51st National Convention in the

city of Charlotte, North Carolina, August 25th through 27th, 2023, signed by myself and our adjutant, Anthony Wright.

... Applause.

I'd like to make you a Distinguished Guest to our 51st National Convention. And if I might, so Sons of The American Legion, we have a National Commander's aide too. But he doesn't get to go everywhere with me. I'm lucky if he'll carry a bottle of water for me. No, just kidding.

... Laughter.

My aide's been great. But to also talk about Gary as a National Commander's aide, I want to thank Gary for every time I was in the same place as Commander, Gary kind of took care of me as well if my aide wasn't there.

He made sure I knew important times and dates and made sure that if my wife was with me that we were taken care of and we got to where we needed to go.

So, Gary, if you would, please, I'd like to make you a Distinguished Guest of our 51st

National Convention, and he's also a dual member.

... Applause.

If you'll remain standing, I would like to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms please escort the trailing candidate of The American Legion National Commander James LaCoursiere to the podium, please.

... Applause.

DISTINGUISHED GUEST

*James A. LaCoursiere (CT), Trailing Candidate for National Commander
The American Legion*

Good afternoon, Sons of the American Legion. It's my absolute great honor and privilege to stand before this great body. My name is James LaCoursiere. I'm trailing candidate for National Commander, if all goes well, 24/25.

I'm actually going to be very brief because you already heard from your incoming National Commander James Seehafer, and you just heard from your National Commander James Troiola.

You guys have an awful lot going on, which I'm very grateful because I'm a dual member myself. I'm a member of the American Legion.

... *Applause.*

I'm a grateful member of the Sons of the American Legion, and I'm also a member of the Legion Riders in Connecticut.

All year you've been hearing about the "Be the One" campaign. You all have been a great asset and part of "Be the One" campaign. That's helped us get the word out there nationwide. Nationwide, to reduce veteran suicide.

But it starts on the local level. It starts right there in your own backyard. It starts in your community. Keeping that in mind, that's what you guys do very well with your programs, and that's why you guys do great with the Child Welfare Foundation with all your fund-raising and all the backbones you guys give to the American Legion family.

The American Legion family is a very strong tool when it's utilized properly. That's why, besides the "Be the One" campaign, I've also adopted my secondary theme, which is based on love. The love I'm talking about is loyalty, unity, and

valor.

That's what this organization means to me. That's what the Sons of the American Legion means to me. That's what the Auxiliary means to me, as well as The American Legion Riders.

You all have an awful lot coming at you this year. Your National Commander has represented this great organization very well. Very well.

... Applause.

Absolutely. Give Commander Carlson a round of applause. He deserves it. He's earned it.

I can say that because I met up with him a couple of times, and he's a very proud man. He's very proud of this organization. It's all right here in the heart, and that's why you all are out here. It's that driving passion you have and your belief in the values of the American Legion family.

What's it all about? Our country. This great organization is about preserving America. It's about preserving our veterans and veteran heritage. It's about taking care of our military

troops, but utmost, the families. Keep in mind, as we served, the families served with us. As we carry on our beliefs and our traditions, the family serves with us.

Like I said, I'm going to keep it brief to keep you guys on schedule. I'm very good and prompt about that.

I actually want to just sincerely say thank you. Thank you, Sons of the American Legion, for all that you do for this great organization and for the United States of America. God bless you all.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Trailing Candidate LaCoursiere, I'd like to make you a Distinguished Guest of this 51st National Convention. Thank you for all you do. I look forward to serving under you.

... Applause.

... Gavel.

At this time, I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort Stacy Cope, the

Youth Welfare Program manager, along with the president of the Child Welfare Foundation of the American Legion, Robert Morrill.

PRESENTATION AND AWARDS

TAL Child Welfare Foundation
Robert L. Morrill (NY), President

Commander Chris, distinguished officers and guests, and fellow members of the Sons of the American Legion, good afternoon. It is my pleasure to be here today, and I am truly honored.

I would first like to take a moment to recognize Mark Nave, Chairman of the Child Welfare Foundation Liaison Committee for the SAL.

Is Mark still here? I saw him backstage, but he had his running shoes on, and I think he was heading out the door somewhere. He does a great job for all of you.

I would also like to give a shout out to the SAL members in the great Department of New York. You guys are, like Tony the Tiger says, Grrr-eat! Love you all. You did a great job.

I would like to thank all of the Sons of the American Legion, not only all of you in the

audience today, but also all of those back home that were not able to make the convention. You are a vital part of the success of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, but even more important than that, your unwavering support and dedication to our veterans across this great nation is deserving of much praise.

So, thank you for all that you do for the veterans and their families. I am happy to say that at our annual spring meeting in May, the Foundation awarded \$797,251 in grants to 16 youth-serving nonprofit organizations across the country, benefitting youth with physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional needs.

All recommendations made by the Sons Selection Committee were approved by the foundation.

Over the past ten years, the Sons have supported an estimated \$3,114,790 in CWF grants. Give yourself a hand. Outstanding.

... Applause.

The Child Welfare Foundation 2022/2023

program year, which ended on May 31st, is now in the books. The Foundation received a total of \$679,264, and of that, the Sons raised \$424,761. That's amazing. Give yourself another hand.

... *Applause.*

The SAL is on its way to hitting a \$10 million goal. As we close the chapter on last year's CWF program year, we look forward to new achievements and getting back to the work that needs to be done, making sure that every child has an opportunity to grow a happy and healthy life.

As we make plans for the upcoming year, take a few moments to plan an activity or event that benefits the children. Whether it is a donation for the year for a banner, feed the pig fund-raising efforts, golf tournament, cooking a meal, the way that we make a difference is one dollar at a time.

The 2024 will mark the 70th year of service to the youth of our nation for the Child Welfare Foundation. I hope it is a banner year, and I look forward to working with all of you in

this effort.

Please stop down to the booth in the exhibition hall to support the Foundation by purchasing some of the items that we have available or just to make a donation. We have new polo shirts in men's and women's sizes, newly designed baseball caps. If you bundle a baseball cap and a shirt together, you can save \$5. We have newly designed lapel pins and new larger piggy banks. You all asked for larger banks last year, so we provided them for you this year.

Finally, before I present the awards this year, I would like to congratulate all of you for your surpassing your membership goal in reaching an all-time high in membership. Simply amazing. Congratulations.

And now for the awards. The U.S. Udie Grant award, awarded to the top Department nationally based on combined total contributions of the American Legion, Auxiliary, SAL, Riders, and Eight & Forty for the contributing year, the winner is the Department of Florida.

... *Applause.*

The next award is the Garland D. Murphy Jr. Award, awarded to the most active Detachment in the nation based on actual contributions received during the contribution year. The winner is the Detachment of Arizona.

... *Applause.*

The next award, awarded to the Detachment with the highest per capita contributions average for the contributing year within each organization, the winner this year is the Detachment of Nevada.

... *Applause.*

Nevada's going to receive two because they also received the achievement award.

... *Applause.*

Commander Carlton, The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Board of Directors would like to thank you for your service this year and your unwavering support of the Child Welfare Foundation. And for all of your efforts, I'm proud to present you with this five diamond lapel pin.

... *Applause.*

I'd like to at this time call on the Ohio Detachment Commander.

BILL TOWNS (OH): Good afternoon. We're here this afternoon representing and informing, after many conversations with director Stacy and also our membership out there. We have a small group of active past Detachment commanders in Ohio that, once they started working, they chose the Child Welfare Foundation as their project they were going to support each year.

Tell you a little thing we do. We have a bottle raffle we do once a year. Back in 1988 -- and some of you will remember some of these names from the early years. Past Detachment Commander Terry Kettering, he was a CWF chairman here on the national level for many years.

At his homecoming, Dale Hartley won a small bottle of Canadian Club that was raffled off. As a Commander, he says, let's do it again, and he gave it back. So, each year this bottle was raffled off.

Give you the little facts about this.

The first raffle, 1988, brought in \$11.40 for CWF. We were rolling. In 1991, a past national membership chairman out of Ohio, Past Commander Kent Blanchard thought, let's do something special with this, and he wrote the distributor and asked if they would give us the little travel bottles for people that would bid on it, that we could give them a little symbolic bottle because what we do with this bottle is the person that wins the bid, takes it home for a year, and gets to display it.

That don't look much for a bottle of Canadian Club sitting on your mantel -- except this bottle that was received by Kent Blanchard back in 1991 was a gold-plated bottle of Canadian Club with the Ohio Past Detachment Commanders Club on the label. It took off from there.

In 1998 the first over \$1,000 donation was made for this, and the donation is just strictly you bid, you outbid everybody else there, and you get the right to hold the bottle for a year. That donation, somebody else you might know, Past National Sergeant-at-Arms, Past National

Chaplain Roy Turner.

The largest donation ever came in twice tied in 2003 and 2007, and that was brought in by, many of you knew him, Rob Brewer, and a lot of the 5th District in Ohio. They did that twice of \$10,000, just for the right to show it off for the year.

Total donations to this day was \$85,600 that this group of Commanders, small group of gentlemen have brought in and donated to Child Welfare.

Now, Rob Brewer had two passions. He had a bunch of things he loved, but there was two passions in his life. One was Ohio State.

DELEGATE: O-H.

DELEGATE: I-O!

DELEGATE: You know!

BILL TOWNS (OH): And the other was the Child Welfare Foundation. Sadly, early morning in July, Rob Brewer passed away, Past Detachment Commander. We keep records of everybody that's made donations on this. All the auctions that's

gone out, who did it, how much money they brought in.

At his funeral we were discussing how we could honor him. Well, Rob Brewer has two places -- Rob Brewer in the 5th District has two places already, two different years that their name is there for here's our donation. We thought what a great thing it would be if we could raise just a little over \$2,000 to make this year's bid for the bottle raffle, \$2,035, with Rob's name being ever embossed as the person that put the bottle raffle over the \$100,000 mark.

Now, if I could say this in any way at all without offending you, I can't, but I'm going to let you know. There are Detachments in that much time that has not done \$100,000. I apologize to you, but it's facts.

So, we sent out messages to our past commanders for \$100,000, saying that Rob's name will forever be ingrained as the one who put the amount over \$100,000 for Child Welfare. As Ohio does for Child Welfare, they stepped up.

At the end of the day when we finished gathering checks in, we have a check here to donate to the Child Welfare Foundation and to let them know that the past commanders in Ohio are still supporting, that we have a check here today for \$17,303, putting the Past Commanders Raffle over the \$100,000 mark by a bunch.

... *Applause.*

And just one final thought that just crossed my mind, that is added to the \$1 million that Ohio has already given.

... *Applause.*

ROBERT L. MORRILL (NY): Commander, Distinguished Guests, and members of the Sons of the American Legion, thank you for the invitation to be with you today. It's been an honor and a privilege for me.

I look forward to seeing the Sons of the American Legion in action over the next year and seeing the great things that we can accomplish together. Thank you very much for the invitation to be here today. God bless you all.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: President Morrill, I would like to make you a Distinguished Guest of our 51st National Convention.

And, Stacy, I would like to make you a Distinguished Guest of the 51st National Convention. Stacy has helped me a lot throughout the year, and I just like to recognize those who have helped. So, thank you.

... Applause.

ROBERT L. MORRILL (NY): Stacy told me a few days ago not to recognize her. She didn't need to be recognized. She does a fabulous job in this program, and she should get a hand.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: At this time, I'd like to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort Rick Lofgren of the Children's Organ Transplant Association to the podium.

... Applause.

PRESENTATION

Children's Organ Transplant Association
Rick Lofgren

Good afternoon. Thank you, Commander, for that introduction. I'm Rick Lofgren, the president of the Children's Organ Transplant Association, and I'm pleased to welcome all of you to beautiful Charlotte. Hopefully they will turn on the air conditioning for us outside as well as they have inside by the time we get out there.

I want to thank everyone for being here. As I was sitting and waiting to come up on stage, I was impressed with all the money you have raised. The Sons have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to help kids across the country, and very specifically raised money to help our kids at COTA. I'm incredibly grateful for your support and everything you do for us.

I also want to introduce my newest colleague Ryan Gallagher. Ryan joined COTA earlier this summer. If you happen to stop by our display booth, if you don't mind, ask him some really tough questions, make sure he's on his toes, and I'm sure he'll give you good answers.

I want to thank you for everything you've

done to help our kids. I specifically want to call out the Detachments from Florida, New Jersey, Indiana, and Delaware, who have gone above and beyond in helping our kids.

I want to mention one gentleman's name, Dewey Long from Indiana. Dewey raised \$65,000 for Hoosier Kids, and every child in Indiana now --

... Applause.

Yes, thank you. Every child we help in Indiana receives \$1,500 for their transplant costs thanks to the work the Sons did on Dewey's project.

And I'm very happy to say that Detachment of Indiana Commander Paul Rush has adopted us as his project this year, and Paul is hoping to do that as well. So, give Paul a hand. Hopefully he'll do very well with his fund-raising.

... Applause.

On a very personal note, my son-in-law is Lieutenant Joseph Morales, and he's stationed add NAS Jacksonville and a member of Squadron VUP-19. Joseph was a E-8 pilot and commander before he switched to flying drones.

I asked him where, and he told me that if he told me where it was, he'd have to kill me, and it would be very difficult for him at Thanksgiving and Christmas. I appreciate his candor on that.

My son-in-law and daughter welcomed our first grandchild this year. The military community at NAS Jacksonville has helped them tremendously. Our grandson was born unresponsive. They resuscitated him, put him in intensive care, and gave him an extensive battery of genetic testing.

He's doing well today, but that experience that our family had is the same experience many of our COTA families have each and every day. The money that you raise isn't just going into some fund somewhere. It's going to help families that are experiencing things. My family got through this and they're doing very well today, but many COTA families -- and there's more than 4,000 of them across the country -- don't go home three days later like my grandson did.

What you're doing to help our kids across this country is making sure those families, when

they take their child home, that they have the ability to pay for those expenses that they have, and it makes a difference in their future. If we could go to the next slide.

I want to mention very quickly, every one of our families starts with a different journey, and every one of you started with a different journey with their own families. But the reason COTA exists is to make sure every family has an opportunity that their son, grandson, their grandchildren, they have that opportunity to grow and to learn and to make sure that they have a full chance at life.

So, what we do is we raise money and provide fund-raising support for families to ensure that they can do that so that they can focus on those things that are most important, their kids' lives. What you do to raise money to help us will ensure that that will happen.

Our goal is to ensure that no family has to be left behind. They have that opportunity for that transplant.

COTA also works with children who are now adults, and they have a single gene disease called sickle cell anemia, polycystic kidney disease, or cystic fibrosis. Those are three of more than 5,000 different diagnoses that qualify for COTA's aid. Those are diseases that patients are born with. That's why we've made an exception to that rule. We have more than 4,000 families across the country we've helped over the past 38 years.

For those of you that don't know COTA and may wonder who can COTA help and why do we do what we do and how do we do that, we help any patient up to the age of 21 that needs a lifesaving organ, bone marrow, stem cell, cord blood, or eyelet cell transplant.

Patients must be U.S. citizens or legal residents, and those that have that single gene disease, there are no age restrictions, as I mentioned that up to 21 does not qualify for those patients.

In the coming week, I'll celebrate my 25th anniversary serving at COTA. I've met some

incredible people along the way. Thousands of parents who were facing the most stressful and difficult time of their life learning that they may lose their child, whether that child is an infant, elementary school, maybe even a young adult, but they need a lifesaving transplant that will save them.

COTA funds are available for that patient's lifetime. The young man that you see in the picture here received a kidney transplant from his dad 21 years ago and is doing incredibly well. His dream was to be an engineer, and now as a mid-30s young man, he's able to do that, and he'll be getting married very soon. Kevin is exactly what we want to have happen. He was 13 years old when he had his transplant, and now at 34 he's doing incredibly well.

What we do is make sure that those families can focus on their kids. I've talked to thousands of parents over the days, knowing what their transplant journey is ahead of them that I know from doing what I've done for 21 years that

they don't yet know what's they have in front of them, but we want to ensure they have that opportunity to go forward.

I've met some outstanding leaders over the years that have stepped up to help our families. These families have no idea who these people are that are helping them, but many of them are Legionnaires, they're Sons, they're Legion Riders and Auxiliary members, and I'm grateful for everything you have done to help our kids.

In fact, the Legion family as a group is our largest supporter of COTA families across the country. You've helped us raise \$1.5 million to help COTA kids across the country. For that I want to thank you for your generous support.

In addition to that, we've received a number of grants from the Child Welfare Foundation that have totaled more than \$200,000, and they've helped with organ donor registration drives, our fund-raisers called COTA for life, for bowling and for golf. You helped us expand our online resources and many more projects along the way.

Today I'd like to introduce you to one of our families that is currently stationed at Fort Dix, the Wards. Josiah, Jude and Lucie, along with mom Nicole and Air Force Sergeant Joseph. Both Jude and Lucie have been diagnosed with a disease called Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency.

The doctors at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia have recommended a liver transplant for little Lucie, who's now 3. Her older brother Jude received his liver transplant six years ago. He's doing very well, and I understand he'll start third grade next week.

Many of our transplant families just like the Wards have coverage through Tricare, through private insurance programs, and through Medicare and Medicaid. But most plans that our families have require them to pay co-payments and deductibles that in many cases are up to \$5,000 a year, and that's if everything goes right. If you go in for a transplant or you have a hiccup in your care, those numbers only go higher.

So even with a good insurance plan, it's

a tremendous amount of money for any family to bear. Then once the transplant has been completed, those costs don't end.

Right now, Lucie is in the front end of this, Jude is on the back end of it. That family is still paying more than \$5,000 a year in medical bills, even after the Tricare coverage they have. That includes transportation and lodging. It includes copayments and deductibles, medications -- all those things that you and I would have to pay for our medical care, but magnify that many times over with two kids that need a lifesaving transplant, both surgeries, by the way, that cost over \$600,000 each.

The backbone of COTA's nationwide success is built on the selfless gifts and support of individuals and organizations that help us across the nation. They work tirelessly in our patients' hometown.

The American Legion family from Posts, Departments, Units, Squadrons, Detachments, right up through the Child Welfare Foundation, you've

been incredibly supportive of our COTA families for more than three decades, and combined total, more than \$1.7 million has been raised to help our families.

In addition to that dollar value that I just mentioned, you've given countless hours of volunteer time to help our families to know that someone's there that has come alongside them to step into the gap.

If you'd like more information on how you can do this, you can go to our website. If you go to COTA.org, you can type in American Legion, and it will get you the information that's on the screen. We'll share fund-raising ideas, other materials that we can provide, and things to help you help our families.

The American Legion family has made a tremendous difference in the lives of our kids, and it's not an exaggeration to say there are children that are alive today thanks to your support. This amazing support has been accomplished not only through fund-raising, but the opportunity that

you've had to get out into your committees and talk about organ donation and registration.

For that, for every Legion family member, I want to say thank you for your generous support. I want to thank you for the service that you provide to our country and for all the things you do that never make it to the newspaper but that you do each and every day with your Detachments.

Two years ago, we honored the American Legion family as our Miracle Makers of the Year at our annual event in Indianapolis, and one of the guests at that event took notice of that and went back to his employer and helped secure a six-figure gift for COTA kids.

He told me that the only reason that he was able to do that was because he received The American Legion family's Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval. Since that time, that organization has made two additional gifts totaling almost \$1 million.

That's an impact that won't show up anywhere on your reports, but that's something that

you are responsible for because of the work that you did demonstrating to someone else that we were worthy of support.

I want to thank you for everything you've done to help your families. I want to encourage you, if you have not stopped by our display, we're on Foundation Row, just across from the Child Welfare Foundation's booth. Please stop by and say hello. Grab some information or leave your information, and we'll mail it to you so you don't have to buy another suitcase to get everything home.

We want to make sure that you have the information that will help you to take back to your Detachment to make sure that other kids that we have not met yet have the same opportunity that those we are helping today have had.

With that, thank you again. We appreciate your generous support, and please stop by and say hello to us. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: At this

time, I will call on Jim Noble for the National Convention Children and Youth Committee report and awards.

On deck will be National Vice Commander Michael Kirschner and the National Historian's report and awards.

ORAL REPORT AND AWARDS

National Convention Children and Youth Committee
James A. Noble (NJ), Chairman

Greetings, Delegates. For the Children and Youth Awards, when you hear your Detachments mentioned, please have them go backstage and be on deck.

A lot of you were in the convention while the Academy was going on last year. That's what our committee does. On that note, I'm going to blame one person in this room. His name is Mark Nave. He came over and explained about CWF. You notice a little guy who was up here before with Mark. He asked, is there any way if I raise donations, I can help? The answer was yes.

Now you saw what happened. Between our Academy and working with Mark, we made things

happen with that \$2,500 donation for our new members. Mark, thank you so much, my friend.

On behalf of the committee, the committee members, of course myself the Chairman, Vice Chairman John Lawrence of Louisiana. John Sansoucie is excused because he had eye surgery and was unable to make it out of Missouri. Doug Evans had knee surgery, was unable to make it. He's out of Kansas. And Juan Torres of Texas.

We've got a game plan that's going to happen tomorrow in room 208 for the attendees at 10:00 a.m. Whoever didn't have the ten ideals, we'll go over that, and we're going to do the five star.

There's no mistake here. They are taught this program. There's a test involved. It's not that we just give them awards. We mentor them to pass, and that's how we get it done. On Sunday morning we'll have a presentation with them all, hopefully up on stage here.

A couple of quick notes. With all that being said, we're going to have tomorrow in the

back one of the cornhole games for raffle.

Also, there was a request for many of our T-shirts that we had last year. We will be asking for a \$25 donation. There will only be 100 T-shirts there. They'll go quick. If they do go quick, we might possibly order more for the NEC.

All the proceeds are going to National Commander Chris Carlson's project of Veterans & Children Foundation.

... Applause.

I personally would like to thank the committee people. A lot of you came on the Zoom meeting over the year. We had one every month, including this month, to do some tidy up and then some maintenance. I want to thank everybody that came on.

Now, just a quick footnote. We do this here at National. We pushed last year for the Detachments to do it. It took hold, and it made movement. Quite a few Detachments, but one of them that just started it was out of Nebraska. Absolutely great job. It was the Detachment of

Nebraska's Children and Youth Academy.

You can do it, and it doesn't have to be at your convention. You don't want your members not being in the convention. It's up to you guys how you run it.

Now, the committee's working on possibly getting either DVDs or thumb drives for you to help you out. A lot of this information is right on the national website too. All the Chairman's information is right on the website. If you need anything, my e-mail's there. Shoot it out to me. See me during convention. I'll give you one of my cards. Work together and get it done.

By the way, does everybody know what team stands for? Together Everyone Achieves More. That's what we do. There is no I.

Commander, that completes my report. As a Delegate to this National Convention, I make a motion to accept that report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's a motion to accept the Children and Youth Committee Report. Is there a second?

JOHN LAWRENCE (LA): John Lawrence from Louisiana seconds the motion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's been a motion, and it's been seconded. Is there any discussion?

Hearing none, all those in favor in accepting the National Convention Children and Youth Committee Report, signify by saying aye. All opposed, nay.

...Gavel.

Ayes have it. Motion carries. Thank you, Mr. Noble, Chairman.

I would like to make you a Distinguished Guest of the 51st National Convention.

PRESENTATIONS

Best Sqdn. Children & Youth

JAMES A. NOBLE (NJ): At this time, we're doing presentations of the National Children and Youth Awards. At this time, Best Squadron, Children and Youth Programs Report Award by region.

In the East: Brick Memorial Squadron No. 348, Brick, New Jersey.

South: J. Thompson Wyatt Squadron No. 2,
Petersburg, Virginia.

Central: Wheatfield Squadron No. 406,
Wheatfield, Indiana.

And it was a tie in the Midwest: Gering
Squadron No. 36, Gering, Nebraska.

Benson Squadron No. 112, Omaha, Nebraska.

West: Sacramento Squadron No. 447,
Sacramento, California.

Gentlemen, one of your representatives
please come up.

Best Overall Children & Youth Program Report Award

As we're waiting, Best Overall Children
and Youth Program Report Award.

Squadron: J. Thompson Wyatt Squadron
No. 2, Petersburg, Virginia.

District: District 1, Ohio. Also,
Detachment of Ohio.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Gentlemen,
as you noticed, there's been ideas to try to make
this a little bit smoother running with pictures,
but as you can tell, the podium cannot be left. So

we'll have to try and arrange something about other things. We're in this process now, so please bear with us as we go through growing pains.

Everyone has the right to be identified and pictures taken because this is what we work for all year long, these awards. The Detachments, you, everybody that's working hard out there, striving your best, and then you get recognized. So please bear with us as everyone has their opportunity.

Did Chairman Nave talk about the apron? They're back. I know the one I have is kind of worn out. I saw them down there this morning. I will be getting one.

I will now call on National Vice Commander Mike Kirschner for his final report.

NVC - Midwest's Final Report

Michael Kirschner (CO), National Vice Commander - Midwest

Good afternoon, everybody. I know this is when everyone hits the door. I'll keep it short and sweet.

Myself as a National Vice Commander did

nothing. Who did everything was each and every one of you sitting out in that audience. This gold cap doesn't mean anything without you all down there.

The Squadrons, the Detachments, those are the numbers you keep hearing about. It's not me or the National Vice Commanders or the National Commander. Our job -- actually your job, what you do is make us look good. We appreciate that.

This is a very successful year for the Midwest, a couple of highlights. You're going to hear about more tomorrow. Two Detachments got the COTA Triple Nickel. We gave over \$75,000 to CWF out of the Midwest. Gentlemen from the Midwest, thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you did.

On a personal note, this year started off pretty well and pretty strong. Then about six months into it, a tragedy hit home. I wasn't sure if I wanted to continue or not.

The "Be the One" program is definitely about the veterans and stopping veteran suicide. I took it a little bit different this year, and in my

travels around to the different Detachments within the Midwest, one thing I mentioned multiple times is "Be the One" just isn't for the veteran, it's also for each one of us and the family members of those veterans.

The small things that people do make a huge difference in each and every one of our lives. The days I didn't want to get out of bed, the days I didn't care about myself, I get a text from somebody, a fellow Sons member just saying, thinking of you. One of my fellow Vice Commanders giving me a call, saying just checking up, hope all is well. It's as simple as that, everybody, on what you can do.

I've been honored this year to represent the Midwest and represent the national organization of the Sons of the American Legion. Thank you for the Detachments that had me, the open arms, the good times, and seeing what each and every one of you do in your Detachments.

For those of you on the different informational calls we had this year, one of the

things I said is nobody should be keeping secrets from anybody. If you have a successful program, share that with your neighbor because the stronger we all are individually the stronger we are as an organization.

Thank you again. Have a great convention, and that concludes my report.

... *Applause.*

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: Mr. Commander, as a delegate to this National Convention, it is an honor to make a motion to accept not only my fellow Vice Commander's report but a true friend over the year. I make a motion to accept his final report. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's been a motion to accept National Vice Commander Midwest report. Is there a second?

CHRIS COOK (OK): Chris Cook. As a delegate to this convention, I would like to second and tell Ron thank you for stealing those words out of my mouth.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's been

a motion and second. All those in favor say aye.
All those opposed, say nay.

Ayes have it. The motion carries.

Mr. Vice commander, I would like to make
you a Distinguished Guest of our 51st National
Convention. Thank you. Appreciate it.

At this time, I would ask the National
Historian Steve DeFeo for his History Contest
Awards.

On deck will be National Vice Commander
Jack Youngs.

Then it will be the National Veterans
Employment & Education Commission.

National History Report and Contest Awards
National Convention History Books Committee
Stephen DeFeo (IN), Chairman

This morning about 10:00 we went over the
awards for the year for the history books, and the
results are as follows.

Community Services Scrapbook: Henry
White Wilmer, Squadron 82.

... *Applause.*

District level: District 3, Minnesota.

Detachment: Delaware.

For the History Books, Squadron level:
I'm going to get killed for this one -- Mukwonago,
Wisconsin, Squadron 375.

Detachment History was won by Kansas.

The awards were about, in one category,
one half a point difference between first place and
second. Another, it was two points. And in one
category there was only one entry. So, the
competition is closed, but we also need more
entries and more people to participate.

Right now, I'd like to call to the podium
Bill Towns from Ohio for the purposes of a
presentation.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: National Vice
Commander Jack Youngs, will you come up to the
podium to give your final report, please.

NVC - West's Final Report

Jack Young (ID), National Vice Commander - West

Commander, my fellow NVCs, Distinguished
Guests, SAL members, I've titled my report Our
Journey. It starts out like this.

About two weeks before National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, I got a phone call from National Vice Commander Ned Fox. Ned goes, "Jack, we have a problem." I said, what's that? He's like both of the members that we had that were running for National Vice Commander have had to back out for health/personal reasons. I said okay.

He says, you're the only one that we know of at this point that's ready for this job. I was like are you serious? I've had no training or anything.

Thus began our journey in Phoenix in 2021, when I was appointed membership chairman for the West.

You will notice that I started out with "our" to this report. That is because it's not something that I could do on my own. First off, I needed the full support of the western region, and more importantly, Sue, who happens to be the love of my life and to which I'm grateful is in my life every day, I asked her what she thought of me becoming the Membership Chairman for the West, and

she replied, "Dear, I will support you in whatever you want to do."

Thus began our journey to the position of the Sons of the American Legion as National Vice Commander.

Flash forward to being elected as your National Vice Commander in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 2022. Once elected and upon returning home to Idaho, I began to gear up for The American Legion Department of Idaho's Detachment district meetings, where I went as an unofficial visitor.

I know not everyone is able to make it to the Detachment Convention or the Mid-Winter Conference; therefore, I at least gave these folks an opportunity to visit with me and to let them know that I was approachable and reachable. In all, I made 8 of the 9 district meetings, and I missed the one because of illness and Fall NEC.

When I went back to the Fall NEC, we got all of our commission committee meeting updates for the SAL and also went to the Southern region get together for some camaraderie and great

conversation.

Once back in Idaho, I was approached to help with our district in the Department Oratorical Contest. It's still amazing to see these young folks in all their splendor as they perform their speeches with their outstanding knowledge of the U.S. Constitution.

During November we conduct Idaho's annual food drive for veterans homes, where we collect food and money for them. We now have four homes, and this program was started back in 1982 with Frank Dalton, who was the Department Commander at the time, and this was his Commander's Project.

During his tenure -- it has been going for 41 years now, and it has saved the homes of approximately \$1.2 million over that time frame. Also, they've never had to purchase a potato, don't know why. Since his passing, it has become known as the Frank Dalton Memorial Food Convoy. As a matter of fact, I'm wearing one of his ties right now to commemorate this.

This is also a great time to get with

friends from across the state as they bring in food from their Posts and Squadrons. During the '22 food drive, I had the privilege of meeting our second leading candidate for The American Legion, Mr. James LaCoursiere from the Department of Connecticut, and I also want to mention that my wife started her Legion career in Moosup, Connecticut, which was his home Post.

My first visitation was to Idaho's Mid-Winter Conference as their national guest. I attended normal meetings and passed out information from the national side. As you already heard throughout this report, I have been working on different things throughout Idaho on a routine basis.

At the end of January, we in the West conducted Wild Willy's Western Rendezvous, aptly named after one of our own, Willy Williams, Past National Executive Committeeman out of Oregon. We get together in Las Vegas every year to promote camaraderie, build leadership skills, and hold other training as we see fit and desired within our

region.

This year we held "Be the One" training with Matt Wrobel, the Department Commander, as well as being a Past Detachment Commander for Idaho, and also our incoming SAL NEC, which is Charles "Abe" Abrahamson, and he's also our Department Commander.

Then we discussed how to make meetings with parliamentary procedure, and that was conducted by our very own National Vice Commander from the South, Mr. Ron Roberts. There was team building exercises used by the Boy Scouts, led by Past National Vice Commander Jim Stewart.

We had folks join us from across the country. This year was different because the Detachment and Department of Nevada had passed a resolution adopting the Rendezvous as their own program. This is a very large responsibility and one that I know is in very good hands, being led by Past National Vice Commander Jim Stewart.

We have seen this event grow over the past nine years, and we celebrate ten years in 2024. We will continue to see the growth within

the region, and our special guest is going to be Ginny Williams, Willie's wife.

My next excursion to be had was going to the Washington Conference, where I had laid a wreath at the Vietnam Wall, visited the Arlington National Cemetery, and watched The Old Guard as they stood their watch so meticulously over the tomb.

We also observed National Commander Carlton lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. And I also visited the grave site of the most decorated soldier of World War II, Audie Murphy. Went to the World War II Memorial. Once I realized I wanted to get a picture of all the Detachments in the region, I got all but two of them. Unfortunately, it was Arizona and Nevada, and I apologize.

With Nevada, the only problem with that was I had David Souza and PNC Jim Stewart with me. Sorry, guys.

There is so much to do in Washington, that it was impossible to scratch the surface

during our short time.

At the end of March, we traveled to Indianapolis for Commander Carlton's Homecoming, where the National Vice Commanders presented him with gifts from us and the Detachment of Idaho presented him with a bell, which was made from the brass grommets of approximately 500 U.S. flags. When the flags are destroyed, we take a ceremonial portion of the ashes and we have permission to be able to bury them at the Idaho State Veterans Cemetery so that our fallen heroes that are buried there can be among the U.S. flag ashes they so desperately fought for.

We also repurpose the flag grommets to make a few bells to pass on to folks who would like to have a piece of the flag they fought for during their time in service but cannot always carry a flag with them at times, but they can always put a grommet in their pocket.

I made an unofficial visit to Oregon for the purposes of hand delivering an IRA pin. I met up with NEC Marc Chaney, Detachment Commander Rob

Liebenow and Detachment Adjutant Ward Allen, to whom the IRA pin was to go to.

We chatted about how everything was going in Oregon and how much it was appreciated how hard they were working to keep themselves ahead of the schedule that National had set up.

They also gave me a tour of their beautiful Milwaukie Post 180. While there it was mentioned they had a submarine museum in Portland. Then I found out it was the USS Blueback, which was one of the only non-nuclear ships I ever worked on during my 20-year career in the Navy. So, I had a tour it for old time's sake.

It was just as cramped now as it was then with one exception. There was a 10 foot by 10 foot hole cut into the side of the boat for your access. I missed not going up and down the ladder through the water tight hatch for one last time, not really! That was a no.

I also received news that Ginny Williams was hoping to see me at their Department Convention, which happened to be the week before I

arrived. I called her to see if she wanted to meet up for a bit and we did. We had lunch, and she gave me a tour of La Pine Post 45, which is gorgeous. It was wonderful to be able to spend time with Past National Executive Committee Willy Williams' wife before heading back home to Idaho.

I traveled back to Indy for Spring NEC where we received updates from all committee and commissions and where I finally finished my three-year National Management Institute class that only took me five years to complete.

Chairman Monserud, I apologize for being a National Vice Commander going through the program, but I did start out as a Detachment Commander. I hate using this excuse, but COVID had something to do with it.

During Memorial Day we went to the Meridian Cemetery along with Scouting Troop 1 and we put out 700 flags on Veterans graves. It was very nice to have their assistance with this endeavor as we were able to share some knowledge to them about paying respects to our fallen heroes

along with the fact that our Post's namesake Lloyd E. Hutcheson, who is buried there, he was a WWI veteran.

I failed to mention that Troop 1 meets at our Post, so it was fitting they have knowledge of our Post's namesake. I went to Idaho Gem Boys State this year, as I have for the past few years where I had been a counselor during that time. As I was not going to be able to be there for the whole program I worked with the food service aspect this time around, because I had a visitation already set up in Nevada.

This is another amazing program The American Legion has, and it absolutely amazes me to see these young men come in all skittish and nervous, and by the end of the first day when you see them, they're starting to make friends. They're breaking out of their shell.

At the end of this time frame, during that week, they find out that they've become part of something bigger than themselves, and they become lifelong friends. If you'll excuse me a

moment.

My visitation to Nevada as their National Guest was exceptional for many reasons but the first was where I had the great honor and privilege of meeting Medal of Honor Recipient Donald "Doc" Ballard, who is an amazing individual. It was amazing to listen to him speak to The Legion Family as well as to the Nevada Boys State delegation.

It was also enjoyable chatting with him outside of the professional setting. During that time, we went to several museums, the Nevada State Museum and US Mint in Carson City, and we made a trek up to Virginia City, where we found a lot of memorabilia about the TV series Bonanza.

These were amazing tours. PNVC Jim Stewart and David Sousa were our tour guides and Dave was our chauffeur.

I wish to thank The American Legion Department of Nevada, the Sons, and the American Legion Auxiliary for their generous hospitality. I would also like to thank Jim's wife, Barbara Stewart, for all of her hard work.

The Department Commander at the time was Valerie Scheuering-Hubbell, whom I met at American Legion College where we were in the graduating class of 2017. So, this visitation was even more reminiscent of coming home to visit your family. Thank you, Nevada.

I also visited the Detachment of Wyoming for Christmas in July at the State Veterans Home in Buffalo.

And it was an absolute honor to be there. I was working with Det. CDR. Donovan Dusel, Detachment Adjutant Jim Anderson, as well as Don Sillivan, who is the SAL District Coordinator for the Northeast. I also met Douglas Johnson, the Department Commander for The American Legion for Wyoming, and he was very interesting to chat with.

We went and helped the veterans do some fishing, as well as we helped clean up the property before enjoying a great lunch served by the veterans home staff.

By the way, the veterans home is surrounded by cattle pastures, and I thought that

was awesome as it reminded me of the upbringing I had where my school had cattle pastures surrounding it and I grew up in New York!

I had the honor of meeting Pedro, who was a carpenter back in World War II, and he was the oldest living veteran at the home. He was 102 years young.

There were also a father/son living at the home as well, which I thought was intriguing. While there, I handed out flag grommets to those who wanted one as everyone cannot carry around the flag, they defended but they can carry around a portion of the flag with them by putting a grommet in their pocket.

During lunch, I was asked to assist Det. CDR. Donovan Dusel along with the Det. Sr. Vice CDR. Levi Dusel, which is his brother, handed out prize money to the folks who went fishing.

I also had the privilege of meeting PNVC Charlie Keith, who is an outstanding individual with a great sense of humor. It was very enjoyable to be with and listen to the ALA talk about all

that they do.

I also informed them they need to get this information out to the public. It is just like the Sons: We do, but we do not let people know what we do because we are not looking for the accolades, just helping our veterans and our communities.

All the while I was visiting Wyoming, my counterpart from The American Legion, National Vice Commander Doug Uhrig, who is from Wyoming was visiting in Idaho. I am sure he had a great time there. Thank you, Wyoming.

I would also like to congratulate Post 6 out of Cheyenne, Wyoming for being the very first American Legion Baseball team to go to the American Legion World Series from Wyoming. Good on you.

With our journey coming to an end, the Western Region arrived at the National Convention at 105 percent, with all Detachments at 100 percent or higher. Plus, we were part of the SAL's all-time high.

If that is not making a statement, then I

don't know what is. In Charlotte at 105% with all Detachments at 100% or higher. At this time, I would like the Western Region to stand and be recognized.

I salute you for your hard work and efforts. Thank you very much. You may be seated. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the hard work and dedication to the SAL.

You are the epitome of what being an SAL member represents. We made great strides with membership during the last two years. If you want to know what it means to make a difference, look at our accomplishments.

A very special thanks go out to the following folks: Commander Carlton, my fellow NVCs, Membership Chairman Thom Skelley, Headquarters staff Brian Compton and SAL liaison Kevin Mook, the Western Region and my mentors, Jim Stewart, Ned Fox, and Ed Cleary.

It has been a privilege and an honor working with you these past two years. The memories that have been made will be cherished for

the rest of my life. The biggest thank you goes to Sue, without whose support these past two years would not have been possible. I love you, dear.

Before I go, I would like to leave you with Medal of Honor Recipient, Doc Ballard's inspirational quote: Seek to understand, then to be understood. Keep a win-win attitude and the world would be a better place. Thank you very much.

... Applause.

As a delegate to this 51st National Convention, I make a motion to adopt my report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's a motion on the floor to accept National Vice Commander Jack Young's report. Is there a second?

MICHAEL VOZAR (IL): Second. Illinois.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Could you repeat your name, please?

MICHAEL VOZAR (IL): Michael Vozar, Illinois.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's a motion, and it's been seconded.

Is there any discussion?

All those in favor, say aye. All those opposed, say nay.

... Gavel.

Motion carries.

At this time, I will ask Mr. DeFeo to please come back up. It was brought to our attention that his report needs to be approved.

STEPHEN J. DEFEO (IN): As a delegate to the Convention, I ask that the report for the historian's report be accepted. I'm making a motion for that.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's a motion on the floor to accept the historian's report. Is there a second?

GREG SPAULDING (ID): Greg Spaulding, NEC Indiana, makes the second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: The motion has been seconded. Is there any discussion?

Oh, sorry. Same Detachment cannot second the motion.

Can we have another second?

RANDY CURRY (KY): Commander, Randy

Curry, NEC Kentucky, seconds that motion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Thank you.

Now we have a proper seconding.

Is there any discussion?

All those in favor, say aye. All those opposed, nay.

Ayes have it. Thank you.

Now at this time, will Bill Towns please approach.

WILLIAM TOWNS (OH): Three years ago, Mike come up and asked me if I would make a scrapbook and be his historian. Quite an honor to be asked.

But then it turned into COVID, and it became a project, but we took it on.

One of the things we did, since we couldn't travel, there was a lot of video things done, and we got a lot of information from that.

Some of the visitations he was able to make, I was able to reach out to the Detachments that he was visiting and have someone there send me pictures. So, he not only has a scrapbook of his

year as a commander, but he also has a scrapbook that contains two years of travel as a candidate. We've been putting this together.

Also, a year ago we gave him a small pamphlet of -- here's the pictures of the events along the way, just to kind of tease what's coming up.

I was able to put this together. I enjoyed the time and things we had to put it in there with. Again, I want to make sure that each Detachment is thanked for their participation in this because it's easy to take pictures here. It's hard to get pictures of the commander when he's traveling. So, it was a great opportunity for people to get in touch with us and get things out there.

Along with his book, I put a section in the back for Past National Commanders to sign and leave greetings to him. If I did not get to you, see Mike if you want to sign it. I got the ones that I ran into. If there's others out there who would like to sign this, we can do it.

Inside his book is pictures of every Past National Commander, pictures of every committee and commission that served with him, his Vice Commanders, and visitations to all the Detachments he went to. Across the pond, when he went over to Europe, and some kickoff photos and events that happened and pictures from Flying Flags for Heroes.

There's one thing I do want to show you is -- I dare you to call this a scrapbook.

Mr. Commander, I'd like to present you the book that we put together for you, and I would also like to say that a second copy was made and will be in the archives for future reference.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: At this time, I will call on Jim Coates for the National Veterans Employment & Education report and awards.

On deck, the National Americanism Committee report and awards.

At this time, I will yield the podium to National Vice Commander Jack Youngs.

ORAL REPORT AND AWARDS

National Veterans Employment & Education
James M. Coates (NY), Chairman

First of all, I'd like to introduce my commission. We've got Bruno Williamson. Bruno, are you out there?

And Fred Vaccarella from Virginia. Is Fred out there?

Okay, great. And Jim Martin. Jim Martin from Indiana. There he is right over there. And Bill Stem from Maryland.

I want to tell you all that being chairman of the VE&E Commission has been a tremendous challenge for me this year, but it's also been a great experience. I've accomplished a lot, and I have these guys to thank for it primarily. If we could give these guys a hand, I would appreciate it.

I also want to thank our NEC liaisons and the support staff that we have. Without them, there's a number of things that we've been working on that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere with. So, I want to thank them and give them a hand as well.

The work that we've done in the VE&E Commission for the past year has been based on four goals. The first goal we had was to work on documentation and creation of a trifold brochure.

We had other documents that we're working on and continue to work on. I'm very happy to say that the trifold brochure is completed now, and it has been accepted for distribution by the NEC on voting to approve the resolution that we created for it.

Now, the trifold brochure, we also have 500 more copies that the staff has been kind enough to print up for us here. So, we're going to figure out a way to get those down here tomorrow so we can distribute those to everybody.

The second goal we have is to support The American Legion's "Be the One" program and work with the VA to gain access and supports for materials they have with regarding the SAVE Program and the ETSSP program, which is the Exiting the Term of Service for Veterans and Sponsorship Program that's been developed so they can provide

service members, as they go into a community, they have somebody, a member of the community that knows the community well that can befriend that servicemember and help them answer those questions that can drive you nuts when you're moving into a new community, you know, about the doctors and the schools and all the incidentals you need to know.

Our second goal was supporting The American Legion's "Be the One" program and work with the VA to gain access to support the SAVE Program and the ETSSP.

Then our last goal that we have is establishing relationships with the Veterans Employment & Education Commission and committees within The American Legion, the National VE&E Commission, Departments, Detachments, Districts, Counties, and Squadrons.

We were able to attend the mid-winter conference this year. We attended The American Legion's Veterans Employment & Education Commission meetings, and we got a lot of information that they crammed into two days, where we learned a lot about

what was going on as far as veteran credentialing when they get out of the service. Also, the SAVE program and the ETSSP program and how that is implemented.

Well, I want to move on and also say that the other thing the commission has been continuing to work on is getting the Marvin Nay Award winner chosen.

And this year now -- because our Marvin Nay Award winner could not attend, I've asked Fred to come up and join me. Fred is from his Squadron. Fred is here to collect the award in his honor and then take it home and present it to him there.

Our recipient for the Marvin P. Nay Outstanding Contributor Award this year, for 2023, is Evan Glendinning, a proud Navy veteran, Legionnaire, member of the Sons of the American Legion, Norfolk Squadron 327.

Evan gets his eligibility through his grandfather who served in World War II and Korea and has been a Legionnaire for 11 years and a member of the SAL for four years.

He is currently a schoolteacher, Post adjutant, Squadron historian, Squadron VE&E chairman, and was re-appointed in March of 2023 as the Detachment of Virginia Veterans Employment & Education Commission chairman.

Evan also serves as the VAVS deputy representative at the Hampton VA Medical Center. Evan volunteered 155 hours working to sponsor two job fairs in 2022 and two education fairs in 2022 and '23. Two organizations, Tech for Troops and Hampton Roads Workforce Council, were two of the organizations there specializing in issues that affect our veterans.

Evan has raised \$10,117 in donations to help veterans and active duty and enlisted members of our military. Funds went to the Habitat for Humanity where the funds were used for a home for a displaced veteran and members of his family.

The Link of Hampton Roads, Navy SEAL Foundation, Tech for Troops, Judeo-Christian Outreach Center for Homeless Sheltering, Food Bank of Southeastern Virginia, and Armed Services YMCA.

On Evan's proposal, his Squadron donated \$1,200 earmarked to the VE&E homeless with funds also used for haircuts, transportation, and job interviews and ID cards. This year we present the Marvin P. Nay award to Evan Glendinning. Do we have that here?

... *Applause.*

FRED VACCARELLA (VA): Evan asked me to speak to you all and tell you that he didn't really earn this award, the Detachment of Virginia earned it. He's a schoolteacher. He's in school on Monday. He's in all the teacher courses planning and schools, teachers meetings, et cetera.

Here again, he thanks you for this award. It's because of you all in the Detachment of Virginia and throughout the whole organization that people like this can get this kind of award for all of our veterans. Thank you very much.

The National Commander has given me also the distinguished award, the Distinguished Guest award, to present to Evan. I won't wear it for him, but I'll give it to him when I get back to

Norfolk. Thank you very much.

... *Applause.*

As a delegate, I'd like to make a motion to accept my report.

NVC JACK YOUNGS: I have a motion on the floor to accept the National Veterans Commission Report. Is there a second?

DAVID BOGGS (VA): Second, David Boggs from Virginia.

NVC JACK YOUNGS: David Boggs from Virginia seconds. The motion has been seconded by David Boggs from Virginia.

Is there any discussion?

All in favor, say aye.

Opposed, nay.

Ayes have it. Motion passes.

At this time, I call on Chris Casey for the National Convention Americanism Committee report and awards. On deck: National Vice Commander David Mennel and National Vice Commander -- am I last?

ORAL REPORT AND AWARDS

National Convention Americanism Committee
Chris Casey (NE), Cmte. Chair

Good afternoon. I've got nine pages.
No. Just kidding. They are 24-point font.
National Officers, Chairmen, Committeemen, Past
National Commanders, Legionnaires, guests, the
Americanism Convention Committee meeting was called
to order earlier this morning.

I'd like to thank all the commission
members for their willingness to dedicate their
time for the betterment of our organization.

Vice Chairman Gerald Hammerschmidt of
Kansas; Paul Hayes of Illinois; Joseph Lohman,
Maryland; Robert "Bud" Neel, Nebraska; and Keith
Murdough, New Hampshire.

I'd also like to thank the previous
Americanism chairmen for their assistance
throughout this first year of my chairmanship.
They've been a tremendous help to the commission.

This morning, the room was nearly full.
Far more people than from my list showed up, and
that's great for the commission, for the convention

committee to do our work.

The combined Americanism accomplishments for this year are really kind of extraordinary and something to celebrate.

The donations for Americanism programs for 2022-2023 totaled \$3,493,375. That's an increase of 1.18 million over the previous year. So, congratulations to all of our members.

The hours donated were 1,732,019. And those hours value just over \$55 million.

... Applause.

So, the Sons of the American Legion continue to set a high bar. The commission obviously had goals that we worked on this year and you, gentlemen, all know those at this point in the year.

As of today, I can report that we've had flag placements registered on Flying Flags for Heroes in the amount of 1,014,824 flags.

... Applause.

So, the CSR totals from across Americanism -- and there's a lot of them -- they

show growth across the board and everyone should be congratulated for their hard work across the country.

We had a resolution out of the Americanism Commission that will come in front of the convention. That resolution is to donate \$250,000.00 to the Veterans and Children Foundation from the SAL Reserve Fund.

The committee moved forward with judging history and scrapbooks, which I know at this point that the National Historian actually provided the scrapbook award winners, but as a commission, the scrapbook is something that the Americanism Commission oversees, and I just want to personally thank everyone who submitted books this year on behalf of the Commission, for the work that you did.

You know, we do -- like the historian mentioned -- we need more of those books. It's really kind of tremendous.

My first time as part of the process overseeing the scoring, there's some great stuff

that's being put forth from Squadrons and Districts and Detachments, and we just need to continue to build on that and get more people comfortable with providing those books.

We had a special guest, trailing candidate Joseph Navarrete, who is actually one of those past Americanism chairmen that I thanked. He provided words.

We'll keep the rest of this all on awards, and I know that's what you're waiting for at this point. Americanism has a lot of them. So, we want to make sure that we recognize those who have excelled in Americanism this last program year.

Would a representative from the following Detachments, please make your way to the stage.

We'll start out with the Atwood-Beyea-York Memorial Award.

Atwood-Beyea-York Memorial Award

Those are representatives from Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Ohio. I had nice pictures of the gentlemen for the Memorial Award ready to

go. We'll pass through that. Next year I'll make sure that we have those pictures up because I think it's important that we just don't talk about these memorial awards and not state who these people were. And it's very important. These were our brothers.

So, I'm going to read you a little bit about Atwood, Beyea and York.

So, Gerald Atwood was a member of Sons of the American Legion Squadron 160, Brooklyn, New York.

Gerald was a New York City firefighter assigned to Ladder 21 and was among hundreds of firemen killed after responding to the World Trade Center on that fateful day.

Gerald was an eight-year veteran of the FDNY working out of Hell's Kitchen.

He grew up in the old mill basin neighborhood of Brooklyn, graduating from South Shore High School and spent two years at Kingsborough Community College.

Edward Beyea was a life member of the

Sons of the American Legion Squadron 173 in Bath, New York, and worked as a computer programmer for Empire Blue Cross/Blue Shield in the World Trade Center.

Mr. Beyea needed full-time care for the last 21 years of his life ever since a diving accident left him a quadriplegic.

He refused to be limited by his disability and learned how to type using a stick that he operated with his mouth. Mr. Beyea, along with friend and colleague Abe Zelmanowitz, who refused to leave Mr. Beyea's side after the terror attack, waited together -- think about that. He stayed right by his side -- waited together on the 27th floor for the rescue workers who could not get there in time.

Raymond York was a member of the Broad Channel Sons of the American Legion Squadron 1404, where he held the officer of Third Vice Commander.

One of New York's bravest, he gave his life on September 11th, 2001 while attempting to save his fellow citizens during the terrorist

attack on the World Trade Center.

A veteran firefighter with Engine Company 285 in Queens, Mr. York had been assigned to light duty from an on-the-job injury.

On 9/11, he was playing the role of Fireman Ray in a fire safety show at Rockefeller Center. He made his way to the burning towers by hitching a ride with a television truck and an ambulance.

His remains were found the next day on West Street. Raymond York, who had worked with the FDNY for 20 years, planned to retire at the end of 2001.

To quote a passage quickly from Gerald Atwood's eulogy. "After all is said and done, it is not how or where we finish our journey that champions our greatness, it's how we live."

The Atwood-Beyea-York Memorial Award for Best Americanism Program goes to Squadron J. Thompson Wyatt Squadron No. 2 Petersburg, Virginia.

District was a tie. District 14 of Ohio and District 11 of Pennsylvania.

And Detachment was also a tie.

Detachment of Delaware and Detachment of Ohio.

... *Applause.*

National Emergency Fund

Now for the National Emergency Fund, given to the highest Detachment per capita donation by region.

And, gentlemen, as you hear your names, if a representative could just come up from your Detachment.

In first place, from the South, Arkansas. Arkansas, \$20.30. Second, was the West, Alaska, \$1.87. Third, Midwest, Montana, \$1.51. Fourth, the East, Connecticut, 55 cents. And fifth was Central, Michigan, 24 cents.

Legacy Scholarship Fund

Now for the Legacy Scholarship Fund. With the highest Detachment donation by region, in first was the East, Maryland, \$16,000. Second, the Central, Michigan, \$3,000. Third, South, Arkansas, \$1,700. Fourth was the West, Arizona, \$1,000. And the fifth, Midwest, New Mexico, \$500.

Congratulations to all the Americanism winners. Job well done.

All right. For the resolution.

Resolution 2: National Convention 2023.

Title: Donation \$250,000 to the Veterans & Children Foundation from the SAL Reserve Fund.

Origin: Americanism, National commander Christopher Carlton.

WHEREAS, in the 1970's, a Sons of The American Legion Liability Account (now called the Sons of The American Legion Reserve Fund) was established as a restricted fund for use in the event of emergencies such as membership decline, etc., and temporary funds were needed to meet expenses;

And WHEREAS, the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana on October 11-12, 2017 by NEC Resolution No. 4 established a ceiling of \$750,000 (with a variance of +/- 1.5%) for the Sons of The American Legion Reserve Fund for each budget year ending in the month of

December to be reviewed annually by the Internal Affairs Commission of The American Legion at the Spring meetings for adequacy and from a fiscal management viewpoint;

And WHEREAS, Resolution No. 4 adopted at the Fall, 2017 meeting of The American Legion National Executive Committee further empowers the Sons of The American Legion to request permission to transfer funds from the Sons of The American Legion Reserve Fund to any approved charity that supports America's veterans and youth with the approval and consent of both the Internal Affairs Commission and the Finance Commission of The American Legion;

And WHEREAS, The Sons of The American Legion Reserve Fund is presently over the variance established;

Now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, by the Sons of The American Legion in Annual Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina on August 25-27, 2023, that the Sons of The American Legion hereby approves the donation of \$250,000.00 from

the Sons of The American Legion Reserve Fund to The American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation

And be it further RESOLVED, that the Sons of The American Legion hereby recommends to the Internal Affairs Commission of The American Legion that said funds be distributed from the Sons of The American Legion Reserve Fund.

The committee voted to approve the resolution and present it to the body for consideration.

As a Delegate to this 51st National Convention, I make a motion to adopt SAL Resolution 2 - National Convention 2023.

ROBERT "BOB" MANZO (MD): Mr. Commander, Bob Manzo, NEC, Maryland, I second the motion.

NVC JACK YOUNGS: The motion has been seconded by Mr. Manzo out of the Detachment of Maryland.

Is there any discussion?

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: Ron Roberts, NVC, also, a delegate to this convention. I'm wondering if we can have a report of what the total is left

in the reserve fund.

WILLIAM HILL (MD): Is that being asked under the convention? Is this a convention resolution, or is that being asked as part of the National Finance Commission?

Because the resolution currently up there has not been presented as part of the National Convention's Finance Committee's report and approval. So that resolution that's in place right now would be pending approval from the National Finance Committee from the convention, correct?

NVC JACK YOUNGS: Is the question balance pending?

WILLIAM HILL (MD): Understood the question. I'm asking a question on the resolution first. The resolution is a convention committee -- convention resolution, correct?

NVC JACK YOUNGS: That is correct.

WILLIAM HILL (MD): Therefore, the Finance Committee for the convention has not provided their final report. So therefore, the report that you're asking about is still pending

the approval of the Convention Finance Committee, correct?

NVC JACK YOUNGS: Correct.

WILLIAM HILL (MD): So, at that time, with approval -- I mean, short of this is I can give the answer, yes, there are appropriate funds within the restricted reserve to provide that amount of money.

However, I just want to be clear that the resolutions you're voting and being voted is still pending an action from the Finance Committee from convention. That would be a pending action for this resolution if approved. I think I've answered Ron's question as well.

NVC JACK YOUNGS: Understand, thank you for the clarification. There's a motion on the floor to adopt SAL Resolution 3 at National Convention 2023. Is there a second?

That was Bob Manzo out of Maryland, correct?

The motion has been seconded by Bob Manzo from the Detachment of Maryland.

Any further discussion? Hearing none --

somebody with discussion?

DAVE ARON (MN): Dave Aron, District of Minnesota. I'm just kind of curious why we are not -- why all that money is just going into one fund and not getting split in between all the funds.

NEDLEY C. FOX (CA): Ned Fox, delegate to this convention. If I may speak.

I believe we should table this motion until such time as the Finance Commission has been able to put their seal of approval on it. Beings we're on the other side of the room and didn't have a microphone, had to come over here. I know we're rowdy. So....

WILLIAM G. HILL (MD): Bill Hill, Maryland. To hopefully simplify this. There's two questions, one on the motion itself, clarification of why we don't give more funds and take that, distribute it elsewhere. That is purely due to resolutions. That is based on a resolution.

Bring a resolution forward for consideration for additional funds, distributions

out of that and it will be considered.

It's no more than that. Gentlemen, I'm not trying to be rude about it. Bring a resolution forward of interest to have that done.

It can be done and discussed, just like we're discussing this one.

Commander, no disrespect. I was giving the short answer on that.

The second part of that, this resolution, for my opinion -- I'll go back to the parliamentarian on this just for clarity -- can be approved pending the final Finance Committee Report of Convention, which is tomorrow. At that time, when it comes forward what the outcome was with the Finance Committee, the two are married together, and they move forward. That's the only action pending at this time, from my understanding.

CHRIS CASEY (NE): I rescind the motion.

... *Applause.*

NVC JACK YOUNGS: If there's no objection, we will rescind the motion. Hearing none, it's so ordered.

CHRIS CASEY (NE): As a duly appointed delegate to the 51st National Convention of the Sons of the American Legion, I move that the Americanism Convention Committee Report and Awards be accepted minus the resolution.

GARY J. LANG (OH): Gary Lang, Ohio, seconds.

NVC JACK YOUNGS: I have a motion on the floor to accept the National Convention Americanism Committee report minus the resolution.

Was there a second? Who was it?

GARY LANG (OH): Gary Lang, Ohio.

NVC JACK YOUNGS: Gary Lang, Ohio.

Is there any discussion?

All in favor, say aye. All opposed, nay.

Ayes have it. Motion carries. Thank you, Chairman Casey. I now turn the podium over to Commander Carlton.

ADJOURNMENT

Christopher Carlton (IN), National Commander

Gentlemen, it's been a long, exceptional day. So, with that...

... Gavel.

... Cheers and Applause.

With the Colors of our Nation in place,
join me in offering a right-hand salute.

Two.

The 51st National Convention of the Sons
of the American Legion will now stand in recess
until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

And also, I'd like to remind you that
those surveys are on the back of the table. Please
take one, fill it out.

*... At 4:46 p.m., Friday, August 25,
2023, the 51st Annual Convention of the Sons of the
American Legion was adjourned.*

-o0o-

... At 9:00 a.m., August 26, 2023, the members assembled for the 51st Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were had:

... *Gavel.*

CALL TO ORDER - Day 2

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Will the Sergeant-at-Arms please secure the door. Thank you.

Good morning, everyone!

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GIBSON: You all messed up now. Try it again, Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Good morning!

... *Delegation chanting "Purpose, passion, Be the One."*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Could have been a late night for them.

... *Gavel.*

With the Colors of our Nation in place, join me in a right-hand salute.

Two.

I'll call on National Chaplain Jeff Gibson Sr. to invoke the blessing of God.

Please uncover.

INVOCATION

Jeff Gibson, Sr. (AL), National Chaplain

Before we do the prayer, y'all, we've got a couple things to go over really quick. I received a lot of prayer requests this morning. Amen.

Listen up, I'll get your minds ready for what's about to take place.

You relax on a plane, even though you don't know the pilot. You relax in a ship, even though you don't know the captain. You relax on the bus, even though you don't know the driver. Why not you relax in life knowing that God is in control?

Our first prayer request is, Mike Gallagher, New Hampshire, he was here, battling sickness and disease. Keep him in prayer; they had to take him home.

Next we've got, from California, Abbey Gate Afghanistan, 13 for 13. 13 seconds for 13

heroes. They represent the 7,000 KIA in the 20-year War on Terrorism. Let us take 13 seconds to remember the 13 heroes, as a remembrance of the 7,000. Amen.

Scott, Ohio, please keep his wife in prayer. She's battling cancer, and they told me this morning to get the Sons nation to prayer because it's not looking very well. We know the power of prayer; a lot of things can change.

Next, Mark from South Carolina, lost a buddy to suicide. Let's keep them in prayer also.

On the side of that, let me bring some good news to you this morning. Is Brandon Curry in the audience? Out of Kentucky?

What Brandon did was amazing.

I got this message late last night.

Brandon took a staff sergeant's remains home back to Alabama to his family. Let's give Brandon a round of applause for taking the remains back to the family.

Brandon, on behalf of the Sons, I salute you for your dedication to service, sir. Rock

steady.

What Brandon did brought me to a message, and after I do this message I'll go into prayer; but, guys, thank you so much for all you all do for our veterans and everyone else. But also, I want you all to think about one thing. Take care of each other.

If you can't take care of yourself, how can you take care of somebody else? Make sure you take care of yourself.

"Words alone are worthless, my children. Our love should not be just words and talk. They must be true love which show itself in action."

The greatest gift you can give someone is your time. Let us go to the Lord in prayer.

Holy Father, grant the things that we do here today will be the betterment for our organization and ourselves. We ask your supreme guidance now in our daily lives. Amen.

... Chorus of amens.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: In memory of our departed comrades and the comrades of all

veterans, let us stand in silence.

I call upon National Sergeant-at-Arms
Greg Wagner to lead us in reciting the Pledge
of Allegiance.

*... The delegation recited the Pledge of
Allegiance.*

... Music.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Recover.
Please be seated.

... Gavel

I'll call on National Adjutant Anthony
Wright for the roll call.

ROLL CALL

Anthony Wright (PA), National Adjutant

National Commander

Christopher A. "Chris" Carlton.

National Vice Commanders

East: Ernest E. "Ernie" Laberge, Massachusetts -
Excused.

South: Ronald E. "Ron" Roberts, Mississippi.

Central: David J. "Dave" Mennel, Michigan.

Midwest: Michael L. "Mike" Kirschner, Colorado.

West: Jack A. Youngs, Idaho.

National Adjutant

Anthony W. Wright, Pennsylvania.

National Assistant Adjutants

Harold E. Thompson, Jr., Nebraska (Emeritus)

James E. "Ed" Sheubrooks, Florida.

Robert J. Avery, New York.

Scott A. Williams, Virginia.

Scott J. Thornton, Ohio - Excused.

Jeffrey E. Hicks, New Jersey.

Clifford Hall, Georgia

National Chaplain

National Chaplain Jeffrey L. "Jeff" Gibson, Sr.,

Alabama.

National Parliamentarian

Gary Leach, California.

National Historian

Stephen J. DeFeo, Indiana.

National Sergeant-At-Arms

Greg J. Wagner, Indiana.

National Assistant Sergeants-At-Arms

Brian K. Waters, Pennsylvania.

Greg Falco, New York.

Lyle G. Larson, Kansas - Excused.

Mark T. Fayer, Sr., Maryland.

Matt Griffis, Arizona - Excused.

National Commander's Aide

David A. Miller, Indiana.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDERS**Immediate Past National Commander**

Michael C. Fox, California.

Michael K. Seaton, California - Excused

Robert A. McBride, Ohio - Excused

J.R. Stillwell, Illinois - Excused

Robert H. Faust, California.

James R. Hartman, Maryland.

Charles E. Gannon, Maryland.

David P. Stephens, Indiana.

Christopher R. Cerullo, New York.

Frederick L. Hartline, Ohio - Excused

Douglas P. Bible, Minnesota.

David R. Faust, Wisconsin.

Robert A. Worrel, Indiana.

Eugene L. Sacco, California.

Joseph M. Mayne, Minnesota.

Byron J. Robichaux, Louisiana.

Richard L. Cook, Oklahoma.

Kevin N. Winkelmann, Texas - Excused.

Clifford A. Smith, Massachusetts.

Michael J. Deacon, Iowa.

Earl R. Ruttkofsky, Michigan.

Raymond P. Giehll, Jr., Indiana.

Thomas E. Cisna, Illinois - Excused.

Mark E. Arneson, Georgia

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 Paviglianti, New York.

Roll call of Detachments

Alabama.

Alaska.

Arizona.

Arkansas.

California.

Connecticut.

Delaware.

Florida.

France.

Georgia.

Hawaii.

Idaho.

Illinois.

Indiana.

Iowa.

Kansas.

Kentucky.

Louisiana.

Maine.

Maryland.

Massachusetts.

Michigan.

Minnesota.

Mississippi.

Missouri.

Montana.

Nebraska.

Nevada.

New Hampshire.

New Jersey.

New Mexico.

New York.

North Carolina.

Ohio.

Oklahoma.

Oregon.

Pennsylvania.

Puerto Rico.

Rhode Island.

South Carolina.

South Dakota.

Texas.

Utah.

Vermont.

Virginia.

West Virginia.

Wisconsin.

Wyoming.

Commander, that completes roll call. You have a quorum.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I now declare this 51st National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion reconvened.

Before we get into the reports for today, I want to review the procedure that we would like to follow today for everyone coming to the stage. Committee Chairmen, please exit the auditorium to my left - your right - and come around to the left side of the stage so you are ready to come to the

podium when called upon for your report. One of the Sergeants-at-Arms can assist you with locating the entrance to the stage.

Award recipients: For awards with multiple recipients, we will ask for a representative from the Detachments to assemble at the left side of the stage in advance.

Also, please, when you're addressing the Chair, find one of the mics in the aisles so that way our court reporter can make a better document.

Also, if there are still any surveys back there, I encourage you to pick one up, fill it out and turn it back in. Please, if you would like to pay a fine, turn your phones on as loud as it can go.

... Laughter.

And also, I'd like to take this opportunity to make all my assistant adjutants, adjutant, my parliamentarian and chaplain Distinguished Guests. I'll give you your medals shortly.

At this time, I'd like to call Jim Noble

to front of the stage, along with youth academy participants.

... *Gavel.*

... *Applause.*

PRESENTATION

Children & Youth Committee
Jim Noble (NJ), Chairman

Good morning, everyone. I've been a little busy running around, came in, caught me off guard in the back of the convention hall.

These are some of the members that will be getting taught today at our academy.

We already have about four Auxiliary members, two of them downstairs and two of them were in the convention hall a few minutes ago. At 10:00, we'll start our program. We'll be heading over to Room 208. And that's where we'll start. Anybody that wants to come in, take a look at what we're doing, not a problem.

We have to wait for our audiovisual, which was a little hiccup. And thanks to Mr. Mook,

he's going to take care of that and get that done.

We have T-shirts in the back. We also have the cornhole games up for raffle. Feel free, once the T-shirts are gone, they're gone. Once the tickets for the raffle are gone, they're gone.

We'll be doing our raffle tomorrow when we have the presentation of our students. Thank you. Have a great convention. Talk to you later.

... Applause.

... Gavel.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: We were talking a little bit up here, and Vice Commander Roberts said there's our trailing candidates. I thought you've got commander, leading candidate and trailing candidate.

... Laughter.

At this time, I'd like to call on Harold Thompson for his Credential report; Bill Hill, Finance, on deck.

ORAL REPORT**NATIONAL CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE**

*Harold Thompson Jr. (NE), Credentials Committee
Chairman*

Good morning. Chairman Harold Thompson called the Credentials Convention Committee to order on August 25th, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. for the purpose of taking the necessary committee action on convention resolution. None was presented.

There was a possible of 898 delegates, 100 delegates at large, for a total of 998 possible delegate votes from 53 Detachments.

On Friday, we had 51 Detachments registered with 990 delegates, 22 alternates and 108 guests.

We have two Detachments that have not registered and they're District of Columbia and the Philippines as of Friday, noon.

One change this year, when The American Legion Judge Advocate went through and brought all constitution and bylaws up to date with The American Legion according to a Resolution No. 28 from May the 5th to 6th of 1938, there were several

changes made and approved by The American Legion National Executive Committee on October 2022.

One change was in the constitution, Article VII, National Executive Committee, Section 3, which reads:

Members of the National Executive Committee shall be delegates to the National Convention with a vote, which vote shall be exercised with respective Detachment, except that the National Commander shall be exercised only in their capacity as a chair of the National Convention.

Also, American Legion National Executive Committee on May 4th and 5th, 2022 had a Resolution No. 8, National Convention registration fees.

The resolution said to raise the registration fee by \$10, which raised it from 25 to \$35.

And now I'll go through possible delegates, and that's one reason, when I read at-large, every Detachment will have one member at-large, and that's the NECmen.

Alabama, seven plus one, for a total eight. Eight registered.

Alaska, six plus two, for a total of eight. Eight registered.

Arizona, 20 plus two, for a total of 22. 22 registered.

Arkansas, four plus one for a total of five. Five registered.

California, 25 plus five, for a total of 30. 30 registered.

Connecticut, seven plus one for a total of eight. Eight registered.

Delaware, eight plus one for a total of nine. Nine registered.

District of Columbia, three plus one, for a total of four. None registered yet.

Florida, 49 plus two, for a total of 51. 51 registered.

France, three plus one, for a total of four. Four registered.

Georgia, 13 plus two for a total of 15. 15 registered.

Hawaii, three plus one, for a total of four. Four registered.

Idaho, four plus two, for a total of six. Six registered.

Illinois, 30 plus four, for a total of 34. 34 registered,.

Indiana, 75 plus five, for a total of 80. 80 registered.

Iowa, 13 plus two, for a total of 15, 15 registered.

Kansas, 15 plus two, for a total of 17. 17 registered.

Kentucky, eight plus two, for a total of 10. 10 registered.

Louisiana, seven plus two, for a total of nine. Nine registered.

Maine, eight plus one, for a total of nine. Nine registered.

Maryland, 36 plus seven, for a total of 43. 43 registered.

Massachusetts, 14 plus four, for a total of 18. 18 registered.

Mexico, three plus one, for a total of four. Four registered.

Michigan, 55 plus four, for a total of 59. 59 registered.

Minnesota, 25 plus three, for a total of 28. 28 registered.

Mississippi, four plus two, for a total of six registered.

Missouri, 10 plus one, for a total of 11. 11 registered.

Montana, five plus one, for a total of six. Six registered.

Nebraska, 17 plus two, for a total of 19. 19 registered.

Nevada, four plus one, for a total of five. Five registered.

New Hampshire, 15 plus one, for a total of 16. 16 registered.

New Jersey, 22 plus one, for a total of 23. 23 registered.

New Mexico, six plus one, for a total of seven. Seven registered.

New York, 63 plus four, for a total of 67.

North Carolina, eight plus one, for a total of nine. Nine registered.

North Dakota, five plus one, for a total of six. Six registered.

Ohio, 65 plus three, for a total of 68.

Oklahoma, six plus two, for a total of eight. Eight registered.

Oregon, six plus one, for a total of seven. Seven registered.

Pennsylvania, 126 plus one, for a total of 127. 127 registered.

Philippines, three plus one, for a total of four. Not registered.

Puerto Rico, three plus one, for a total of four. Four registered.

Rhode Island, four plus one, for a total of five. Five registered.

South Carolina, six plus one, for a total of seven. Seven registered.

South Dakota, six plus one, for a total

of seven. Seven registered.

Tennessee, seven plus one, for a total of eight. Eight registered.

Texas, 14 plus four, for a total of 18. 18 registered.

Utah, four plus one, for a total of five. Five registered.

Vermont, 11 plus one, for a total of 12. 12 registered.

Virginia, 12 plus two, for a total of 14. 14 registered.

West Virginia, eight plus one, for a total of nine. Nine registered.

Wisconsin, 12 plus two, for a total of 14. 14 registered.

And Wyoming, five plus one, for a total of six. Six registered.

That completes my report for the preliminary credentials report. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Harold, I'd like to make you a Distinguished Guest of the 51st National Convention.

At this time, I'd like to call on Bill Hill for the National Convention Finance Committee report. On deck is Membership Training and Development Committee Chairman Mike Monserud.

ORAL REPORT

National Convention Finance Commission
William "Bill" Hill (MD)

Commander, real quick, I'll do an update on our National Finance Commission prior to giving my report for convention.

Remember, as they say, I'm just a beautiful face up here for Finance. I want to give credit to the members who actually do all the hard work and are participating in it.

Steve Honigfort from Ohio, Bob Thompson from South Carolina, Gary Nelson from New Jersey and Greg Price from Michigan. Jeff Van Horn from Illinois. And our newbie, who we elected as scribe for the meeting yesterday, Jeremy Revell from Vermont.

Also want to thank our NEC liaisons who participated this year for the first time. It was key having them part of that. The one who attended

yesterday, was actually the lead for the NEC liaisons, was Bill Kelly from Florida. Thank you very much.

Administrative updates for the year. Last year, we've had one last NFC meeting in July to reconcile 2023 budget, which we're on track. We see no material differences or changes to the budget.

Now on to our meeting for yesterday. Our convention meeting.

We had 11 convention members in attendance, two not in attendance. We had 15 guests. The meeting opened at 11:30 a.m. We reviewed resolutions, and I'm only going to read the resolution numbers. The details of the voting have been submitted to the National Adjutant for records so I'll just give you highlights of the actual resolution and what the status of it.

SAL Resolution No. 1 was approved.

SAL Resolution No. 2 was approved. Both of those approved had financial implications so we just verified and approved those.

Resolutions 4, 5 and 6 had no financial actions.

Resolution 7 was approved.

Resolutions 8, 9, 10 were mostly just administrative, no financial actions on that.

We had some general discussions around finances and how much different things are. Information was provided on how we do things nationally. There was no major updates.

At this time, gentlemen, all the resolutions that had any type of financial activity have been reviewed and approved. None of them were rejected or denied.

The meeting was motioned to adjourn at 11:55. It was so passed. There were no additional actions at that time.

Mr. Commander, that is my report.

As a delegate to this 51st Annual Convention, I make a motion to accept the Finance report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's been a motion to accept the Finance report. Is there a

second?

ROBERT "BOB" MANZO (MD): Bob Manzo,
Detachment of Maryland, I second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Sorry, same
Detachment. Sorry.

Mark NATALE (NJ): Mark Natale,
Detachment of New Jersey, second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Motion made
and seconded. Any discussion?

Hearing none, all those in favor, say
aye. All opposed, say nay. Motion carries.

Chairman Hill, I would like to make you a
Distinguished Guest of the 51st National
Convention.

I'll call on National Member Training &
Development Mike Monserud for the Detachment
Commander's School report and certificates.

Today, to kind of keep this going, anyone
who receives an award or certificate, we're going
to take pictures at recess. I'll stay as long as
needed.

Anyone else, chairmen, who wants a

picture, we'll meet over here when we recess and we'll take what it takes to get the pictures done. That way we don't have dead space and time.

ORAL REPORT

MEMBER TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Michael D. Monserud (IA), Chairman

Good morning. Yesterday we held the Commanders Training Class in here, in this room. We had 33 participants. I want to thank the members of my committee: Vice Chairman Mike Cotten; Mike Obremski from Maryland; Frank Meraz from California; Dan Sauerwein from North Dakota; Scott Baker from Pennsylvania; and my consultant, Shawn Davis from Minnesota.

At this time, if you were in the Commanders class, I'll have you come up on stage and we'll give you your certificate in one minute.

My report for MTD, before we do that, is: In the fall, we're going to do NEC training/NEC orientation for all the new NECmen. Upon that completion, we're going to be pushing the applications for SAL University out to the Detachments, to the adjutants to get the applicants

started.

There's been some confusion on who can apply for the SAL University. If you are a Detachment commander or below, ever held a position of Detachment commander or below, you are eligible to apply for the SAL University. It does not have anything to do with if you held a national appointment. That has no criteria for the matter. The Detachment commander or below.

So, if you were on Internal Affairs or Membership, it doesn't matter. You can still apply for the position. We're going based off what your Detachment elected you as.

We're going to hold the class size at 30, and as of now it's scheduled to go in the spring for two and a half days. It's going to replace NMI. So, it's going to be a lot of some of the NMI training and some new training and things to help the Squadrons get up and running and basically develop our future leaders is what we're looking for.

At this time, if there's no other

questions for MT&D, none, I'm going to present the awards. We will line up in Detachment, alphabetical order by Detachment. The first one is. Harry Bedgood, Detachment of Alabama.

Second is Chris Bedel (AK).

Chris Balsley from the Detachment of Arizona. Sean Brandon, Detachment of California.

Chris Reachard, Detachment of Delaware.

Eric Kinsey, Detachment of Georgia.

Michael Vozar, Detachment of Illinois.

Paul Rush, Detachment of Indiana.

Bill Doyle, Detachment of Kentucky.

Steve Curry, Detachment of Kentucky.

Daniel Maurin, Detachment of Louisiana.

Joseph Lohman, Detachment of Maryland.

James Blake, Detachment of Massachusetts.

John Weiss, Detachment of Minnesota.

Tim Cudd, Detachment of Missouri.

Eldon Kramer, Detachment of Nebraska.

Shawn Horton, Detachment of Nevada.

Scott Douglass, Detachment of New Hampshire.

Keith Barnes, Detachment of New Jersey.

Robert Fresquez, Detachment of New Mexico.

Peter DeAngelis Jr., Detachment of New York.

William Slater Jr., Detachment of North Carolina.

David Dilts, Detachment of Ohio.

Steven Cox, Detachment of Pennsylvania.

Michael Graichen, Detachment of Rhode Island.

Richard Hall, Detachment of South Carolina.

Shane Lamer, Detachment of South Dakota.

Pat Unger, Detachment of Tennessee.

Royace Fowler, Detachment of Texas.

Brian Mason Jr., Detachment of Vermont.

Kevin Chaplin, Detachment of Virginia.

Herbert Churchman, Detachment of West Virginia.

And Allen Watry, Detachment of Wisconsin.

I want to thank all the commanders that attended the class yesterday, and I hope you guys got what you needed out of it. Again, if you ever need training, please contact the MT&D department.

Like I said before, it doesn't do us any good just sitting on our computers. We'll distribute what you need; and if we don't have it, we'll get it developed.

I would like to thank Past National Commanders Joe Gladden and Mike Deacon for teaching the class yesterday. Thank you.

... Applause.

As a duly elected delegate to this Convention, I make a motion to accept my report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's been a motion to accept the report. Is there a second?

CHRIS COOK (OK): Commander, Chris Cook, delegate of Oklahoma, seconds that motion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's been a motion made and seconded. Is there any discussion?

All those in favor, say aye. All those opposed, say nay. Motion carries.

Since our National Vice Commander of the East, Ernie Laberge is not here with us, he did submit his report, and at this time I'll call on National Vice Commander Mike Kirschner to read his report.

ORAL REPORT

NVC Ernest Laberge (MA)

(Read by NVC Michael L. "Mike" Kirschner (CO))

On behalf of National Vice Commander Ernie Laberge, who is home for personal reasons:

Hello, Distinguished Guests, American Legion Family, members and friends, The Eastern Region did very well this year.

There was an opportunity to visit several of the Eastern Region Detachments, bringing greetings from our National Commander, Mr. Chris Carlton, talking about supporting both the Veterans and Children's Foundation and the "Be the One" program, as well as all of the other important American Legion and Sons Programs.

Here are some of the highlights from this year's visits, and please note that Detachment visits are being listed in the order in which they were visited.

Massachusetts: This visit started with the American Legion Department Commander's Testimonial Dinner.

It was a pleasure to be a guest and

support the Department Commander. The Detachment of Massachusetts continues to excel with the "Partnership for Kids Program."

Each year, the Detachment raises money for the three Massachusetts Childrens Hospitals, with their biggest fundraiser being the annual bowling tournament.

They also continue to have dedicated support of the Flying Flags for Heroes program. And lastly, they continue repairing, cleaning, and remounting our veterans' graves.

Special thanks to Past Detachment Commander Gene Theroux for his continued efforts with this project.

New York has strong relations with their veterans and communities. During this visit we toured the Albany Fisher House where the Detachment made their annual donation.

The employees of Fisher House expressed their appreciation to the Detachment and stated that they hope the relation between the two organizations lasts a very long time.

The Detachments Winter Conference included formal meetings and a variety of training classes; all of the Detachment leadership did an outstanding job putting together a very well-run event. Many thanks to everyone for an informative and fun weekend.

The Eastern Region "Unofficial" Gathering was held in Springfield MA. The Gathering hosted 100 guests from the complete American Legion Family from several Eastern Region states.

On Saturday, training was held which included a session by PNC Cliff Smith with a history of SAL National Awards. Then employees from the Central and Western Mass VA covered two topics, the first was Veteran Suicide Prevention which goes along with the "Be the One" program. This training covered signs of suicide and dispelled myths about talking with people on this topic.

The second was a discussion on volunteers returning to full service now that covid restrictions have ended. This training was well received by all.

Lastly was the Testimonial Dinner. Many thanks go out to all who gave gifts and support, and special thanks to the Gathering Committee members for everything you did to make the event run so smoothly.

Again, many thanks to them and to everyone from the "Beast from The East" who attended.

Delaware has many active Post families. During this visit we were able to visit ten. Not to mention visits to The Mobility Command Air Base and museum and Fort Miles.

Something different happened on this visit. It was being allowed to fire one of the sixteen-inch guns at Fort Miles. Special thanks to our guide, a former CIA employee, for getting us into that area.

Another interesting visit was to Georgetown EMS - American Legion Post 8. Not only do they support the Pillars of the American Legion, they supply first responder service to our veterans and the community when an emergency occurs.

Please note that our veterans, should the need arise, receive this service free of charge.

One of the most memorable parts of this visitation was having the privilege, honor, and pleasure of meeting W. "Joe" Marm. Joe is a Medal of Honor recipient and one of the most soft-spoken men you could ever meet.

It was a great pleasure to have time with him. Joe, thank you for going above and beyond in your service to our country.

Lastly, when leaving while at the train station, Detachment Historian Jonathan Miller and I talked with an Amtrak police officer and found he was eligible to be a member of the American Legion. We explained the benefits to him and handed him a membership application. Let's hope he decides to join this great organization. And Jon I look forward to any updates about this you might have.

New Hampshire: Convention business began with a joint meeting of the American Legion Family and a memorial to past family members, after which the groups adjourned to their perspective locations

to get to work.

The Sons meetings allowed everyone to go over the details of some of the important materials that need to be completed such as the Consolidated Squadron Reports and the Squadron Data Reports.

There was still some confusion about the SDRs, and they were discussed and corrected. The meeting continued with distribution of awards and the election of new officers.

Membership ribbons for Squadrons reaching 100 percent were also awarded.

The Detachment continues to do outstanding work for both area and American Legion Charities.

Congratulations for everything that you achieved this year and to your new slate of officers who will no doubt continue this legacy.

Lastly, it was an honor to be included in a service and wreath laying for Memorial Day in downtown Lincoln.

Thanks again to Past Commander John Hook and the entire American Legion Family of Hew

Hampshire.

New Jersey: The Detachment continues to support the American Legion Family charities, your donations to charities such as COTA and CWF are to be commended. Also, during this visit, it was an honor to attend a ceremony at the Wildwood Wall Memorial.

This is a scaled-down version of the Wall Memorial located in Washington, D.C. We also attended an American Legion Department and Detachment of New Jersey tradition called the "Wrecking".

Both Department and Detachment outgoing commanders are placed in costume and are given tasks to do in public. This event was a lot of fun for everyone and showed the great sportsmanship of both the outgoing and incoming leadership teams.

Many thanks to NEC Bob Phillips and the Detachment team for a great visit and outstanding weekend.

Maryland: Maryland continues to set the standard for fundraising. It was amazing to hear

the numbers that the Detachment reaches in support of both local and American Legion Charities.

At the Detachment convention, it was evident just how important family is to this Detachment. One example is the Hill family, as all of Past National Vice Commander Bill Hill's family assisted him with the running and setup of their convention.

And special thanks to Past Detachment Commander Larry Ford for making our visit a very "precious" memory. We look forward to visiting with you again in the future.

Pennsylvania was a visit rich in history as we were taken on a visit to Gettysburg. New Detachment Commander Steve Cox gave us a guided tour of the battlefields and monuments. Also, a special thank you to National Adjutant Tony Wright for setting up a surprise special wreath laying ceremony at one of the Massachusetts battlefield memorials.

The Convention was very well run and informative. Time also allowed us to visit several

area Posts giving us the ability to meet and make more new friends and learn about all of the events they were doing to help our veterans, and their families.

To Past Detachment Commander Tom Walsh and your wife Rose: Thank you for making our stay so informative and enjoyable and we look forward to seeing your Detachment's continued success.

To the states I was not able to visit: Having reviewed all that you have accomplished this past year shows that each of your Detachments continues to excel as supporters of the American Legion, our veterans, and their families.

All of you should be proud of your continued success. Please continue to let everyone that you come in contact with know that you are truly "Proud Possessors of a Priceless Heritage."

Good luck with all of your future endeavors.

In closing: Please continue with everything that all of you are doing. All of you are truly making a difference in the lives of our

veterans, their families, and our communities.

Thank you to everyone who supported me and gave me guidance.

Thanks to past Massachusetts Department Commander Sally Nay and Sergeant-At-Arms Bob Desrosiers, our National SAL Commander Chris, our Membership Chair Thom Skelley, SAL Liaison Kevin Mook, Mr. Brian Compton, and leading candidate John Cook.

Also, it has been an honor to serve with my fellow Vice Commanders Jack, Dave, Mike, and Ron.

Thank you all for all that you have done and all that you continue to do for the SAL and our veterans.

And I would be remiss without thanking the American Legion Family of Massachusetts for their support.

And a very special thanks to my wife Joanne, who stood by my side and traveled with me through my term as your National Vice Commander.

To everyone, it was both an honor and

pleasure serving for you this past year. Again,
many thanks to everyone. God bless all of you and
God bless the United States.

Ernest E. Laberge.

That concludes Vice Commander East Ernie
Laberge's report.

... *Applause.*

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: As a duly elected
delegate to this National Convention, it is my
honor to make a motion to accept my friend, my
partner, Ernie Laberge's, final report.

Do I have a second.

ROBERT "BOB" MANZO (MD): Bob Manzo,
Detachment of Maryland, NEC, I second.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's a
motion on the floor to accept the National Vice
Commander from the East Ernie Laberge's report.
It's been seconded.

Are there any discussions? Hearing none,
all those in favor, say aye. All those opposed,
say nay.

... *Gavel.*

The eyes have it. I'm glad there was no discussion. He's not here to answer.

At this time, I'd like to make him an honorary Distinguished Guest of our 51st National Convention.

At this time, I would like to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please bring forth Past National Commander Jake Comer of The American Legion.

... *Applause.*

PRESENTATION

Past National Commander John P. "Jake" Comer, (MA)

Good morning, all.

Well, here we are again. 36 years later. I pride myself that I'm the only National Commander who has appeared here every year since I was elected. And why not? In fact, this year I think we have a much larger crowd than normal. That was nice.

But anyway, Commander Chris, Adjutant Tony, all Distinguished Guests, my National Vice

Commander Ernie and all of the Sons of the American Legion, ladies and gentlemen. It's a pleasure, as usual, to come here and address the Sons.

You're part of our tremendous family organization. You know, we met yesterday with a couple of the leading candidates for National Commander in my suite, and there were others saying, "It's never happened before, why are you doing this?"

Well, I wanted to say hello and get to know them. I really didn't know them too well. Because this year you've had a Commander in Chris that I wish I had done the same.

He has turned out to be one of the most outstanding commanders in my lifetime. Everywhere I've gone, he's been there, and he's done the job so very well. Excellent.

... Applause.

Just a great guy.

... Applause.

So, I was there when he threw out the first pitch in Shelby, North Carolina, The American

Legion baseball.

I don't know if any of you-- many of you have never been there, I'm sure, but if you ever get the chance, you get baseball in your heart, get to Shelby, North Carolina, to see how that World Series operates.

This year, Texas became the national champions, winning 1-0 on an error. But they were great, a great team.

You have your program that you've gone ahead and raised so much money this year again on child welfare, the Child Welfare Foundation. Those of you that come here every year for the last 35 years, I'm sorry, you've got to listen to me again.

... *Laughter.*

But for the new Sons, I want to tell you what a great thing you do in raising the money going over \$5 million for Child Welfare Foundation over the years.

Our family theme that year, when I was Commander, was child welfare, and I wanted to raise

a million dollars. Well, you didn't raise the million, we raised \$1,168,000, that's what you did.

... *Applause.*

And the Auxiliary and the Legion, they weren't there where naturally as they should, they had their own charities as they should do. But the Sons kept it up. They've done a great job and that's where you've gone over the 5 million.

So, keep up the very good work. It's a program that I truly believe in. Takes care of so many children's organizations, and you can feel proud of yourself that you've done well.

So, ladies and gentlemen, all I can say is, again, coming here is on my agenda every year. You're an outstanding organization and part of The American Legion Family. Because when we hear, we forget. And when we see, we remember. It's when we do, we understand. God bless you all.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Commander, thank you for the kind words, and at this time I would like to make you a Distinguished Guest of our

51st National Convention.

PNC JOHN P. "JAKE" COMER (MA): You gotta put that on.

... *Laughter.*

... *Applause.*

PNC JOHN P. "JAKE" COMER (MA): I say you gotta put it on because you're the president. This is the Medal of Honor.

... *Laughter.*

Sons of the American Legion Medal of Honor. Thank you.

... *Applause.*

... *Gavel.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: At this time I call on Thom Skelley for the National Convention Membership Committee report and awards.

On deck: The National Convention Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee report.

ORAL REPORT

National Convention Membership Committee
Thomas Skelley (TX), Chairman

Good morning, comrades, brothers, my family. What a year we have had. Put out a

challenge at the beginning of the year to arrive at 105. We didn't quite make that.

We did, however, hit an all-time high for membership in the Sons of the American Legion. Give yourselves a hand for that. 376,154 members.

... *Applause.*

We took a 21,000-member hit during COVID. Not only have we made up those numbers, we've succeeded in exceeding those numbers. We have 19 Detachments. Let me say that again. 19 Detachments that are over 105 percent this year.

... *Applause.*

Absolutely. We have 39 Detachments that surpassed their 100 percent. Fantastic job.

... *Applause.*

Did a lot of work this year. A humble group, but I do want to thank Casey Hanson, Daryl VerStreate, the regional chairs, Robert Bristo and Terry Harris. Linwood Moore, John Cook and Jim Fischer, as well as our National Vice Commanders.

They didn't make it easy, but they made

it fun, and that's what we did. We had a lot of fun and we set a lot of records.

Membership did meet yesterday. We had a resolution to present to the Convention. No:

SAL Resolution 1 - National Convention, 2023.

Title: Amend the 105 percent of membership criteria and presentation details for the Triple Nickel Award.

WHEREAS, the Sons of The American Legion is a program of The American Legion comprised of male descendants of Veterans;

And WHEREAS, membership is the lifeblood of the organization;

And WHEREAS, various Detachments work extremely hard in attaining membership goals through the use of Membership Committees;

And WHEREAS, the Detachment should be recognized for their untiring efforts;

And WHEREAS, new Charters, membership renewals, and percentage targets are in the forefront of the membership success;

And WHEREAS, the National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion adopted Resolution NEC 1-F09 during its session on October 10-11, 2009 to create the Triple Nickel Membership Incentive Award;

And WHEREAS, there is some ambiguity in the original resolution with regard to the determination of the 105 percent membership achievement and the presentation of the award; now, therefore,

Be it RESOLVED, by the Sons of The American Legion in Annual Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina on August 25-27, 2023, that the Sons of The American Legion hereby amends the criteria for qualifying for the Triple Nickel Membership Incentive Award to:

Read as follows: Five new charters with membership transmitted. 105 percent membership over the previous year as determined by the December 31st Final National Membership Report for the previous membership year, e.g., for the 2023 Triple Nickel Award, the 105 percent goal will be

based on the December 31, 2022 Final National Membership Report. 85 percent renewal rate, all by July 1st;

And be it further RESOLVED, that any Detachment that meets the above criteria will be awarded an Emblem Sales Gift Certificate in the amount of \$555.00 to be used at the discretion of the Detachment;

And be it further RESOLVED, that this award will begin with the 2024 membership year and shall be presented annually at each National Convention;

And be it finally RESOLVED, that Sons of The American Legion Resolution NEC 1-F09 is hereby rescinded.

Membership did pass this. It was brought before the NEC, to the body to vote, to the Convention to vote.

As a delegate, I'd like to make a motion to adopt the new resolution. So, I make a motion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's been a motion to accept the resolution. Is there a

second?

JUAN CRUZ-RODRIGUEZ (PR): Juan Cruz,
NEC, Detachment of Puerto Rico, second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's been
a motion and a second.

Any discussion?

Hearing none, all those in favor of
adopting SAL Resolution 1 - National Convention
2023, signify by saying aye. All opposed by saying
nay.

The ayes have it. The motion carries.

... *Gavel.*

THOMAS SKELLEY (TX): Hard work and
effort. This is where the hard work and effort
pays off. I'd like to start presenting the
membership awards.

National Regional Membership Award -
first Detachment to reach quota in each region with
a minimum of 200 members as of December 31st of the
previous year.

Midwest, South Dakota.

East, West Virginia.

West, Oregon.

South, Georgia.

Central, Michigan.

Guys, just a little note here, the Midwest hit that quota on February 9th. What a tremendous achievement. Lawrence Hartline Award is presented to the Detachment chartering the most new Squadrons from July 1st to June 30th. This year that award goes to Detachment of Wisconsin who chartered 10 new Squadrons.

... Applause.

Largest Squadron Award - Squadron with the most paid members for the prior year as of December 31st of that year. Here's a shocker, guys, I'm glad everyone's sitting down. With 1,749 members, Squadron No. 291 - Newport Harbor, Newport Beach, California.

... Applause.

Highest Renewal Percentage Award by Detachment with a minimum of 200 members as of December 31st from the previous year, from the central, Detachment of Michigan, 91.62 percent.

2. Midwest, Nebraska, 90.97 percent.

3. East, Pennsylvania, 90.56 percent.

... *Applause.*

4. South, Detachment of Georgia, 88.70
percent.

... *Applause.*

And finally, from the West, California,
with a renewal percentage of 83.30 percent.

... *Applause.*

These are the Detachments that have
90 percent or higher renewal. Why is this
important? We can recruit. We have seen we can
recruit. We know we can.

It's the retention. It's keeping those
members. Finding a place for them in our
Squadrons, in our Posts. Finding a program for
them to fit in on. That's what keeps this
organization alive.

Detachment of France, 94.23 percent.

Hawaii, 100.00 percent renewal.

... *Applause.*

Detachment of Michigan, 91.62.

Philippines, 100 percent renewal.

Detachment of Puerto Rico, 95.08 percent.

South Dakota, 90.28 percent.

Nebraska, 90.97 percent.

Ohio, 91.11 percent

... *Applause.*

And Pennsylvania, with a renewal
percentage of 90.56.

... *Applause.*

Did I miss South Dakota? My apologies,
South Dakota, 95.28 percent. My apologies. Arthur
D. Houghton Trophy - Detachment with the greatest
membership increase as a percentage compared to the
previous year.

We have five different categories. Just
starting from the lowest up.

Category 1, South Dakota, 117.107 percent
increase. He's getting a workout today, ain't he,
folks?

Category 2, West Virginia.

Category 3, Georgia. I think we called
them before once or twice.

Category 4, Arizona.

Category 5, Michigan.

... *Applause.*

I'm going to give these guys a little time to catch their breath as they're walking back and forth across the stage.

Guys, we had 32 Blue Brigade winners this year.

In order to receive the Blue Brigade you've got to recruit 30 new members, fill out a form, send it in. That simple. Brand-new jackets ordered for this year.

Something changed a little bit. Instead of doing them on stage, the jackets will be mailed to the Department headquarters. So again, will be mailed to respective Department headquarters. I will, however, recognize those individuals today in alphabetical order by state.

From Alaska, Jimmy Griffith, his first, 40 members.

From Arizona, Dan Ashley. Michael Bryant, Andre Koster and James Matlock.

From California, John DiRienzo. Florida, Marshall Badillo Sr., Gary Blanchard, Gary Compton, John Cupp, Robert Daley, William Grieco, Michael Haygood, John Holbert, Joe Leckey, Ed Lewis, Steve Lucas, Ray Perez, Terry Skarda, Barry Steagall and Robin Summers.

Florida, you guys were busy this year. Nice job.

From Michigan, Robert Bunton and John Pickard.

From Minnesota, David Arend Jr.

New Hampshire, Scott Douglass.

Oregon, Ward Allen.

Pennsylvania, Ricky Cramer, Patrick Driscoll II, Rushel Tony Harris and Lester Waters.

Finally, from the, Detachment of Wisconsin, Michael Hellquist and Marvin Northway.

Guys, over a thousand members recruited by what's on the list there. Outstanding job.

... Applause.

Recruiter of the Year Award

Next on the program is a special award.

It's the Recruiter of the Year Award. Of these Blue Brigade nominees, somebody recruited the most. Actually, somebody did recruit the most but did not actually put in for the Recruiter of the Year Award.

But we did have one gentleman that recruited 61 members, and I'm proud to present this year's Recruiter of the Year Award to Dan Ashley, Detachment of Arizona.

... Applause.

For working so hard I'd like to make you a Distinguished Guest of our 51st National Convention.

... Applause.

Detachment Recruitment Awards. They will be handed out to the commanders and to the Detachments, but we do want to recognize them up on stage. These are the most new members recruited by size category as of the 105 percent target date.

Winners this year, guys, astonishingly enough are the exact same winners we had last year. So, these Detachments know how to recruit.

Cat. I -- Mississippi. We do have the awards on stage. My apologies.

Cat. II -- Washington.

Cat. III -- Texas.

Cat. IV -- California.

Cat. V -- Pennsylvania, 6,453 new members recruited this year.

... *Applause.*

Squadron Commander of the Year was the award we were asked last year by Commander Fox to create. We had the first winner last year, and I do believe he's in attendance, probably going to be taking some pictures down here.

But we had three nominees this year. Each of the nominees received a certificate, along with the winner being awarded an official Sons cover saying that he is the Commander of the Year. In alphabetical order our nominees were from Maryland, John A. Jones, who I don't believe is here but we have a representative. Mike Deutser from Oklahoma.

And Scott Bergquam from Oregon. I'm

sorry, these weren't in alphabetical order, as you can tell.

And Tom Aylward from South Dakota.

And the winner, from Squadron 104, Oregon, Scott Bergquam, your Squadron Commander of the year.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I'd like to make him a Distinguished Guest of our 51st National Convention.

... *Applause.*

THOMAS SKELLEY (TX): We're down to the end. Thanks, right, I know I've been up here a while.

Triple Nickel Award

Probably the most prestigious award that a Detachment can achieve is the Triple Nickel Award. You heard about the resolution earlier. It take five new chartered Squadrons, 105 percent of the previous year's membership, and at least an 85 percent renewal, all done by July 1.

This year we had four Triple Nickel

recipients.

I'm proud to present, with five new Squadrons, 90 percent of membership and 116 percent of goal, Detachment of South Dakota.

... Applause.

With 107 percent of goal, five new Squadrons and an 88 percent renewal rate, Detachment of Georgia.

... Applause.

With 106 percent of goal, five new Squadrons and a 91 percent renewal rate, Detachment of Michigan.

... Applause.

I announced a few minutes ago that we had four. Unfortunately, one of the Detachments that earned this award is under suspension. I was asked not to read them at this time. So that concludes the report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I had them stay up on stage because, gentlemen, the one thing that's not easy is membership. I think we all can agree that you may pay your dues but how do you get

that next guy to pay your dues?

And in order to receive a Triple Nickel the amount of work you need to put into it being over 85 percent, reaching 85 percent in retention, being 105 percent overall and then starting five new Squadrons, that is a lot. So, at this time I'd like to make all of you Distinguished Guests to the 51st National Convention.

... Applause.

I was in Michigan, they were at 102 percent at their convention. They ended up being 107 percent.

... Applause.

THOMAS SKELLEY (TX): As a Delegate to this 51st National Convention, I make a motion to accept the Membership report.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's been a motion on the floor to accept the membership report. Is there a second.

JUAN CRUZ-RODRIGUEZ (PR): Juan Cruz, NEC, Detachment of Puerto Rico, second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's been a motion and a second. Is there any discussion?

Hearing none --

MARC CHANEY (OR): Commander, back in the back of room.

Marc Chaney, NEC from Oregon, didn't we have a resolution with his report? Are we accepting this with or without the resolution?

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: The resolution that was presented earlier was voted on and passed.

THOMAS SKELLEY (TX): So, folks, outside the report, we do have two special presentations to make today. We have a --

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: No, we haven't voted on it. There's a motion on the floor.

THOMAS SKELLEY (TX): I'm sorry.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I'm sorry, minus the resolution, I'm being told. I thought it was passed. Minus the resolution.

I thought it was -- is there any more

discussion? They're trying to confuse me.

Hearing none, all those in favor say aye.
All those opposed say nay. Ayes have it.

... *Gavel.*

Motion carries.

THOMAS SKELLEY (TX): Nothing ever goes perfect, does it? Just how we planned it, though.

Could we have a representative from the Detachment of Maine up to the stage, please? While we're waiting on that, guys, we did this last year as an official competition, the Chairman's Cup as a challenge between the Vice Commanders.

Didn't necessarily do it this year in the same way, but they all succeeded tremendously. Every region was over 100 percent. But there was cream that rose to the top. 105 percent of goal, each Detachment in their region at 100 percent.

So, it is my pleasure to present this unofficial Chairman's Cup to National Vice Commander of the West, Jack Youngs, and to Regional Membership Chair Jim Fischer.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Jim, Jim Fischer, is he here? If he is, would he come up? I would like to make Jim a Distinguished Guest at our 51st National Convention for working so hard. That was an awesome thing you guys did this year for your division -- region.

... *Applause.*

THOMAS SKELLEY (TX): And finally, a special award that we had done this year. We have a Squadron, as we looked back through the record books, that was chartered August 16th, I believe, 1933. They're celebrating their 90th anniversary of continued service to the Sons of the American Legion.

Thomas W. Cole Squadron 0019, from Sanford, Maine, we have this award to them.

As a representative, Don Allisot from Maine, come out and accept this, please. 90 years continuous service.

... *Applause.*

Come on!

... *Applause.*

And the plaque: In special recognition to Thomas W. Cole Squadron 0019, Sanford, Maine, is hereby officially recognized as the oldest active chartered Squadron celebrating 90 years of service to the Sons of the American Legion, chartered on August 18th, 1933.

Presented at this 51st National Convention of the Sons of the American Legion in Charlotte, North Carolina, this 26th day of August 2023. Attested by Commander Christopher Carlton and National Adjutant Anthony Wright.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Please, I'd like to make your Squadron a Distinguished Guest of our 51st National Convention.

DONALD ALLISOT (ME): Thank you, Commander. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

I am representing Squadron 19, Sanford, Maine. I had it all set up for a representative from the Squadron to come today, but last Saturday I found out that Paul LaRue's daughter, child, was diagnosed with leukemia. So, they had to stay home

to take care of the 6-year-old granddaughter.

So, your prayers would be greatly appreciated. Hope for a speedy recovery. Thank you.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Chairman Skelley, I would like to make you a Distinguished Guest of this 51st National Convention. Thank you for all your hard work.

... *Applause.*

At this time, I will call on National Vice Commander of the Central region, Dave Mennel for his year-end report.

NVC - Central's Final Report
David Mennel (MI), NVC - Central

Good morning to my extended family. No, I don't have any extra money to hand out. I'm going to start by thanking my bride of 14 years, Anita, and she has been my rock and my support for all my endeavors that I've been going on since we've been together.

This has been an unforgettable year.

There has been a lot of information passed on during our conference calls. During our regional calls, each Detachment's representative was able to talk about what was going on within their Detachments and highlight the special programs that is working for all of them.

My visitation started in January. My first visit was to Green Bay, Wisconsin. You would think that at that time of the year, it would be freezing. Well, guess what? It was a balmy 45 to 55 degrees.

They have a lot of their programs that are working well for them, especially their ALF, American Legion Family, Dog Program, which is to aid with the comfort of the children of deployed parents.

Their Detachment also has a program called Operation Homeless Vets. Imagine in February sleeping in tents and cardboard boxes. This is one of their ways they bring awareness about our homeless Vets. They also say freezin' for a reason.

The Department's Banquet on Saturday evening had a Luau theme. Thanks to the Auxiliary women, Commander Dave, NEC Chris, Vice Commander Allen, and myself, they presented us with grass skirts. Thank goodness we didn't have to show our legs.

At the Auxiliary's DEC the following morning, Saturday morning, I had the honor to perform the POW/MIA ceremony with Commander Dave Fuller.

The next weekend, the second visit, was to Mobile, Alabama. Expecting warm weather, Friday was nice, but then the cold, damp weather moved in. Par for the course for me. Having a visitation outside of the Region was a nice change.

NEC Thomas Glander and Alternate NEC Blair Miles took great care to make sure that my time in Mobile would be Memorable. One thing that I did not know is that the birthplace of the Mardi Gras started in Mobile. That's a great information.

Saturday evening was the Department

Banquet with the Mardi Gras theme. Had seafood gumbo for the first time, wasn't bad. I did receive numerous sets of beads. No, thank God, the banquet was G-rated, and I did not have to take my shirt off.

Their Squadrons within the Detachment are doing great work. They are working the Legion programs with great results. Thank you to Commander George Krigbaum for the fabulous hospitality.

In February we traveled to Washington, D.C., for The American Legion Conference and the SAL wreath laying on February 26th. It is always a somber experience at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Also attended a few of the legislative meetings that the American Legion was holding.

March 24th was Commander Chris Carlton's Homecoming in Indianapolis. We enjoyed the trip to the Speedway Museum and tour of the track. It was wonderful. In fact, a few people took the pleasure of kissing the bricks. There was a wonderful turnout.

The end of March I traveled to Tinley Park, Illinois, for the Detachment's Spring DEC meeting and Commander Kevin O'Connell's homecoming. NEC Butch Ray kept me aware of everything that their Detachment is doing for the Veterans and the Children, great members doing great work within their Squadrons and Detachment.

One thing that I did find out is that with the SAL and Auxiliary members at the Detachment is that you never leave your phone sitting around because, when you come back, you're going to find out that you may have 50 to 100 extra photos on your phone.

Thank you to Commander Kevin and PNC Tommy Cisna and NEC Butch Ray for the wonderful hospitality that you showed me.

April 21st I attended the Central Region Extravaganza in Columbus, Ohio. They had presenters there with exceptional information that we all took back to our Detachments and to our Squadrons to be passed out.

July 23rd I traveled to Minnesota, where

NEC Shawn Davis and National Membership Chairman Robert Bristo met me at the airport and took me to the Armed Forces Center. It's a wonderful facility within the airport for our military personnel and veterans to utilize while waiting for their flights on a layover.

Commander Tim Weaver and PNC Doug Bible welcomed me to their Detachment Convention. I enjoyed hearing from everyone in attendance about their accomplishments in their Squadrons and Districts and their donations to the many different programs.

Before their election of officers, they had auction of many donated items. I enjoyed carrying all of the items around as the auctions were going on so everybody could see what they're bidding on. After the fun of the auction, it was time for the elections. After the elections, it was my honor to do the installation.

I just want to thank everybody for their great, great hospitality.

Now, throughout the year, as my home

state Michigan, I've been able to attend all of the DEC meetings and the convention and hear of all the great work that the Squadrons, Districts, and everyone else within the Detachment. They're doing an awesome job. I am proud to be a member of Michigan.

... Applause.

I want to just congratulate them for their 107 percent coming into the Convention. Congratulations to Commander Victor Fisher -- I know he doesn't like to have his name mentioned -- and the Detachment of Michigan for reaching the Triple Nickel.

My final leg of this journey was to ride the Legacy Run of a little over 1,100 miles from Kokomo, Indiana; through Garden City, Michigan; Dayton, Ohio; West Virginia; Bristol, Tennessee; and ended up here. It was a wonderful ride. Great group of people, the Legion Riders. You ride for a cause. Thank you.

To finish congratulations and thank you to everyone. I reiterate that -- everyone -- for

all the work that you put forth for our organization and our programs.

Thank you for putting your trust in me as your National Vice Commander Central Region. Because of everything that you do, you prove that you are proud possessors of your priceless heritage.

As a delegate to this 51st National Convention, I make a motion to accept my report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's a motion to accept the National Vice Commander's report. Is there a second?

TIM WEAVER (MN): Mr. Commander, Tim Weaver, Detachment of Minnesota, seconds the motion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's been a motion and second. Is there any discussion?

Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by saying aye. All those opposed, say nay.

...Gavel.

Motion carries. Ayes have it.

At this time, I will yield the podium to

National Vice Commander Dave Mennel.

NVC DAVID MENNEL: At this time, I call Seth Rippe for the National Veterans Affairs Rehabilitation Committee report and awards.

PRESENTATION

NATIONAL Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Awards
Seth Rippe (NE), Chairman National Convention
VA&R Committee

Thank you, sir. National Commander, Past National Commanders, Legionnaires, and fellow Sons, thank you for being here. It's great to see all of you.

I'd like to start by recognizing the VA&R Commission for their work this year. Gabe Cinquegrana of New York, Eddy Seegers, Jr., from Texas, Buster Sutterlin from Ohio, Nick Arceo from Colorado. In addition to these members, I'd also like to recognize and thank our NEC liaisons, Mr. Ray, Mr. Lang, and Mr. Phillips. Thank you, gentlemen.

... Applause.

The VA&R Commission has been promoting our parent organization's Be the One campaign this

year. You heard about it yesterday. You heard Commander Troiola speak about it. You heard our VE&E chairman Mr. Coates speak about it. It truly has been a focus of this organization.

This program aims to destigmatize asking for mental health support, providing peer-to-peer support and resources, providing FDA approved therapeutics to those in need. Too often our veterans fear asking for help, or they believe they can handle the situation on their own. It's their family and those closest to them, you, who often recognize the signs.

We're encouraging our members to Be the One. Be the One to ask that veteran in your life how they're doing. When they need to talk, listen. When you see evidence that they're struggling, be there.

During our regional calls, we have been encouraging individuals to make sure their Squadron educates its members and the community, presents resources in their Post, especially the national crisis hot line, and share events and stories of

success. Together we can make a difference.

The VA&R Commission has also been urging Squadrons to make a donation to the Veterans & Children Foundation to support Commander Troiola's goal of \$2 million this year.

They feed and house children of military personnel and veterans facing urgent, unexpected hardships. It prevents eviction, keeps the power on, and fulfills basic needs to hold the family together through difficult times. The Foundation relies entirely on charitable donations and needs an estimated \$25 million to be sustainable through the future.

The VA&R Commission also recognized we had a barrier to serving our veterans. We are struggling to get certified reps in our VA facilities. The Sons applicants were being certified through The American Legion, a process that was prone to delays in the approval.

That delay then in turn caused frustration for our applicants, lack of volunteers in our VA homes, and had put the Sons dangerously

close to not meeting the minimum requirement to maintain participation in the VA/VS Executive Council.

A year ago in Milwaukee, I promised you that we would improve this process for our members, but more importantly, for our veterans. A couple of months later we drafted a resolution and put it before the Fall NEC to have the Sons of the American Legion reps and depts certified by the Sons National VA Representative.

Since the passing of that resolution and the dissemination of the process, we have seen a significant uptick in the number of certified individuals. Thank you.

But these goals don't even begin to tell the whole story of what you did for our veterans this year. You contributed nearly \$1.5 million in VA programs and approximately 900,000 hours of service to our veterans. Thank you.

... Applause.

Now, on to our awards. In 1977 at the 6th Annual Convention of the Sons of the American

Legion, that was the first time that the Kepler, O'Brian, and Webster awards were presented to the Squadron, District, and Detachment with the best VA&R reports.

I'd like to recognize Earl E. Mitchell Squadron No. 29 - Glendale, Arizona, as the winner of the Kirby Memorial Award for Best Squadron VA&R report.

... Applause.

This year, the Allen I. O'Brian for the Best District VA&R award goes to District 5, Ohio.

And finally, the Earl Webster Memorial Award for Best Detachment VA&R award is a tie this year between the Detachments of Ohio and Delaware.

... Applause.

While we're waiting for those award winners to make their way up here, I wanted to start by thanking the nearly 30 members that came to our VA&R meeting yesterday. We had a great meeting.

I'm always revitalized after talking to a group of individuals like this. You truly inspire

me. So, thank you guys for what you do for our veterans.

... Applause.

Is there a representative from Arizona who could come and accept this award?

In 1991 Charles B. Rigsby was elected National Commander at the 22nd National Convention of the Sons of the American Legion. The following year, the organization was saddened by the passing of our immediate Past National Commander Rigsby.

At the next spring committee, a resolution was presented and approved to rename the National Volunteer of the Year Award to the Charles B. Rigsby National Volunteer of the Year Award in his honor for his many years of service to our veterans programs at the VA medical centers. This was truly his passion.

Before I announce this year's winner, I would like all the previous Rigsby winners to please stand and be recognized.

... Applause.

Thank you, gentlemen, for your continued

service to our veterans.

Now, without further ado, this year's Rigsby Award winner volunteered more than 400 hours of service to our veterans. It is my sincere honor to announce to you that this year's recipient of the Charles B. Rigsby VA Volunteer of the Year Award goes to Kevin Robinson, Squadron 33, Detachment of Alaska. Kevin, come on up.

... Applause.

Kevin, I'll have to get your cover size from you. We do not have your new cover with us, but I know that you'll wear it with pride.

NVC DAVID MENNEL: It's my privilege to make you honorary member of our 51st National Convention.

SETH RIPPE (NE): Thanks again, Kevin, for all you do.

As a Delegate to this 51st National Convention, I make a motion to accept the National Convention VA&R Committee Report.

NVC DAVID MENNEL: We have a motion on the floor to accept his report. Do I hear a

second?

JEFF EVERMAN (IN): Mr. Chairman, Jeff Everman, Detachment of Indiana, seconds.

NVC DAVID MENNEL: We have a motion and duly seconded. Do we have any discussion? Hearing none, the motion is passed. Thank you, sir.

At this time, I relinquish the podium back to Commander Chris. I'm sorry.

All in favor of the motion, say aye. Opposed, say nay.

Now the motion passed.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: At this time, I'd like to make our Chairman Seth Rippe of Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation a Distinguished Guest to our 51st National Convention.

... *Applause.*

"What a true honor this is," said American Legion Auxiliary 2022-2023 National President Vickie Koutz during her installation speech at the 2022 National Convention in Milwaukee. Koutz is the third American Legion Auxiliary member to serve as National President for

the Department of Indiana.

The previous national president, Alice Galka, served during the 1988-1989 administrative year.

Humble, kind, and considerate, Koutz puts others ahead of herself, truly living the American Legion Auxiliary motto of "Service Not Self."

Koutz grew up in Boonville in southwestern Indiana, a town with a population of about 6,500, and has lived there her whole life. Koutz has been married to Jim for 50 years, and they have a son, Michael. He spoke on stage at convention about his mother during the installation of officers ceremony.

"The day is finally here, and we are so proud of her," he said. "I know my mom will accomplish a lot this next year. I encourage you to break out of your comfort zone."

For Koutz, the getting out of her comfort zone list includes trying new foods, public speaking, and traveling alone, even though she has gotten well at public speaking.

All which Michael is confident she will do successfully during her term as National President.

For the 2022-2023 American Legion Auxiliary year, Koutz's focus is to honor our veterans every day. Additionally, the National President's Project will be on National Veterans Creative Arts Festival companions. "Sometimes, companions can't afford to pay for a meal plan," she said. "This broke my heart. The one person who is a constant in their life couldn't stay with them during meals."

Her project on companions is triple tiered -- money for a meal plan, travel, and/or a separate hotel room if needed for non-family member companions.

Koutz is also working to raise awareness on our country's Prisoners of War and Missing in Action. Her husband, Jim, returned to Vietnam years later after serving overseas to help dig for remains, and since then, wears a POW bracelet all the time.

"Listening to him talking about his experiences made me realize how important it still is today."

With that, I would like to introduce our National President of the American Legion Auxiliary, Vickie Koutz.

... *Applause.*

ADDRESS

*Vickie Koutz (IN), National President
American Legion Auxiliary*

Thank you so much. Please be seated. Commander Chris, I would like to start by saying thank you to everyone in the audience for your kindness, your hospitality, and your generosity that you have shown me as I traveled across the nation this year.

I also want to congratulate all of you on the all-time high in membership. I just learned that this happened while we were at the World Series. How awesome is that!

... *Applause.*

And that doesn't happen very often. We can't say that in the Auxiliary. We were like

1,800 members more paid this year than last year, but when Chris told me that you all had made an all-time high, that is just awesome. So, congratulations.

Chris, you have made Indiana proud, and I am so glad to call you my friend. I wish you a great Convention and much success in the year to come. And as I said at the National Commander's Banquet, when he had his Homecoming, you are truly an adopted little brother. I adopted him as my little brother. And you will always be that.

From our years to come, thank you so much for giving me such a great SAL Commander because I think he's been phenomenal.

Thank you for all that you do to continue to support our veterans. Love you like a brother. Thank you.

... Applause.

If I may take a personal point of privilege here, I would also like to introduce you to our incoming National President for the year 2023-2024, Lisa Williamson.

... *Applause.*

LISA WILLIAMSON (AK): I was not prepared to speak today, but I appreciate everything. Thank you, Vickie, for your kindness, your friendship. Chris and Alaska, I love you.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Madam President, we have a Citation of Appreciation. Citation of Appreciation is hereby presented to Vickie Koutz, National President of the American Legion Auxiliary. In recognition of outstanding contributions and in appreciation of dedicated service to the programs of the Sons of the American Legion.

Presented at the 51st National Convention in the city of Charlotte, North Carolina, August 25-27, 2023, signed by Chris Carlton, me, National Commander, and Anthony Wright, our National Adjutant.

We would also like to make you a Distinguished Guest of our 51st National Convention.

... *Applause.*

Ms. Williamson, if you don't mind. We would like to make you a Distinguished Guest of the 51st National Convention.

... *Applause.*

I'm sure that the guy that's going to come up behind me is going to do you good too.

...Gavel.

... *Applause.*

At this time, I will yield the podium to National Vice Commander Dave Mennel.

NVC DAVID MENNEL: I do have a donation here I need to make. I thought my phone was totally shut off, but for some reason my text messages didn't shut the sound off.

The Commander sat at my chair. Guess what happened? I'm donating \$40 to the Commander's special project, Veterans & Children Foundation.

... *Applause.*

At this time, I call on Bill Clancy for the National Convention Internal Affairs Committee Report. On deck, the National Convention

Legislative and Rules Committee.

ORAL REPORT

*National Convention Internal Affairs Committee
William Clancy, III (NY), Chairman*

Fellow Sons, honored guests, members of the American Legion Family, good morning. It felt like you were sitting under the stars with the lights behind here. It's fantastic.

Today my report was preceded by reports from Member Training and Development with Chairman Mike Monserud, Membership with Chairman Tom Skelley, and yesterday Convention with Christopher Byrd. Wonderful reports, amazing accomplishments. Those three committees report to IA.

So, I wanted to thank those committees and their chairmen, not just for their hard work, but also for their friendship and their sense of fun.

Each of those three guys are wonderful leaders, and being part of their team was just a pleasure this past year.

The Internal Affairs meeting yesterday was very well attended. It was standing room only. We opened the meeting. I introduced the members of

the IA Committee from the past year who were Mr. Ken Sutton from California, Dickey Huntley from Maine, Doc Pfeiffer from Indiana, Steve Gower from Virginia, and our Vice Chairman Christopher Michel from the state of Delaware.

We went on to report a lot of work that took place in Internal Affairs this year that has led to some great things that will be helping to improve our organization. I'm going to briefly highlight that report.

We began our year with an overarching assignment from the Advisory Committee to think about aspects of the organization that could be improved upon just to make things better, opportunities for improvement, and we were given some specific goals.

Our first goal was to improve how national appointees are notified of their assignment. National appointees will now mostly, as I think most of you now know, will not be happening at convention. They will take place at the Fall NEC.

This fall we'll be rolling out a bit of a change where all appointees will be notified via phone call. They'll be explained their roll and their responsibilities and assigned goals. Each individual will have goals.

Then they'll be receiving a PDF, basically a proclamation of their appointment, that they can put up in their Post or at their home to lend a sense of seriousness and the honor that goes with getting a national appointment.

We think that will really get guys pumped up to serve, ready to serve, and do so in an effective way. So that goal was accomplished early on.

The second goal that was assigned to our Commission was to think about ways to make our NEC meetings more impactful, flow faster, more efficient, and more fun. Meetings that are more fun will attract more members, make for members to be more productive and more energized about doing all the hard work they do.

We developed a series of recommendations

for the upcoming NEC meeting. We made those recommendations to both the Commander, the leading candidate, and the trailing candidate. I won't go into what's going to be changed. It's their baby, so to speak, but there will be some, I think, exciting changes at the upcoming Fall NEC meeting and all NEC meetings thereafter.

We had some additional accomplishments. We were tasked to work with emblem sales to help develop or bring out products that would improve or affect or be available to Sons members, and we did do that.

Emblem sales, as a result of our pushing and with the help of Kevin Mook, our headquarters adviser, has produced a SAL Welcome Kit that is now available through emblem sales, and they produced a flag topper which was mentioned yesterday. That was a great accomplishment, and we're hoping to do more of that in the year ahead.

We were tasked to develop a welcome letter for all new members. We have developed several versions of a welcome letter, and that's

something that we'll be rolling out soon as well.

We were asked to consider potential changes to the Convention Committee, and we had many conversations with members of that committee, prior chairmen of that committee, and we came out with some recommendations that might be taking place in the coming years.

And that would be to have someone on that committee who would have more longevity and would be someone in the position of like a liaison to national headquarters because, as you might know, the chairman of that committee changes every year with the convention, and every year there's a lot of repeated learning to have to figure out how to work with the national organization to make a convention be excellent.

We also made a recommendation that Convention Committee will have at least a liaison to the candidates who are upcoming. So, there will be a liaison between the Convention Committee and the leading candidate and the trailing candidate to plan the conventions in a way that's cohesive with

those Campaign Committees.

We worked, we were tasked to work on something that we called SAL TV, television. Our Vice Chairman Christopher Michel led that effort to basically make a YouTube channel for SAL events, things like the Washington Conference, things like these meetings, maybe some really outstanding events that take place across the Detachments.

We engaged The American Legion media team in this regard, and I think we're going to see a fast tracking of the ability to get our videos publicized or put up on the Legion website. It would involve an editing process and an approval process, just to make sure everything is covered with considerations like copyrights and permission of everyone who's filmed.

This is a lot of work, and I was proud of the team for what they accomplished.

We had a lot of resolutions and also some awards. I'll go through the resolutions first. I have to put on my reading glasses here.

The first resolution was Resolution

No. 4, presented for the National Convention, originating in the Detachment of Wisconsin. And the title of that Resolution was Add Homeless Veterans to Consolidated Squadron Reports. It reads:

WHEREAS, some of our most vulnerable veterans are homeless;

And WHEREAS, according to The American Legion's Homeless Veterans Handbook and an American Legion news release concerning Homeless Veterans there are approximately 33,000 homeless veterans today;

And WHEREAS, women veterans are more than twice as likely to be homeless as women non-veterans, as are veterans ages 18 to 30;

And WHEREAS, The American Legion has determined homeless veterans a serious enough issue to dedicate an entire website with six supporting subsites to it at www.legion.org/homeless;

And WHEREAS, there are many Squadrons that raise monies for and volunteer with homeless veterans programs in their communities;

And WHEREAS, today when Squadrons contribute to these veterans in need it is all under the consolidated report under "Other VA&R Projects;"

And WHEREAS, this results in no visibility into these very important contributions to some of our most vulnerable veterans.

Now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, by the Sons of The American Legion in Annual Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina on August 25-27, 2023, that the Consolidated Squadron Report has a single category added to the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation section called "Homeless Veterans" with two values for the donations and number of hours spent;

And be it further RESOLVED, that the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission encourages Squadrons to participate in efforts to help our homeless veterans;

And be it finally RESOLVED, that this resolution become effective with the close of the 2023 National Convention of the Sons of The

American Legion.

The Commission thought this was a terrific thing to add to the CSR, and this Resolution was approved by the Internal Affairs Convention Committee.

Hear, I agree. That was Resolution No. 4.

Resolution No. 5, National Convention, 2023. The title: Add Troop and Family Support to the Consolidated Squadron Reports.

Origin is the Detachment of Wisconsin.

Whereas, up until the 2019-2020 administrative year, there were two categories on the Consolidated Squadron Report that gave a place to indicate the donations and hours that Squadrons contributed to "Support for the Troops" and to the "Family Support Network;"

And WHEREAS, today when Squadrons contribute to these areas by providing support at troop deployments and helping military families in times of need it is all consolidated under "Other VA&R Projects;"

And WHEREAS, this results in no visibility into these very important contributions to our nation's active-duty members.

Now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, by the Sons of The American Legion in Annual Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina on August 25-27, 2023, that the Consolidated Squadron Report has a single category added to the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation section called "Troop & Family Support" with two values for the monetary donations and number of hours spent;

And be it further RESOLVED, that the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission encourages Squadrons to participate in efforts to help support our troops and their families;

And be it finally RESOLVED, that this Resolution become effective with the close of the 2023 National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion.

The Commission equally thought this was a very valid and noteworthy endeavor to do to change

the CSR to reflect this, and this was also approved.

I'm going to hold there. We're going back to Resolution No. 4, which has the title Add Homeless Veterans to the Consolidated Squadron Report.

I would ask for a motion that this resolution be accepted. Do we have a motion?

ALLEN WATRY (WI): Allen Watry, Detachment of Wisconsin, makes the motion to approve the resolution.

WILLIAM CLANCY III (NY): We have a motion. Do we have a second?

RICHARD KILBY (CT): Mr. Chairman, Richard Kilby, Detachment of Connecticut ANEC, seconds the motion.

WILLIAM CLANCY III (NY): We have a motion and a second. All in favor? Any opposed? Any discussion?

Did I hear someone say discussion.

All in favor? I'm sorry. My apologies.

NVC DAVID MENNEL: We have a motion and

duly seconded to accept the resolution. Is there any further discussion?

Seeing none, all in favor, say aye.

Opposed, say nay.

Motion passed.

WILLIAM CLANCY III (NY): Thank you. We are moving on to Resolution 5, which I just read. Again, the title is to Add Troop and Family Support to the Consolidated Squadron Report, submitted by the Detachment of Wisconsin.

Do I have a motion to accept?

GREG SPAULDING (IN): Greg Spaulding, delegate Indiana, makes a motion to accept.

ALLEN WATRY (WI): Allen Watry, Detachment of Wisconsin, seconds.

NVC DAVID MENNEL: We have a motion and duly seconded to accept Resolution No. 5.

Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye. Opposed, say nay.

Motion passed.

WILLIAM CLANCY III (NY): The IA Commission also received three motions which were

for National Office endorsements. There were two from the Detachment of Oklahoma for Mr. Chris Cook. One was for Mr. Cook for national office. The other was an endorsement of Mr. Christopher Cook from Oklahoma for National Commander. Both of these were received and filed.

There was a third resolution from the Detachment of Oklahoma for Mr. Sherbourne from the Detachment of Oklahoma for national office. That resolution was also received and filed.

That was the contents of my report yesterday at our meeting. I believe now we have some awards to be presented related to the CSRs.

We're reading a Consolidated Squadron Report is hereby given to the Detachment of Puerto Rico. Your considerable efforts in achieving a 100 percent response from your Squadron's reporting are commendable, providing you and your members to be an invaluable part of the Sons of the American Legion.

Through your reporting at the local, state and national levels, the Sons of the American

Legion will be more effective in supporting veterans and their family. Your efforts illustrate the principles of working above and beyond the call of duty and exemplifies the commitment to a foundation of the future.

Presented at the 51st National Convention, city of Charlotte, North Carolina, August 25th, signed by Commander Carlton and Adjutant Anthony Wright.

If I could get a representative from the Detachment of Puerto Rico, please.

We have an additional award for the Detachment of Delaware, which has also received 100 percent in submission of their consolidated reports.

And we have a third for another 100 percent from the Detachment of Vermont, again presented this day at our Convention.

Representatives from each of those Detachments could make their way forward, please.

For the Detachment of Vermont, 100 percent CSR reporting.

... *Applause.*

Detachment of Delaware, 100 percent CSR reporting.

... *Applause.*

We will find the representative from Puerto Rico.

Mr. Commander, that is my report from the IA Commission. I make a motion to accept my report. Do we have a second?

STEVE THOMAS (OK): Commander, Steve Thomas, Detachment of Oklahoma. I second that.

NVC DAVID MENNEL: Thank you. We have a motion and duly seconded to accept Mr. Clancy's report.

Do I hear any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye. Opposed, say nay.

...Gavel.

Motion passed.

Mr. Thomas Deal, for your legislative report.

ORAL REPORT

Legislative and Rules Committee
Tom Deal (MD), Chairman

Good morning. It is my pleasure to be up here today to give you the report from the Legislative and Rules Committee.

The Legislative and Rules Committee met yesterday at 11:33. We opened the meeting with 11 members and 21 guests.

The Rules of the National Convention with proper motion were passed.

Next we talked about our goals, and the number one goal we had was to increase the number of nominees for the George B. Evans Veterans Advocate of the Year Award. We had a goal of eight. This last year we had five. Again, this year we had five. I'd encourage all of you to try to find somebody to nominate.

But it is my pleasure to announce the winner this year. This year's winner of the George B. Evans Veterans Advocate of the Year Award is Mr. William Kelly from Squadron 137, Detachment of Florida. Bill, come on up.

While Bill's making his way, I would like to recognize all the nominees that were nominated. Mr. Gilbert Miles from Squadron 43 in California, Mr. Michael Donnelly from Squadron 116 in Maryland, Mr. Peter Thomas Puzzo from Squadron 189 in Florida, and Mr. Terry Hanson from Squadron 42 in South Dakota.

We have a lot of volunteers working hard, and I want to thank those who submitted these nominees here. It is very good to reward all our guys doing the work.

I'm going to read this award here. Sons of the American Legion 2023 National George B. Evans Grassroots Advocate Award is hereby given to William D. Kelly, Jr., Lakeshore Squadron 137, Jacksonville, Florida, for an outstanding service and significant contributions of time and effort and grassroots lobbying by displaying an aggressive leadership role in building relationships with elected officials that directly impact public policy, taking our message to key media outlets, and developing strong grassroots initiatives during

the 2022-2023 year.

Presented this 51st National Convention in the city of Charlotte, North Carolina, August 25-27, 2023. Signed Christopher Carlton, National Commander, Anthony Wright, National Adjutant.

... *Applause.*

This is truly an honor because a lot of times we don't have this cover ready for him.

Bill, I'll put that on. Congratulations.

... *Applause.*

Would you like to say a few words?

WILLIAM KELLY, JR. (FL): No, thank you.

NVC DAVID MENNEL: Bill, on behalf of National Commander Chris, I'd like to make you a Distinguished Guest of our 51st National Convention.

... *Applause.*

THOMAS DEAL (MD): Congratulations again, Bill. Well deserved. Bill is a past legislative chairman, and he does work very hard in Florida for the legislature.

Next we talked about voter voice. You'll

hear me talk about it all the time when you see me. We keep signing up people at any of the meetings we do. We kept signing people up yesterday at our meeting. We have over 75 new members at the SAL.

It's jumping, but not like it should be. We need to get everyone signed up. If you're not signed up in this room, please see one of the legislative chairmen here, and we can get you signed up.

We talked about Washington Conference. Washington Conference next year will be February 25th to the 28th. The wreath laying will be on February 25th. You have to fill out a form to come. You don't have to pay anything to come. We just need to know you're coming. If you want to get a wreath, if you want to get lunch and a tram ticket, then you do need to pay for those things.

It's a great thing. We had 150 members last year. We'd like to see that this year. We had three buses full of people. It was great. It was great to walk around Washington, D.C., with the wreaths and the monuments and all of us lined up.

It's truly a great experience and everybody looking at us to say, who are those guys? A lot of PR. A lot of good things. I encourage you all to try to get there.

Lastly, I want to introduce the Legislative Commission members, and if you're here, please stand. Our Vice Chairman Blair Miles from Alabama, David Lee from New York, Bernie Kessler from Ohio, Charles Curtis from California, and Richard Humphrey from Colorado.

Also, our NEC liaison is Thomas Glander, Bob Manzo, and Jeff Lee, and our PNC liaison is Mr. Byron Robichaux.

Thank you for what you do. This is truly team members working. These guys work very hard. It's a great team working hard.

Mr. Commander, that is my report. As a Delegate for this Convention, I move for the acceptance of my report.

NVC DAVID MENNEL: All right. We have a motion on the floor to accept the report.

BERNIE KESSLER (OH): Bernie Kessler,

Detachment of Ohio, second the report of the legislative commission.

NVC DAVID MENNEL: Thank you, sir. We have a motion on the floor and duly seconded to accept Mr. Deal's report.

Do I hear any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye. Opposed, say nay.

...Gavel.

Motion passed.

Mr. Deal, on behalf of our National Commander, I'd like to make you a Distinguished Guest.

At this time, I'd like to yield the floor back to your National Commander, Mr. Carlton.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Thank you.

At this time, I'd like to call on our National Vice Commander from the South -- well, everybody knows Ron -- to give his final report.

ORAL REPORT

NVC - South's Final Report

Ronald E. "Ron" Roberts (MS), NVC - South

He did that to me in Milwaukee, and I

said, Commander, really? He said, why should I introduce you? Everybody knows you already. You're the quiet one whenever there's a meeting or a question of any kind.

Thank you, Commander, for that gracious introduction.

I'm going to take you on a journey as an NVC. First of all, I want to thank my wife, young bride of 52 years, said have fun, do your best. Call me when you're heading back into town from wherever you're going.

I'm going to start this a little different. I was called about two years prior to being asked if I wanted to run for NVC, said we need proof of your eligibility. Who are you eligible under?

Let me tell you something, I come from a unique family. Every male member of the Roberts family for the last four generations served their country voluntarily in the military.

... Applause.

Thank you. My eligibility to join the

Sons comes from my father, my grandfather and my great grandfather, all served during eligible periods. My father, both my brothers, and I were dual members during their lifetime, my brother and my older brother. My father passed away. My dad served during WWII. My brothers and I served during the Vietnam conflict. Next slide, please.

A little bit about my father. I didn't know this. He didn't tell us what he did in the military until my kid brother got back from the Navy. He said, sit down at the table. I'm going to pour you a shot of brandy. I'm going to tell you what a real war was about. I had no idea what he did, who he belonged to, whatever.

My dad was Company 1, 85th Infantry, 10th Mountain Division, para-ski troopers. I never knew it was such a thing. They called them the tough bunch. I said, Dad, really? You jumped out of a perfectly good flying plane with snow skis strapped to your back? He said, "That was the job we had, and we did it."

You'll see his insignias up there, bronze

star, purple heart, and so on. I never knew he was awarded those. We got that shadowbox made two years before he passed away.

This hangs at the wall in my house. The top picture is dad. Left is my older brother Bill. He's passed away. And on the right is my kid brother Terry. You can see we all served in different branches. Next slide.

Moving on, we start out as an NVC. Somebody says are you interested? You've got to do some politicking, which I don't like politicking. Anyhow we always had the Southern Area traditional get together at Post 103 in Mooresville, Indiana. We had invited guests.

If you're there, I know if you want to come over, let us know. No charge. If you want to make a donation for supper, you can do that, but that's about it. They provide their hospitality bus to take us from the Sheraton over to their Post.

Next picture, Southern Region leadership with our incoming National Commander Chris Carlton

Another get together. These are the leaders of the South. I wanted to take a picture with them.

I asked my wife, do you want to put my cap on me at National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin? She said, do I have to? Which one? She said, honey, you keep reminding me you're a paid up life member of every veterans organization on earth.

I said, yeah, but this one is for the Sons, not the Legion, not for the Vietnam Veterans, not for the VFW, none of those. This is for the Sons. That's where my heart is right now is working for the Sons. So, she was happy to put my cap on.

I'm not going to say anything about the official photo. I didn't take it. I didn't approve it. They did it. They sent it and published it.

First stop on the journey in Florida. It started at check-in in the lobby in Florida. You want to impress a little country boy, look at that check-in lobby. That's live palm trees. That's

just the check-in lobby.

Moving right along, it was a pleasure to visit Florida. I call them the flagship of the fleet, always leading. NEC Bill Kelly served as my escort, picked me up at the airport, got me checked in and to my room. Met with Commander Gerald Sambets, then on to evening meal with the Florida Sons.

Didn't take long to figure out why Florida always exceeds their goals at everything! Fund raising, membership, whatever. Their spring convention was like coming to a National Convention -- literally, they had vendor booths in the halls, up and down four different halls, 60 different vendor booths. Anything at emblem sales, they had their own representatives.

Their meetings included committee and commission meetings with reports on progress of different projects, just like you're here at the convention. They raise phenomenal amounts of money not only for the Legion programs, but also for charities including Special Olympics and hurricane

relief funds.

I had the opportunity to participate in a Q&A session on Parliamentary Procedure, had a great deal of participation.

Special thing happened when I was there. PNC Jimmy Roberts got up on the stage in front of everybody, called his girlfriend out, and proposed to her. Got on his knees and everything else. That was a special thing. Congratulations again, PNC Roberts.

Florida leadership is escorting me to address a Legion family meeting. I was honored to address the Legion as well as the Auxiliary. These are a bunch of friendly people, let me tell you. They work hard, but they play hard.

You are not going to believe, the Auxiliary president says, I'm having an evening dinner, and we're having a contest, T-shirt contest, and the theme is rock and roll. Pick out your favorite T-shirt that you can get. She let us know way ahead of time. And wear it to the dinner evening. There is my T-shirt. I won the first

prize. "I may be old, but I got to see all the cool bands" is what my T-shirt says.

Detachment of Florida, great people, said before you leave, we want to present you with a plaque, Ron. That was a great honor to receive a plaque from Florida.

Next stop -- these trips are very quick. Every other weekend or sometimes weekend after weekend. Next stop, Cajun country, Louisiana. What can I say about Cajun country? You instantly feel welcome.

NEC Camille Lejeune served as my escort, from check-in to finding my room. Commander Dan Maurin served as my host, guiding me to meeting rooms of the Sons, the Legion and Auxiliary. What got you when you walked in the first meeting room was the aroma of jambalaya, gumbo and crawfish etouffee were in the air, what a way to be welcomed.

Again, none of this is pre-planned, but Commander Maurin said, would you mind leading a short question and answer session on parliamentary

procedure? We know you're the guy on that, and I said no problem. 1 1/2 hours later we finished. Great participation!

It is indeed an honor to address the Legions and the Auxiliary. I did something unique. Every Post, every Detachment I visited, I presented each President with a tray I made in my shop that said, "Your opinion is not part of the recipe." I carried these everywhere I went and handed them out to the President of the Auxiliary.

Next stop, a little side trip to Las Vegas. Everyone says must be nice. When I said little side trip, I flew out Friday evening, arrived at 6:15, joined with the guys that were there, had a little bit to eat and a couple drinks, went to bed got up the next morning, sat in on their training session.

They asked me to teach three different classes Saturday afternoon from 1:00 to 6:30: Parliamentary Procedure; Writing Resolutions; and Implementing Change.

I said, okay, no problem. I was done at

6:30, slept that night, caught the early flight back out Sunday morning because I had another trip to make.

Great participation out there. This was my fifth time at the Western Area Rendezvous, It is now named Wild Willy's Western Region Rendezvous after Willy Williams, who was in Sons for I don't know how many years, and he started it nine years ago up in Henderson, Nevada, at the Western Region Rendezvous.

Got back from that, next weekend, next stop Kentucky. I don't know why this is following me around like this, but Kentucky Commander Brandon asked if it was possible for me to teach the same classes that I taught in Las Vegas. I said that's not the purpose of an NVC visit. He said, well, according to us it is.

He said, by the way, we brought you something to entice you a little bit. It was a two gallon bottle of Kentucky bourbon blackberry flavored. I never heard of blackberry flavored bourbon. It's not that bad tasting come to think

of it.

I said sure if I could get some help with the PowerPoints while I'm addressing the Legion and the Auxiliary I'll be glad to help teach the classes. Mr. Mark Tansel, most of you know him from Indiana, was down visiting from Indianapolis, and he graciously stepped up and took over while I was addressing the other members of the Legion Family.

Really felt welcome, and a member of the Kentucky family. Taking a break after three classes, wow! Again, Mark and Brandon, great group of men to work with.

Next stop, North Carolina. I'm known as a busy man working, moving all the time -- not compared to North Carolina Adjutant Will Slater. From the minute I arrived at the airport and was greeted by Will Slater, Detachment Adjutant, he was on the run, and I was unable to keep up with him. I had to keep saying, slow down, Will. Slow down.

Off to the hotel, and I was introduced to Sons leadership, Commander Mayhew and NEC Terry

Pressley, went out for supper then settled in for evening.

Always an honor to present a new charter. Presented a new charter to 255, Mathews, North Carolina, first thing in the morning, then addressed the Legion and Auxiliary.

Presented American Legion 100th Anniversary silver dollar coin to Will Slater for his work as my NVC Adjutant. He did all my calls and everything else for me while I was an NVC.

There's a look at the charter presentation. These guys have everything in order, everything ready to go. You don't have to wait for nothing.

They have another award, the Dogwood Award, for 100 percent membership by December 31st. They asked me if I'd stand up there and help them with that. Again, to Squadron 255 the new Squadron.

Will took me around and introduced me to the North Carolina Legion and Auxiliary. It's always nice to be asked to give a small talk and

explain what the Sons does and what the Commander's programs were. It was an honor to address the North Carolina Legion and Auxiliary.

Here I presented the silver dollar coin to Will Slater for volunteering to serve as my Adjutant.

Then just happened to come out of a meeting, and who was standing in the hallway? After I addressed the North Carolina Sons, I came out of that meeting, Sons members in attendance, and here was who I met in the hallway. I don't know if some of you know him or not, Past National Commander of the Legion, Bill Oxford. He just happened to be standing there.

I said, Bill, what are you doing here? He said, I'm from the Carolinas. I said, I didn't know that. He said, what are you doing here? I told him, and he said, congratulations. Let's get our picture taken. Super Past National Commander of the Legion. These guys are great.

Okay. Will, I swear, flew me down to the airport, but he drove me. Flew out to D.C. from

Jackson, Mississippi, with a young man sitting next to me. He introduced himself to me because I started talking to him and introduced myself.

He said, I'm Crawford. I'm with Senator Roger Wicker from here in Mississippi, Senator Wicker's aide. I said, you're Roger's aide? He said, yeah, why? I said, I've got some things I want to bring up about veterans and veterans causes and veterans concerns. He said, okay, I'm listening.

He was very attentive. He gave me his business card as well as his personal straight line office number. If you've got any questions, anything the Senator can do for you or your organization, give me a call.

Arrived in Washington, D.C., got up to the hotel. Here's a picture in the back over Dave Mennel's shoulder. You'll see a plaque on the wall. That's to remind you that this is the hotel and the place that the assassination of Ronald Reagan took place. What a thing to have outside your hotel.

Next visit, we went to the Tomb of the Unknown. I've been there a couple times before. I especially wanted to go down to the wall. I had permission from Mississippi to place the wreath at the wall.

You can look on your cell phone if you know somebody's name up there. They'll give you the panel number and the name number on the panel. So, 17-E is the 17th panel from the east end if you count them. You count down from the top, the 54th name, and I found it. To honor Terry Dean Shauver, a brother of one of my close high school friends.

Gave his life on March 26th, 1967, defending freedom. I had no idea at the time, but Blair Miles took this picture without my knowledge and sent it to me. I'll be eternally grateful.

Next comes Puerto Rico. They didn't want to send me to Puerto Rico. They said it's expensive. I said, I don't care. Angel Navarez was on the phone talking with me. Juan Rodriguez was on the phone talking with me. They said, Ron, you realize it's our 100th anniversary down here?

We've never had a national officer visit Puerto Rico.

I called Kevin. Kevin, what do we need to do? He said, they've been calling me too. We authorized your trip down there.

Angel met me at the airport, my friend over here, checked me in at the hotel. Then I freshened up, met Sons/Legion Adjutant Juan. These are both dual members, both hold upper offices in both organizations.

Was introduced by Adjutant Juan. Every Legion, Auxiliary and Sons member we saw, I mean, we walked down an aisle, it was stand in line and introduce Ron Roberts, NVC from the Southern area.

Angel took me out for an evening meal of authentic Puerto Rican food. I couldn't pronounce a single one of the names, but it was all delicious. As I mentioned before, Puerto Rico was celebrating 100 years as a member of the Legion Family.

When all the Squadrons surpass their membership goals, Commander Angel makes sure

somebody gets a plaque or a trophy that deserves it. We stood in line and I don't know how many plaques or certificates were passed out. It was truly an honor to be involved showing people -- you know what they did with their membership, over 100 percent. We're giving certificates and plaques to just about everybody.

If you had a Squadron who met or exceeded your goals, they honored you with a plaque and took your picture. Most of the time, we had Commander Rosario, a female commander of the Legion down there, Angel and myself.

They said, well, that's all of them, but we've got one more plaque. Who gets this one so I know who we're talking to? They said, well, we did this one for you, Ron, for coming down here.

Commander Navarez and Legion Commander Rosario presented me with a plaque. I have never seen anything like it in my life.

You see the shape of the islands is like a custom plaster on the front of the plaque. The plaque is that thick all together with the plaster

outlined on the front. Something I didn't know was that the Department of Puerto Rico and the Detachment of Puerto Rico also includes U.S. Virgin Islands that have a Legion Post, so St. John, St. Croix, and St. Thomas are part of Puerto Rico.

So, I really appreciated that plaque.

They didn't have to do that. That was a wonderful recognition.

The Auxiliary lady comes down, Mr. Ron, come down and talk to the auxiliary. You're here. You need to talk to us too. We're just as important as the Legion. I said, okay, Maria. Lead the way. Maria Montanez, wonderful lady.

Then I found out someone else was visiting. You look at the row of us, you see Angel on the corner right behind the first lady in red, then me, and Legion Paul Dillard, Past National Commander, was down visiting. And Carmen Rosario down on the end.

They were super excited to have two national officers down there, really a great bunch of people. They asked me to give a little address

to the Auxiliary, which I did, and I especially reminded them that we do appreciate all that they did to keep work for veterans and veterans affairs and the benefits we get as veterans.

I said, I want to make a point with you Auxiliary members that I think is very important. Because of you, the person giving you a talk, you can call a million dollar man. They said, what do you mean?

I said, it started three years ago. I had heart ablation done outside the VA, but the VA paid for it, a little over \$400,000. I had the artery in my right leg replaced not once, but twice, each time was \$700,000, that's \$1.4 million, a little over \$2 million. I'm going to get my left knee replaced in November. My copay was zero.

That's the benefits us veterans need to tell you thank you for fighting for it because they tried to take away all of that. Not only that, I graduated from college with the GI Bill paying my way. I bought my first home for my wife and I with the GI Home Loan Bill. I started a business and

sold it very successfully with the GI Set Aside Program.

So, thank you, Sons, for what you're fighting for us veterans too.

Back home to Mississippi. There's a special feeling of ease that you feel when you get back home. Everybody you know and you're ready to get done with it all.

So, they asked me to address the Legionnaires there at home at our state convention in Natchez, Mississippi, right on the river.

I talked about the "Be the One" program and made sure they had the big new plaque out front. Since the "Be the One" program started -- now, it's not just the Legion, several other organizations too. The whole state of Tennessee, Tennessee workers, have been involved with "Be the One" for four years now -- over 80,000 calls have been answered.

There's no way to know how many veterans' lives have been saved. So, let's keep up our support.

Then I was asked to make a small address to the Ladies Auxiliary. If you look closely, a close-up picture, there's a pink microphone cord going over the podium down to the plug-in, and I asked the President, I said, really, pink? She said, that's all we had. I said okay.

Our Detachment had some 100 Percent Membership awards. Detachment Commander Danny Baser said let's present the awards. We had some certificates we gave out.

It's always a pleasure at your own Detachment to recognize those individuals that have met or exceeded their goals. The greatest thing of all is when you stand up in front of them and swear in the new Detachment officers. Just a feeling of pride and accomplishment there that you don't normally run across.

So, my final comments. What a year! It has truly been an honor to represent National Commander Chris Carlton, as well as the members of the Southern Region, on my travels.

What a team! You Southern Detachment

leaders stepped up and accepted the challenge on membership as well as fund-raising programs.

Excellent job.

Thanks, Southern Team for all you have done and continue to do for the Sons, Legion Family and Veterans. As your representative, I knew the South would lead the way again. Even with tornadoes, hurricanes and flooding, the team just dug in deeper and found what it took to keep on going.

You worked harder, lead the way in membership for the first nine months. We were the leaders, reached 100 percent membership at the end of the year, and made many charity contributions.

By the way, Florida raised over \$500,000 for charity, and this year marks their 29th all-time high in membership. Got to give them a hand for accomplishing something like that.

... Applause.

You just can't stop them guys. You just can't stop them.

Again, thanks for electing me as National

Vice Commander. It has been an honor and truly a privilege.

I have a few of the NVC Challenge Coins left on me. So, if you want one, just walk up to me and say, I'd really like one of your coins.

I want to tell you a little bit about the coins. USA made coin. We looked to some Chinese knockoff ones. The NVCs were trying to decide. You rub them a little bit, and the enamel peeled off. The enamel doesn't peel off of these. They're three times more expensive than the cheap ones, but they're more than worth it. If you'd like one, let me know.

Thank you to the Sons for your support. Thank you to the Detachments that invited me. I'm sorry there were a couple that I couldn't quite make it to because of my schedule and because of my injury. Thanks again. Thank you all.

... Applause.

As a registered delegate to the 51st National Convention, I'd like to make a motion to accept my report.

CAMILLE LEJEUNE (LA): Mr. Commander,
Camille LeJeune, NEC, makes that second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's a
motion and a second to accept Ron's report. Any
discussion?

All those in favor, say aye. All those
opposed, say nay.

... *Gavel.*

The motion carries.

I'd like to make you a Distinguished
Guest at our 51st National Convention.

Will National Vice Commander Jack Youngs
approach. I apologize, I forgot, but I'd like to
make you a Distinguished Guest to our 51st National
Convention.

... *Applause.*

You'd think I'm young because I look
young, but I feel old because National Vice
Commander Dave Mennel, will you approach? And is
Chairman Monserud in the room? Would you please
approach.

I'd like to make you a Distinguished

Guest to our 51st National Convention.

Also, could I have my aide, David Miller, approach?

... Applause.

While I'm doing this, I'd like to make all my Sergeant-at-Arms and Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Distinguished Guests. I will get you badges.

... Applause.

As National Commander said about his aide, you choose someone you can trust and you can travel with and talk to, that is a friend. And David Miller is that to me.

When he has the opportunity, he's been able to travel with me to a couple of places that he did it on his own dime. One, because he wanted to go back; and, two, because he wanted to be with me and help me.

So, with that, thank you, David Miller, for being my friend and my aide this year. I want to make you a Distinguished Guest.

... Applause.

Truly apologize, Chairman Monserud, but I'd like to make you a Distinguished Guest.

... *Applause.*

Now I think I'm all caught up and feel good about that.

At this time, I'd like the Sergeant-at-Arms to please bring Vincent Gaughan to the podium for the purpose of presentations.

PRESENTATION

Vincent M. Gaughan (IL), PNC, The American Legion

Mr. Commander Chris Carlton, National SAL officers, SAL members, friends and guests, it's my pleasure to be here this afternoon on behalf of The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.

I'm honored again to be here with such great people such as yourselves.

The Sons of the American Legion is a force in which The American Legion Family is very proud. Your commitment and dedication to The American Legion's Veterans & Children Foundation and other Legion programs continues to be steadfast and ongoing.

It is through all our mutual helpfulness that we continue to make the difference with our nation's youth and its veterans. As you all know, there's still much work to be done. Many veterans still don't know that much about The American Legion. And it is our hope, with the assistance of the Sons of the American Legion, that we will change that and bring awareness to the Veterans & Children Foundation.

Every dollar contributed has gone on significantly to be impacted in the lives of our veterans and their families and through our programs and services supported by the Veterans & Children Foundation.

One of the parts of the Veterans & Children Foundation is to support the Temporary Financial Assistance program. Grants are given to bring stability to minor children living with veterans and in service members homes when the financial stability is threatened.

Each year thousands of dollars in financial grants have provided a safety net to our

veterans families.

Part of the mission of the Veterans & Children Foundation is to support the financial service officers.

Let me get a little bit into the TFA. What that is, it's a system where veterans with children in their family, either active duty or nonactive duty, and it shouldn't happen, that they can't make the security deposit if they get transferred. They might have trouble with their utility bills.

The Army and the Navy, Armed Forces should make sure that doesn't happen to them, but it does.

So, the VCF, what we do, we give grants to these families, and it's nonrepayable. So at least they know somebody else cares about them and we care about them. So, then they move on from there.

But the other aspect is that we support veterans service officers training. And there's two parts to that. Our Legion service officers continue to grow each day with new innovative

training. As you know, the PACT Act has passed and caused for updated training of our service officers, and we must be able to keep up with the additional flows of claims.

Our service officers have made an impressive record in 2022. They have attained \$16 billion in funds for our veterans through the appellate process and through the VA process there.

Let me say another thing, if you get a hold of the Legion Magazine for the month of August, this goes into detail what the service officers do. So far, at national -- national level in Washington, D.C., the appellate level and 80 percent of all appeals are financed and supported by The American Legion.

What we do is we hire an independent law firm who has expertise in Veterans Affairs. Last year, in 2022, they hired 13,967 cases, and they were able to get an additional \$75.4 million.

It is through the SAL support of The American Legion programs we've been able to help these veterans get the benefits that they deserve

and that they have earned.

Again, for 2022, the calendar year, the veterans of The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation was able to acquire \$1,239,118 in donations. I am pleased at this time to announce this year's Veterans & Children Foundation award recipients.

This year's recognition awards are presented to the following Sons of the American Legion Detachment. Before I go into that, I have to give a shout-out to Detachment Commander from Illinois, Kevin O'Connell and the Illinois Detachment. God love you all.

... Applause.

They have a little laryngitis so I have to stick up for them. That's it.

The first award is the Harry W. Colmery Legacy Award. And this is awarded to the number one Detachment with the highest total contributions in Veterans & Children Foundation. This year the award goes to the Detachment of Oregon, with their combined total of over \$13,000.

... Applause.

Do we have somebody from Oregon? Well, the Detachment of Oregon represents probably the best in all people. You do a lot of work and you don't want that much recognition. He just wanted to say thank you and no comments. All right.

The next award is the James A. Drain Award. And it's given to the Detachment with the highest donations per capita. This year, the award goes, again, to the Detachment of Oregon with the highest per capita total of \$8.69 per member.

... Applause.

Commander, on behalf of the Veterans & Children Foundation, I want to thank the members of the Sons of the American Legion and all the American family members of The American Legion for your hard work and continued support of our veterans and their families. God love you, Commander.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: We would like to make you a Distinguished Guest of our 51st

National Convention.

... *Applause.*

See, he has Stacy Cope with him. That's why she's a Distinguished Guest.

... *Applause.*

And to the Detachment of Oregon, you'll have to share it but I'd like to make the Detachment of Oregon a Distinguished Guest to our convention.

... *Applause.*

At this time, I'd like to call the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort Past National Commander Joe Gladden to the podium.

PNC JOSEPH W. GLADDEN (MD): It's officially good afternoon. It's great to be here today. I wanted to share with you, I had the great honor of being the first SAL consultant to the national American Legion Riders Committee to represent the Sons of the American Legion on that committee. How many Riders do we have in the room? If you're a Rider, stand up.

... *Applause.*

Thank you, gentlemen. Who else owns a motorcycle and is not a Rider? If you aren't, you need to join the Riders.

Before I start, I need to -- I'll be brief -- but I need to apologize to my dear friend Dave Mennel over there. Dave I think it was my text to you saying, good job on your report, that might have caused you that fine on you. So, my apologies to you for that. Well, \$20 is \$20. But I'm not the one who left my phone on.

... Laughter.

Anyway, it's a great honor to be the representative to the National AR Committee for you all and to represent the Sons. Realistically, when you think about it, the Sons probably -- this is just my own educated guess -- I bet you we're more than 50 percent of The American Legion Riders across the nation. That's got to be the case because everywhere I go you see Riders; they have the Sons patch on.

We just finished up the National Legacy Run, and I want to say our National Commander was

there. And Chris did an outstanding job supporting and showing what the Sons of the American Legion are. He inspired us on each and every stop that he gave a talk. Chris, you deserve a big round of applause for doing the round with us.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Go ahead, tell them. I know you want to. I was a good trash collector, too, right?

PNC JOSEPH W. GLADDEN (MD): At every stop we stopped, here comes Chris with a bag of trash. But you know what? That's the kind of Commander that Chris is. He's the guy that's going to get down in the trenches with each of us and do the job that needs to be done. And that's what Chris was doing, doing the job that needed to be done.

When you're riding on a motorcycle and you're hot and tired and everything else and they give you a bottle of water. That water disappears real quick and you're left with a piece of plastic in your hand. What do you do with it?

We can't leave it behind because we can't

leave trash behind to all these places that allow us.

So, Chris, thanks for doing your job. I really forgot about it but thanks for reminding me, but Chris did an incredible job representing the organization.

The Legacy Scholarship Fund, you know, that was my project back when I was National Commander. It stayed near and dear to my heart this entire time. And we've been raising tons of money for it as a Legion family.

Over \$20 million has been raised for the Legacy Scholarship Fund. Last year, \$1.3 million in scholarships were given out to the veterans of our children that have fallen and our disabled veterans' children. What an incredible job, and the Sons of the American Legion are a big part of that as well.

The National organization came to The American Legion Riders and said, guys, you do an incredible job raising money for the Legacy Scholarship Fund, but the Legacy Scholarship Fund

now has \$17 million sitting in the fund. And it doesn't need to be filled anymore; it has enough money in it now to support the needs of our children for the foreseeable future, with what it's going to earn and the additional donations that will come in.

So, they said we want you to accept a new challenge. And after hearing about that challenge, we all got on board, everyone on the national committee.

That new challenge is one you just heard from a second ago -- the Veterans & Children Foundation. They want us to be the new face, so to speak, the new fundraiser for the Veterans & Children Foundation. And I want us all to support that as well.

I saw a quote that said, whenever you climb a great mountain, you look across and see there are other great mountains to climb. Well, we've climbed that great mountain of the Legacy Scholarship Fund and now we're going to climb another great mountain, the Veterans & Children

Foundation.

We need to help those veterans that have children and have financial needs. We need to help train new service officers so they can go out and get our veterans the disability benefits they deserve.

As I think you might have just heard, over \$16 billion was funded by the VA to our veterans. And that's what we're going to be doing as American Legion Riders -- we're going to be supporting the Veterans & Children Foundation. And I hope you all get on board with me on that.

With that, I want to say thank you for all you do back at your home Posts and back in your Squadrons and chapters and please keep supporting our country, The American Legion Riders and The American Legion.

Thank you very much.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: At this time, I yield the podium to National Vice Commander Ron Roberts.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: Would Chris Casey come to the microphone, please? The reason we wanted to call him up we wanted to go to Resolution No. 2.

I had the privilege to serve on the TFA Committee for my home state of Mississippi, the Legion, to review these applications. You would be amazed how many veterans' families need help because they either got shipped off because they didn't have the funds transferred in time, so the wife is there with bills, but not getting any money. And he's picking up his paycheck over in Baghdad, which doesn't do her any good in Mississippi Oklahoma.

Chris, could I have you read the resolution for us again?

CHRIS M. CASEY (NE): Yes, sir.

Hello, again, take two.

SAL Resolution 2, National Convention, 2023.

Title, donation of \$250,000 to the Veterans & Children Foundation from the SAL Reserve

Fund.

Origin, Americanism Commission. National Commander, Christopher Carlton.

WHEREAS in the 1970's, the Sons of the American Legion Liability Account, now called the Sons of the American Legion Reserve Fund, was established as a restricted fund for use in the event of emergencies, such as membership decline, etc. And temporary funds were needed to meet expenses;

And WHEREAS, the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 11-12, 2017, by NEC Resolution No. 4 established a ceiling of \$750,000 (with a variance of +/- 1.5 percent) for the Sons of The American Legion Reserve Fund for each budget year ending in the month of December to be reviewed annually by the Internal Affairs Commission of The American Legion at the Spring meetings for adequacy and from a fiscal management viewpoint;

And WHEREAS, Resolution No. 4 adopted at

the Fall, 2017 meeting of The American Legion National Executive Committee further empowers the Sons of The American Legion to request permission to transfer funds from the Sons of The American Legion Reserve Fund to any approved charity that supports America's veterans and youth with the approval and consent of both the Internal Affairs Commission and the Finance Commission of The American Legion;

And WHEREAS, The Sons of The American Legion Reserve Fund is presently over the variance established; now, therefore,

Be it RESOLVED, by the Sons of The American Legion in Annual Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina on August 25-27, 2023, that the Sons of The American Legion hereby approves the donation of \$250,000.00 from the Sons of The American Legion Reserve Fund to The American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation;

And be it further RESOLVED, that the Sons of The American Legion hereby recommends to the Internal Affairs Commission of The American Legion

that said funds be distributed from the Sons of The American Legion Reserve Fund.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: You've heard the resolution. As a delegate to the 51st annual Convention of the Sons of the American Legion, I make a motion to accept the resolution. Do I have a second.

WILLIAM G. HILL (MD): Bill Hill, delegate, Maryland, second.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: Bill Hill, the money man. We have a second.

Any discussion, any questions for Bill or anybody.

It's a very important resolution. If you have any questions now is the time to ask them.

Hearing no questions, all in favor signify by saying aye. Any opposed, say no.

The ayes have it. The resolution is passed.

... Applause.

At this time, I call on Ned Fox for the National Convention Constitutional Amendments

Committee report.

ORAL REPORT

National Convention Constitutional Amendments
Committee
Nedley C. Fox (CA), Chairman

Good morning. It's 9:16 a.m. on the West Coast. Mine is going to be short on the report. But, NECs, if you have your book, I'd like you to put No. 10 in your book.

And I learned -- I've been a member now 63 years of this great organization -- and I was taught at a very young age, we respect our veterans. They've earned the right to eat and drink alcoholic beverages when they're wearing their cover. We as Sons, we're here to support them.

Please, courtesy, respect, remove your covers if you're eating or drinking alcohol. That's rule of the day. Please put that in your book, unwritten rule No. 10. I have a couple more, and we'll save those for later.

Now, on behalf of the Constitutional Amendments or bylaws, it's been called a few

different things, however, I'd like to thank -- we had 20 Detachments represented at the meeting that took place in Room 205, Section B.

I'd like to thank Chris Cook from Oklahoma for putting together the notes for us. And Chris, thank you. I got them right here.

I'd like to acknowledge junior Past National Commander Michael Fox for stepping in and acknowledging. And if I've missed anybody, my apologies.

I will put the roll call list; I'll leave that with the National Adjutant so those can be an official record thereof. So, we opened 11:30, 11:31. We had one resolution that was presented and discussed. Kicked back and forth around the wall. Those who wished to speak had the opportunity. I think it was good discussion. I think we will leave it at that.

But the resolution was SAL Resolution No. 7 of the National Convention, 2023. And the title was Annual Dues and Per Capita.

Origin, Detachment of Oklahoma.

WHEREAS, the National Constitution and Bylaws is the governing document of the Sons of The American Legion;

And WHEREAS, the revenue for each Squadron and Detachment is derived from annual membership dues;

And WHEREAS, the National Constitution and Bylaws does not define who sets the annual membership dues;

Now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, by the Sons of The American Legion in Annual Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina on August 25-27, 2023, that the National Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion, Article X, Section 2, be amended to read "The amount of National per capita shall be determined by each National Convention for the ensuing year";

And be it further RESOLVED, that Article X, Section 3, to read "The annual dues amount shall be determined by the Squadron and Detachment, respectively, which will include the National per capita.";

And be it finally RESOLVED, that the current Section 3 and Section 4 remain and be renamed accordingly.

By unanimous consent, this was approved.

As a delegate to this convention, I would make a motion to approve Resolution No. 7 to the National Convention.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: You've heard the motion to approve Resolution No. 7, National Convention 2023. Do I have a second?

CHRIS COOK (OK): I'm on my way. Everyone else is asleep. Let me find a mic. Wait a sec. I don't know where a mic is at.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: They hid it right there in the middle of the aisle.

CHRIS COOK (OK): Chairman, Chris Cook, delegate of Oklahoma. I second the motion.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: Second by Chris Cook, Detachment of Oklahoma. Is there any discussion?

Everybody understand the motion? No discussion.

All in favor signify by saying aye to SAL Resolution No. 7, National Convention 2023. Any opposed?

Hearing none, the motion carries.

NEDLEY FOX (CA): We'll give our report. Do we have the video clip ready? I guess not.

Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you for the opportunity to come up and address you and have this done. I would like to announce that the committee, Subcommittee on Resolutions, when we adjourn, let's get together so we can have a quick discussion for Post convention, and just a quick acknowledgment, beings we've got time -- we're killing time; they told me to stretch because of more guests to come -- but acknowledge Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Ohio, New York, New Jersey, California -- that I know for sure were at the meeting yesterday.

And with that, Commander, I would like to make a motion that my report be accepted as verbally said. Thank you.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: You've heard the motion to accept the report.

BRANDON CURRY (KY): Mr. Commander, Brandon Curry, Kentucky, seconds the motion.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: Seconds to accept Ned Fox's report. Any questions? No discussion?

All those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, nay.

The motion carries.

Ned, on behalf of Commander Chris Carlton, I'd like to make you a Distinguished Guest to the 51st National Convention.

Will Kevin Chaplin come to the microphone please for Public Media and Communications.

Virginia, Kevin Chaplin.

ORAL REPORT
Public Media and Communications
Kevin Chaplin (VA), Chairman

Thank you, Vice Commander. Good afternoon, everybody.

Before we get started I'd like to thank and introduce the commission members -- Vice Chairman, Robert Hill; members, Brandon Roberts,

Doug Heiser, William Murphy III; our national Webmaster Gene Theroux; consultant, Charles Treat III; and NEC liaisons Mark and Bruce. And let's not forget our PNC advisor David Faust. Thank you for your hard work.

The Commission has been working on tracking the performance of our website, newsletters and social media. Our goal is to increase member engagement using our Facebook page, our website and our newsletter subscriptions.

Can I have a show of hands, how many you're using myLegion.org? That's a good number.

How many of you have subscribed to our newsletters? That's a little smaller number. Just something to keep in mind, there's a section, when you're in myLegion, down in the lower left, called subscriptions. You can subscribe to a whole bunch of newsletters from the Legion family, one of which is the SAL Newsletter. Please encourage your members in your Detachment to engage with myLegion.org website and subscribe to our newsletters and follow our Facebook page.

MyLegion.org is a member portal and the only way to subscribe to our newsletters. We're currently working on a simpler method of subscribing to our national communications.

Currently, you need to be a member, have access to myLegion.org and click on the subscribe button.

We're working on a subscribe button for our Web page where anybody can enter their name and email address to subscribe to electronic communications.

Did you know that 25 percent of our Facebook traffic is female? Imagine these are Auxiliary members keeping tabs on what the Sons are doing.

I would love for them to receive our newsletters. This would allow us to communicate with potential members and other interested parties who are not Sons members.

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.

At this time, we're going to play a short video for the Snapshots of Service. As you know, the Public Media Communications judges a national photo contest, Snapshots of Service. This photo contest is designed -- this photo contest is designed to showcase the outstanding work and commitment our members have to this great organization.

Each year we choose the winning photos in four categories that represent the pillars that support The American Legion -- Americanism, Children and Youth, National Security, Veterans Affairs.

This year there was stiff competition. There were some great pictures submitted. And I wish we could make them all winners. Here's a video of the winners and the submissions.

... At this time the delegation viewed a video.

... Applause.

Some really good pictures. Like I said,

I wish we could make them all winners.

This year the winners are, for Veterans Affairs, first place, Squadron 105, New Jersey, presenting a donation to the Fisher House.

... *Applause.*

If you could make your way up here.

Second place, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, is Squadron 257, Ohio, distributing treat packages to veterans at McMullen Assisted Care.

... *Applause.*

Children and Youth, first place, Squadron 112, Benson, SAL member Sean Casey attending wreath-laying ceremony in Washington D.C.

That was that opening one with the kid was in color and everything else was black and white. It was an excellent picture.

... *Applause.*

Second place, Children and Youth, Squadron 246, Betterton, youth member -- Betterton, Maryland, youth members Able and Finley, after a community parade in Betterton, Maryland.

Americanism, Squadron 207, Massachusetts, Commander Jeffrey Zaleski and his son, Kalen, presenting flags at veterans' gravesites, and Civil War Medal of Honor recipient Edward Leonard.

... Applause.

Second place, Americanism, Squadron 105, New Jersey, participating in their flag-retirement ceremony on July 26, 2023.

... Applause.

National Security, first place, Squadron 257, Ohio, Loudonville High School, POW/MIA Recognition Day in Loudonville, Ohio.

Let's have a big round of applause for all our Snapshot winners.

... Applause.

Next up is our Videos of Service Award. This is the first time we're giving out awards for this contest. It was just voted in last year.

This contest is to bring awareness to the public about the Sons of the American Legion using social media platforms. The videos must contain SAL members in their covers or identifiable

clothing on or during the activity or event and fall under one of the three categories -- Program Support, Community Engagement, Membership and Recruitment.

The winning videos must be published -- will be published on our national Facebook page. We didn't want to put them out ahead of time because you would know who won. So, we'll put them up sometime after the convention.

Membership and Recruitment, first place, 105, New Jersey.

... *Applause.*

Program Support, first place, 457, New York.

... *Applause.*

Second place, 414, Massachusetts.

Community Engagement, first place, Squadron 42, Indiana.

... *Applause.*

You'll notice we didn't have a second place in Membership and Recruitment or Community Engagement. That means there's some opportunity

there for Squadrons and Detachments and members to put more videos out there and submit them. You're doing it already. Let us know about it. We'll be glad to put it in and get it judged.

As a delegate of this 51st convention, I make a motion to accept my report.

MARK MCCUE (MA): Mark McCue, NEC, Massachusetts, seconds.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: You got a little ahead of yourself. Did our court reporter get that second? Thank you.

All in favor of accepting the National Public and Media Communications report signify by saying aye. All opposed, nay.

Hearing none, the motion carries. Thank you, Chairman Chaplin.

We're getting closer to where we want to get to, gentlemen.

On behalf of National Commander Chris Carlton, I make you a Distinguished Guest.

Let's get on to the important stuff. I had to verify this because everybody's waiting

this.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NVC Ronald Roberts (MS)

Anybody have to make any announcements, wants to make any announcements? This is the time, gentlemen. Any Detachment, anybody have any announcements for the group? Come to the microphone.

We've got one from up here. If you've got an announcement to make please come to a microphone so we can hear the announcement.

PNC JOSEPH W. GLADDEN (MD): Joe Gladden, Past National Commander from Maryland.

Tonight, we're very honored and want to invite everyone come out to American Legion Independence Post 262 to meet and greet our candidate, Mr. JR Hall, for National Commander, Sons of the American Legion, tomorrow if the creeks don't rise and the water don't fall.

So, the Post is located at 1940 Donald Ross Road, Charlotte, North Carolina, 28028. Come out tonight and share some hospitality and meet our

candidate. Look forward to seeing you, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: Thank you, PNC Gladden.

We've got an announcement from the podium.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: At the conclusion of today's session, I'm going to request that Chuck Gannon, Jim Hartman, Joe Gladden, leading candidate for National Commander and the five leading candidates for National Vice Commander remain in the building. We just want to go over a quick rehearsal with everyone.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Adjutant.

Before we call for caucuses, there's someone I'd like in the audience to come up on stage to make some remarks. My friend from Georgia, Mr. Bob Brown, would you please come up on stage. Mr. Bob Brown, the microphone is yours.

BOB BROWN (GA): Thank you, Past Commander Roberts. I hope I can keep my emotions

in check. I think those who have known me for a while know that I get emotional when I talk about things that come from my heart.

It has been my great honor to be a member of this organization for 35 years, spending the last 16 serving as NEC for the state of Georgia and this national organization.

During that time -- you might look at me and wonder, what the heck is going on up there -- I served under 15 National Commanders. Beginning with the first one I served under, Ray Giehl's father-in-law. And the last one, Chris Carlton, son-in-law.

It's been such a great experience and my honor to serve with 15 National Commanders, 75 National Vice Commanders and probably over 200 NECs and Alternates. I've achieved so many things in this organization. I got to go across country with J.R. Stillwell after his accident. Spend three days in the car with J.R. and you'll know what this organization is about.

... *Laughter.*

I got a chance to ride the Legacy Run for the first 12 Runs. First one starting in Oklahoma -- excuse me, Salt Lake City.

Traveled through a lot of countries and a lot of states. Visited a lot of Posts, some of the great sites.

I had the opportunity to go to every single one of the military academies and several of the training bases, actually spending a week at Parris Island training with the troops. Scared the heck out of me, wondering what the heck I was doing there. Stood in those yellow footprints knows not what to talk about.

The Naval Academy; Air Force Academy; Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Gordon; the Air Force Academy.

During that time, I've been able to meet 26 Congressional Medal of Honor recipients, including a very close friend of mine, Medal of Honor recipient Raymond Davis, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps at one time.

It's been such an honor. I don't know

how to say it. And I thank you all for being supportive. I've been passing out a few coins that I had made special.

I call it my retirement. It's not; I'm just retiring as an NEC. I'm not going to leave the organization. I'll still be around if you need me.

I tried to give as many of these coins out to people that I worked with over the years. I have some more left. And if you worked with me over the years and would like to have one, please meet up with me. I'd love to give you one. I've got 100 pounds of them in my pocket I need to get rid of any how.

... Laughter.

But thank you so much, gentlemen. Thank you, Commander Carlton. It's been a great year.

I think it's almost ironic that I served with your father-in-law first and you last.

But I'm wearing all their pins, every single one of them, in order, from the first to the last.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to thank all of you for being my friends, my coworkers and those that I've had so many experiences with. Thank you so much. God bless America. God bless our troops.

... Rising applause.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: I met Bob 15 years ago as an NEC my first time here. And I introduced myself. I said, I have no idea what an NEC is about. He said, sit down, I'll tell you.

As much time as you've got, in every Convention after that, you sit down with me again, and in 15 years you'll have learned what I know.

Thank you Bob. On behalf of National Commander Chris Carlton, it's my honor to make you a Distinguished Guest to the 51st National Convention, Charlotte, North Carolina.

... Applause.

Gentlemen, I'm going to -- I want to make sure we're in order here. We're going to be going into recess shortly, but I want to -- go ahead, sit down, have a seat.

I want to ask our National Vice Commanders at this time while everyone is still in the room to tell your region where you're going to have your caucus. So, I'll start.

Southern area caucus will be in the front and to my left, your right.

NVC DAVID MENNEL: Central Region, in the center down here in the front.

NVC JACK YOUNGS: Western Region will be back in the corner there to my left and your right.

NVC MICHAEL KIRSCHNER: Midwest will meet right over here to my right. And since I gave Ernie's report, I'm going to let you know the East -- and you all can figure out who will run your caucus -- will meet back by the Rise of the Sun sign.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: Thank you, fellow NVCs.

... *Gavel.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: And one last announcement. After the caucus, I will be available over -- if anyone would like pictures.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: Anybody else have any announcements to make before we go into recess?

Hearing none.

... Gavel.

ADJOURNMENT

With the Colors of our Nation in place, right-hand salute.

Two!

Gentlemen, the 51st National Convention of the Sons of the American Legion will now stand in recess until 8:00 a.m. tomorrow morning. Thank you.

... At 12:47 a.m., Saturday, August 26, 2023, the 51st Annual Convention of the Sons of the American Legion was adjourned.

-oOo-

... At 8:00 a.m., Sunday, August 27, 2023, the members assembled for the 51st Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were had:

CALL TO ORDER - Day 3

Christopher Carlton (IN), National Commander

Sergeant-at-Arms, please secure the doors. Thank you. Good morning, everyone.

It was brought to my attention, and I would like for you to help me sing happy birthday. Apparently, we've had a birthday, our Adjutant Anthony Wright. So, if you will, please.

... The delegation sang "Happy Birthday"

NATIONAL ADJUTANT ANTHONY WRIGHT: I do want to thank you for singing happy birthday. My family didn't even sing happy birthday to me on my birthday. Ironically -- that's fine because I was out making my wife money.

FROM THE FLOOR: We're your family!

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: That's right. You are my family. The live feed isn't working,

but I'm sure she's not watching the live feed. I do turn 50. At one point I was the youngest member of my Detachment, but fortunately we brought in a couple of younger guys. Now I feel like I'm part of that older group of guys that I used to pal around with.

So once again, thank you guys and girls.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Please rise. With the Colors of our Nation in place, please join me in offering a right-hand salute.

Two.

National Chaplain Jeff Gibson will invoke the blessing of God. Please uncover.

Invocation

Jeff Gibson, Sr. (AL), National Chaplain

Oh, Father, bless us and keep us and watch over this meeting. We honor this in your son's name, and everyone said amen.

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

... The Convention observed a moment of silence.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I call upon National Sergeant-at-Arms Greg Wagner to lead us in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Pledge of Allegiance

Greg Wagner (IN), National Sergeant-at-Arms

... The Convention recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

... The National Anthem was played.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Please be seated.

... Gavel.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: National Adjutant Anthony Wright will now call the roll.

Roll Call

Anthony Wright (PA), National Adjutant

National Commander

Christopher A. "Chris" Carlton.

National Vice Commanders

East: Ernest E. "Ernie" Laberge, Massachusetts -
Excused.

South: Ronald E. "Ron" Roberts, Mississippi.

Central: David J. "Dave" Mennel, Michigan.

Midwest: Michael L. "Mike" Kirschner, Colorado.

West: Jack A. Youngs, Idaho.

National Adjutant

Anthony W. Wright, Pennsylvania.

National Assistant Adjutants

Harold E. Thompson, Jr., Nebraska (Emeritus)

James E. "Ed" Sheubrooks, Florida.

Robert J. Avery, New York.

Scott A. Williams, Virginia.

Scott J. Thornton, Ohio - Excused.

Jeffrey E. Hicks, New Jersey.

Clifford Hall, Georgia

National Chaplain

Jeffrey L. "Jeff" Gibson, Sr., Alabama.

National Parliamentarian

Gary Leach, California.

National Historian

Stephen J. DeFeo, Indiana.

National Sergeant-At-Arms

Greg J. Wagner, Indiana.

National Assistant Sergeants-At-Arms

Brian K. Waters, Pennsylvania.

Greg Falco, New York.

Lyle G. Larson, Kansas - Excused.

Mark T. Fayer, Sr., Maryland.

Matt Griffis, Arizona - Excused.

National Commander's Aide

David A. Miller, Indiana.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDERS**Immediate Past National Commander**

Michael C. Fox, California.

Michael K. Seaton, California - Excused

Robert A. McBride, Ohio - Excused

J.R. Stillwell, Illinois - Excused

Robert H. Faust, California.

James R. Hartman, 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.

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 - Excused.

Clifford A. Smith, Massachusetts.

Michael J. Deacon, Iowa.

Earl R. Ruttkofsky, Michigan.

Raymond P. Giehll, Jr., Indiana.

Thomas E. Cisna, Illinois - Excused.

Mark E. Arneson, Georgia.

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 Paviglianti, New York.

Roll call of Detachments

Alabama.

Alaska.

Arizona.

California.

Connecticut.

Delaware.

Florida.

France.

Georgia.

Hawaii.

Idaho.

Illinois.

Indiana.

Iowa.

Kansas.

Kentucky.

Louisiana.

Maine.

Maryland.

Massachusetts.

Michigan.

Minnesota.

Mississippi.

Missouri.

Montana.

Nebraska.

Nevada.

New Hampshire.

New Jersey.

New Mexico.

New York.

North Carolina.

North Dakota.

Ohio.

Oklahoma.

Oregon.

Pennsylvania.

Puerto Rico.

South Carolina.

South Dakota.

Tennessee.

Texas.

Vermont.

Virginia.

West Virginia.

Wisconsin.

Wyoming.

Commander, that completes roll call. You
have a quorum.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I now
declare this 51st National Convention of the Sons

of The American Legion reconvened.

At this time, I yield the podium to National Vice Commander Ron Roberts.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: Got to figure out where I am on this. At this time, I call upon National Commander Chris Carlton for his final report. The podium is yours, Mr. Commander.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER'S FINAL REPORT

Chris Carlton (IN), National Commander

First and foremost, I'd like to thank my beautiful, wonderful wife Veronica Carlton.

Like I said, when I made her a Distinguished Guest, if it wasn't for her, I wouldn't be here. I was asked one time, do you have the support of my wife, and I said I wouldn't be sitting here if she didn't. She's helped me through the years, always backing me and guiding me in the right way, always proofreading my speeches, correcting my spelling. So, thank you. I love you.

I'd also like to thank my parents, Raylene Carlton, Mirron Carlton, Mom and Dad, for

raising me the way I am. The things I do, how I act, is because of them. It is truly correct when they say that you're an image in the shadow of your parents.

I thank my grandparents, Edna and Virgy Carlton, who are no longer with us, because they too shaped and molded me.

I want to thank my other family, Ray and Debbie Giehl.

My brothers and sisters, I'd like to thank the Detachment of Indiana, The American Legion Department of Indiana, the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Indiana. Their support and backing has helped me through this time, has brought me to where I am, and I know that I can rely on them to do the things that I need done because they know that I will help them do the things they need done.

There's a lot of other things. I'd like to thank the National Vice Commanders, what a great job you've done, leading your regions, doing the things you did, reaching an all-time high.

... *Applause.*

And I'd like to thank all of you, each and every Detachment out there, for reaching an all-time high. In your Detachments, I mean we had four Triple Nickels this year, one of the hardest awards that you can get. That's no easy feat. And then many others who reached 100 percent, over 100 percent.

It wasn't my work, it wasn't their work, it was your work. The money we raised for CWF, it wasn't my work, it wasn't their work, it was your work. It was your hard work. It was your passion. You knew what the purpose was, and you kept going, and you did it.

Throughout this past year, I've been coast to coast, north and south, and everywhere in between, even over the pond to Germany. I got to do a lot of great things. Usually, I don't talk about myself as I, me, but since this is a report about me, I'll share some of the things that, yes, I have done.

I got to do a lot of great things. Just how our schedule is made, it's invitation only. So, if you haven't put in an invitation for our next National Commander, please do so.

So, I kind of kept with how the weather was because I got to visit all the cold places first and all the hot places last. So, in the winter I was cold, and in the summer I was hot.

But on some of the visits, I got to talk to a gentleman one night at a Squadron function, and he was on the fence about joining the Sons. He was like, well, what do I need? We were telling him; you just need your father's DD-214. Well, I have that in my wallet. You're carrying that around in your wallet? Yeah.

I'll tell you what, I'll pay your first year's dues if you fill that out tonight. Sure enough, he filled it out, and a few minutes later I was initiating him into the Sons of the American Legion.

I've done buddy checks. I've driven with Detachments to collect raffle tickets, meeting

other Squadrons, helping with hog roast. I've been to the end of the trail, the Oregon Trail, going around. I had the opportunity in Oregon to be able to be able to install a new Squadron and their officers.

I got to meet a lot of you, talk with you, see what you're about, see what you do, encourage you.

I participated in a lot of the American Legion programs. When it came time for the Oratorical, it was on my schedule to be there, and I looked at our liaison Kevin Mook, and I said what is my capacity? What am I supposed to do? He said, you really don't have to be there until the last day to present the winners.

So, I can volunteer? He kind of gave me this look, you want to volunteer? One, I live in Indiana. Two, it was one of the first things I did when I got into the Sons was volunteer for Oratorical.

So, I was an escort for two days, and on one of those days a gentleman across from me, he

said, so you're the National Commander for the Sons? Yes, I am. He's like, so what is your job actually? I said, well, my job is to inspire, encourage, congratulate our members, pushing them on to do what they do.

As National Commander I'm supposed to do what I'm doing right now, what you're doing, and volunteer for our programs. I've said it many times and I tell people; I believe that a leader is not just someone that barks orders and points the finger on which way to go, but they're the servant. They're out front leading by example. I believe to be a great leader, you must be a great servant, and that's what I did. I'd bus tables.

When I went to National Commander Troiola's Homecoming, I found a Post that was close because, well, there's a lot of downtime, and actually it didn't start until the next day. So, there was a Post about a mile away, and I figured, well, let's go for a walk. An hour later, I'm there.

I didn't walk into that Post saying, hi,

I'm Chris Carlton, the National Commander for the Sons of the American Legion. I just said, hi, I'm Chris Carlton from Indiana here for the homecoming. The Post Commander was great, showed me around. Everybody I met was great. They had bingo that night, and when it was time to tear down, I said, hey, can I help? Oh, yeah, sure, come on. I busted tables down and stacked chairs and put them where they needed to go.

I happened to give someone a coin, and next thing I know, what, you're National Commander? You shouldn't be doing this. I was like, no, that's not right. I'm National Commander. I should be doing this.

We had a great year. We've accomplished many things, but I know that who follows me is going to do the same because the same members are going to be here. The same members are going to continue to work the way they worked this year to make this organization better and greater year after year after year after year.

I'm not going to go on and on, but I do

want to thank each and every one of you once again for electing me, allowing me to be your Commander, and I hope I have made you as proud as all of you have made me proud.

God bless this country, God bless our troops, and God bless this organization, the Sons of the American Legion.

... Applause.

RAYMOND GIEHLL, JR. (IN): Mr. Chairman, Raymond Giehll Jr., Delegate from the Detachment of Indiana, makes a motion to accept the Commander's Final Report.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: You've heard the motion. Do I have a second to that motion? Gentlemen, surely someone wants to go to the microphone.

JUAN CRUZ (PR): Juan Cruz, NEC Puerto Rico, I second the motion.

NVC RONALD ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Juan Cruz from Puerto Rico. The motion has been made and seconded. Any discussion? Great. All in favor, signify by saying aye. Opposed? There had

better not be any.

Motion passed. Thank you.

At this time, I yield the podium to National Commander Chris Carlton.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: At this time, I call on Harold Thompson, Jr., for the National Convention Credentials Committee final report.

FINAL REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Harold Thompson, Jr. (NE), Chairman

Good morning. At the close of the registration Saturday, we had 51 Detachments with 990 delegates, 22 alternates, 108 guests at the 51st National Convention.

Members attending the credentials committee was the Chairman Harold Thompson Jr., Nebraska; Robert Servile of California; Ed Sheubrooks of Florida; Jimmy Hunter of Illinois; James Nader of Indiana; Matthew Krupco of Kansas; William Murphy of Massachusetts; Robert Phillip, Jr., New Jersey; Robert Avery in New York; Dennis Albright of Ohio; and Tyler Vance of Virginia.

Our guest was Eric Kinsey of Georgia, Steve Concord of Iowa, Desmond Miller of New Hampshire, and William Slater Jr. and William Slater Sr. of North Carolina.

With no further business, Tyler Vance moved to close the meeting, second by James Nader. Meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m., August the 25th, 2023.

Credentials chairman. I will not go through and read the delegates list since I did that yesterday, and there's been no changes to the delegate strength, to save some time this morning.

As credentialed chairman Harold Thompson, duly elected delegate to the 51st National Convention, Sons of the American Legion, I move for the acceptance of my report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I have a motion on the floor to accept the National Convention Credentials Committee report.

Is there a second?

JOHN KINGSTON (TX): John Kingston, Detachment of Texas, seconds.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: The motion is seconded. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor of accepting the National Convention Credentials Committee report, signify by saying aye. All opposed by saying nay.

...Gavel.

Ayes have it. The motion carries.

Thank you, Chairman Thompson.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON:

Sergeant-at-Arms, secure the doors and allow no one to enter. Thank you.

I will now turn the podium over to National Chaplain Jeff Gibson, Sr. for the Memorial Service.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL SERVICE

Jeff Gibson, Sr. (AL), National Chaplain

You all sound a little weak this morning. Late last night? I'm going to do something a real quick. Is Brandon Curry here? Would he please come forward out of Kentucky.

Would you come up here for a minute, please.

Could I get all the veterans to stand up. All veterans, all dual members, would you please stand down here in front, please.

Listen up, guys, I got a lot of text messages last night, the positive things that we do, and it's live streamed. So, when people see what we do, they appreciate it. They want to be members. The next year's goal will be 5,000 members, based on what we do.

Mr. Brandon Curry, could you come up here, please. Yes, sir.

Will all Sons please stand. All the rest of you all please stand so we can honor our veterans. The Commander gave me permission to make Brandon a Distinguished Guest of the Convention. I want you all to understand why this is so important.

When you've been in combat and you see the Humvee in front of you get blowed up and you run up there and try to pull your squad member or one of your platoon members out, man, it does something to you. For Brandon to take a staff

sergeant's remains back to the state of Alabama to his loved ones, that's a lot.

I tossed and turned last night, and I got this for the veterans on behalf of the Sons, and this is the veteran creed. When you listen to it closely, you'll hear what Brandon did.

The veteran creed.

I am a veteran. I have seen and done things you may not understand. I am a warrior! I will never accept defeat. I will never quit. I will never leave a fallen brother or sister. If they are hurt, I will carry them. If I can't carry them, I will drag them.

I will help them face their enemies. That includes the demon from within. They are my brothers and sisters. I'm a veteran!

Sons, let's give these veterans a hand salute and thank them for their service.

... *Applause.*

You can have your seats now. Thank you very much.

If you see tears in my eyes, it's not

weak. They are unspoken words.

The next thing we want to do a little different is that the one we prayed for yesterday, he passed away last night. I got a lot of prayer requests about cancer, people losing their wives, their fellow Sons members.

Would all cancer survivors please stand that's present. This is being live streamed, y'all. You know why I asked that? You know what, we don't know who's watching this that might be dealing with cancer, that might take this and use it as a little uplift or little motivation to let them know that it's going to be all right.

To the gentlemen in the back that's standing up that survived cancer, let's give them a round of applause.

... Applause.

I have three requests real quick before we start our service. Thank you all so very much for allowing me to do that.

The first one is the Maryland 400. Today we remember the brave 400 men from Maryland who

came, who gave up Brooklyn to help George Washington hold the bridges. 256 of them perished that day in the Battle of Long Island. As long as the Battle of Brooklyn and the Battle of Brooklyn Heights was military action of the American Revolutionary War fought August 27, 1776, the western edge of Long Island in its present day for Brooklyn, New York.

The Maryland 400 was members of the 1st Maryland Regiment and was repeatedly charged by numerous superior forces during the Battle of Long Island, during the Revolutionary War, sustaining heavy casualties but allowing General Washington to succeed, evacuating the bunker of his troops to Manhattan. This action commandeered the Maryland nickname, the Old Line State. A memorial in Brooklyn and a plaque was put up in memory of this regiment and their fallen soldiers.

The second one we got is on behalf of the Detachment of Oklahoma we would like to ask for prayer for our Detachment Liaison and Department Senior Vice Commander Lee Cathy, who is fighting

for his life battling cancer.

The last one, pray for Dee Bucky, Past Northwestern Division Auxiliary Vice President, who's fighting cancer from the Detachment of Minnesota.

We're dealing with a lot of cancers. Let's keep all those in prayer.

I'm going to give you a quick outline of our program. A welcome from Will Slater, North Carolina Detachment Chaplain. First scripture, Will Slater Jr. Second scripture, Terry Pressley. Then we have a music selection. Then I'll be back with the memorial prayer, then the memorial word. Then we'll have the candle lighting ceremony with the National Commanders and National Adjutant. Then music selection. Then we'll play Taps, and I'll close out with the benediction. That's the order of service.

WILL SLATER (NC): Good morning, gentlemen. How are we doing today? Hopefully everyone is having a good time at this convention. We definitely welcome you to Charlotte, North

Carolina, and I hope we have an outstanding time at this convention.

Just to let you know, today's chaplain is our NECman today. Our chaplain was unable to make it due to school starting. Let's have a good prayer for everybody for those going to school. Make sure that they are safe and secure. And let's have a great day. Thank you.

TERRY PRESSLEY (NC): Good morning.
Would you please uncover.

Dear Lord, we thank you. We thank you for this opportunity to come today to honor those who have come before us, Lord. We thank you for the health that you give us to do this job. We ask that you would be with us now during this memorial service.

Help us to honor those who have come before, help us to honor those who are serving now, Lord. These things we ask this in Your holy and precious name. Amen.

WILL SLATER (NC): Proverbs 3:5-6, Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lead not onto

your own understanding, in all your ways, submit to him, and he will make ye your paths straight.

TERRY PRESLEY (NC): You'll have to excuse me, I'm a Baptist. I do things the Baptist way. If you'll all stand to honor the reading of God's word.

This chapter comes from 1 Kings, chapter 8, verses 5-7. King Solomon and the entire city of Israel that had gathered about him were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and cattle that they could not be recorded or counted. The priest then brought the ark of the Lord's Covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the most holy place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim. The cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark and overshadowed the ark and its carrying Post. Thank you.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GIBSON: Be seated, gentlemen. We have a musical selection.

... *Music.*

Amen. Some gave all.

A prayer, a comfort this morning. Let us

go to the Lord in prayer.

Dear Lord, please comfort all who are hurting emotionally, all who are dealing with illness and injury, all who are heavy hearted, dealing with difficult situations, all who are anxious, worried, and fearful. You are the God of all comfort. You know each need. You hear each cry. You see each tear.

Lord, may each person feel your nearness. May your spirit engulf them with your peace. May they feel the burning be lifted from their shoulders. May they feel their bodies relax. May they find comfort and rest in your arms at this very moment.

All these blessings we ask in Thy name, and everyone said amen.

Our message today, I'm coming from a place of a little hurt. The veteran that Kevin Mook and Willie Morgan saved that served 24 years in the United States Navy, and he had to pull the plug on his wife of 31 years, they invited me to come to the Mayo Clinic in Milwaukee. I was not

able to go financially, but I told them, if they bring the body back this way, I would come and do the home going service.

So, they brought the body back. She wanted to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery, but it was booked up. So, she had to be buried in another cemetery in Virginia, and I drove up and did the service.

While I was there, I looked at the husband, and to lose someone that you spent 31 years of your life with to cancer. My message today is going to be about love, but I gave him this to comfort him and the family, and anyone out there who's been through some trials or tribulation and lost a loved one or lost a battle buddy, this is for you. It reads as thus.

When tomorrow starts without me, when tomorrow starts without me, I am not here to see if the sun should rise and find your eyes all full with tears for me.

I wish you wouldn't cry the way you did today while thinking of the many things we did not

get to say.

I know how much you love me, as much as I love you. Each time you think of me, I know you'll be missing me too.

When tomorrow starts without me, please try to understand that an Angel came and called my name and took me by the hand.

My brothers and sisters, for all your lost loved ones, that's for you all to let you know no matter what you're going through, no matter what trials and tribulations you may be facing, you're not alone. You have extended family that's here for you. All you have to do is reach up the phone and call.

When I called Kevin Mook and Willie Morgan, they jumped on it right away. I said, a man is contemplating suicide because he's hurting so deep inside, he don't know where to go. I asked him, did he call the VA? He said he couldn't get through right away. I told him, hold on, somebody will be there. We took care of that ASAP.

This year has been a beautiful year

because we were able to do so much. A lot of things that people don't know that chaplains do go unnoticed, but we know somebody sit high and look low, watches everything that we do.

But I just want to tell you all that because I don't know what you all are going out there, but last night I got some messages for prayer about cancer, cancer. That's why this morning I'm a little down because you can't reach everyone. You wish you could, but you just can't.

But as long as I get the message, I will continue to pray and ask for God's healing and protection over all of you, and not only those that suffer with cancer, those that's dealing with them, they need prayer also because if their spirits get down and they don't look out for themselves, how can they look after somebody else? So, they need prayers, encouragement, and uplift as well.

Our message today is Jesus is love. We're coming out of the book of Romans 5:8. It reads, God demonstrated his own love for us while we were still sinners. Christ died for us.

I know everybody has different beliefs, and I'm a man of God. I'm a gospel minister. So while I talk, while I pray, pray to the God of your understanding because I'm going to serve the God of my understanding.

So, I don't want to be offensive to anyone. Whatever your religious belief is, pray to your God. While I give this message, use your God of understanding.

When we try to determine someone's worthiness of love based on action, it becomes a game performance whereby we keep tally wrong and right. Love isn't measured by wrong or right, rather those who truly love do so regardless of whether love is ever reciprocated.

The single greatest example of love demonstrated in history is the birth, life and death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. While we were undeserving and still sinners and did not love him, he came to give us life for each of us.

Every day we live and serve is a day where we can exude the same love Jesus for us

because, as believers of his word, we have his love in our heart. From our daily duty of parenting and every day in between, there are numerous opportunities to show love today and every day, even to people we may deem undeserving.

Through these opportunities, we can demonstrate the true love of God to a hurting world through our words, actions, service, and all which we do in love.

I'm going to keep it good today. Sometimes you know us Southern preachers, we get a little long winded, but I want you all to understand what the message is all about. The things that you do, you do because you love the veterans. Your mother and father serve, and you know a lot of times somebody need a little encouragement.

I want you all to go with me for a few minutes on a trip. This picture of veterans sitting at home -- no wife, no children, nobody. All of a sudden, his anniversary date comes, and for the anniversary date, the anniversary date is

that day you almost died during the war.

All of a sudden, the demons start coming. You start going, your mind start going somewhere you don't understand where you're going. Then all of a sudden, you get a phone call. Hey, I'm just checking on you. How are you doing today?

You might not even know that person. Somebody give you the number. You just pick it up and call, hey, how are you doing today? Just by doing that, you save somebody's life. You don't know if he was serving or deserving that, but we do it anyway. That's what we do, y'all.

A lot of times we have to be reminded of the things that we do and why we do them because, you know what, a lot of people depend on us. A lot of you all get out there, cut veterans' grass.

One time I tried to be sneaky. I thought I was being sneaky. Now, I'm 6'5", 300-something pounds, and I'm trying to be sneaky. It was 11 veterans in our county that didn't have food. I told my wife; you drive the truck. I'm going to drop the food off, and I'm going to run. Keep the

truck moving. I drop the box at the door, run, try to jump on the back of the truck so, they wouldn't catch me. You know people, hey, that big guy. You know, the big guy with the light blue jacket on. The big guy, the Sons guy. I seen him.

But that's what we do, though. That's what it's about, and that's what the message is about because, you know what, I always thought about this. One day somebody might have to do for you.

You know, when I talk to the younger kids, I tell them, hey, don't disrespect your mother and father. They took care of you when you was born. They change you. If they keep on living, you might have to change them. That's love, y'all.

But I thank you all so very much for allowing me this opportunity. Man, it's been a great two years. My greatest success that we're able to build a veteran memorial in the county I live in through y'all's help.

I've had the opportunity to speak at a

lot of places. They asked me to come to Ft. Bragg this September to do a memorial service for the 82nd Airborne, but I told them I'll no longer be the National Chaplain, you know what I mean? If I go, I'm going as just a member.

I thank you all for this opportunity. Listen up, when we show the names of all the members that we lost this year, please, out of courtesy and respect, stand to represent your state.

Let us go to the Lord in prayer. Heavenly Father, thank you for demonstrating how you want me to love and for giving me a heart to love and serve others. Amen.

...The Convention viewed an In Memoriam video.

Amen, amen, and amen.

Ladies and gentlemen, we will now have the candle lighting ceremony with the National Commander and the National Vice Commanders.

Now we have a musical selection.

Ladies and gentlemen, will everyone

please rise. Place your cover on. Execute a half left, half right face, face the American flags, as we render Taps.

... Playing of Taps.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GIBSON: Let's go to the Lord in prayer. May the Lord bless and keep us. May he grant us strength to live through troubled times. May he fill us with his grace equal to meet every need and his peace which pass all understanding. May he grant us the wisdom and the will to do justice, to love mercifully and to walk humbly with him.

May he surround us with his love and lead us in the path of everlasting life. Amen.

Before I turn it over to the Commander, ladies and gentlemen, I want to give you this as my last words. When you feel alone, God loves you and is always with you. You're never alone. Thank you so very much.

Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Please be seated. That concludes our memorial service. And

at this time, I'd like to make our chaplain a Distinguished Guest of our 51st National Convention.

... Applause.

I know throughout the year I could always count on Chaplain Gibson to send me memes uplifting and just nice little things. Be blessed today, and just it always uplifted me. Thank you.

At this time, I'd like to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to bring our liaison Kevin Mook -- never mind, Kevin, would you please.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

KEVIN M. MOOK (MD): I have a couple of things to tell you. Checks. They're in progress. We should have them. We'll have them as soon as we have them. We expect to have them very soon. Yay. Okay.

... Applause.

Post-NEC, there's going to be pictures. There will be a photographer in the back for NEC members, new NEC, new officers in the back after Post-NEC.

And also Friday, Commander called me up. I was sitting down here talking with the court reporter to make sure that she's good to go, giving me a thumbs up every once in a while, making sure she's all right.

He called me up to talk. I wasn't ready for that. Then yesterday, my boss was here, Chairman Newman was here. I thought I better follow him up on stage. He called me up again. Both times I was not prepared. So, this time...

... *Applause.*

I'm prepared. But wait, there's more. I fined myself \$20 for the VCF.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: At this time, I would ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please bring Chairman Noble and all of our youth that participated yesterday to the podium.

REPORT

National Convention Youth Academy
James A. Noble (NJ), Chairman

Good morning.

All right, we're awake and alive and

going. I have a couple of quick announcements.

I'd like to thank our NECs, our liaisons on the committee. Bob Brown from Georgia. Chris Sherman from Wisconsin and David Rippe from Nebraska. Appreciate your help.

Quick footnote. There's a lot of behind the scenes nobody sees or knows what's going on. There's a list of people that's actually helped. Since Friday, I want to thank all of them. I'm not going to name all the names, it's too long.

After the presentation, we're going to pick the winning number on the raffle for the cornhole game. You can see me off stage and we'll take care of it from there.

Also, the shirts are still available. We're looking for a generous donation. The cornhole game raffle has brought in \$400. The T-shirts, 975.

With a grand total so far of \$1,375 to the Commander's project which is Veterans Children's Foundation.

Also, I have an extra \$20, Commander, for

you. Harold Thompson, National Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms, when I walked in the office -- unfortunately having a donut with his cap on -- he also donated \$20. We try to keep it going, guys.

Beware of these graduates. If you don't have a challenge coin, you might be making a donation. They were doing their job before the memorial service and right after it.

We're going to go into the presentations. We had a total of five, three of the SAL and two of the Auxiliary juniors. They're up on stage now. I have one of the Sons that --

... Applause.

Go ahead.

... Applause.

Gotta be inspired here. Let's go. I know our chaplain has done a great job getting us inspired. Thank you, sir.

One of them has something to say. I'd like to get him up to the microphone. If you give me a minute, we'll get it done.

SEAN DIETER JR.: I'm doing a fundraiser

for CWF, and all the money from this year will be coming from here to Pennsylvania to New Orleans.

... *Applause.*

So far I have \$73.

... *Applause.*

JIM NOBLE (NJ): That was Sean Dieter out of Pennsylvania.

These guys here, when we're done, they'll be in the back of the room for a few minutes, if anybody wants to give them a coin or pin, they'll gladly accept. Be careful of the challenge coins. They got me good yesterday.

Henry James Hasselhan.

Commander.

... *Applause.*

Sean Dieter Jr.

... *Applause.*

Luke Wheeler. Luke is from the Detachment of Virginia.

... *Applause.*

Next we have Rebekah Avila Hernandez, one of our juniors.

... *Applause.*

We have Samantha Sty.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: One more round of applause.

... *Applause.*

... *Gavel.*

JIM NOBLE (NJ): Thank you, Commander and National Officers, guests, delegates. It's been a busy three days. This old guy's going to handle it, though. All right.

Raffle tickets. Get your tickets out. Commander, it's all yours.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: It's all mine. It's always been this way, I make one person real happy and a bunch of other people mad.

... *Laughter.*

And I get to be the bearer of good news.
0639186. And that will be on the purple ticket.

0639186. That was a joke. It's a red ticket.

... *Laughter.*

We may have a winner. Please meet

Chairman Noble in the back.

We have now come to a very special item of business, the election of National Officers. At this time, I call upon National Parliamentarian Gary Leach, who will read the Rules of the Convention governing the Nomination and Election of Officers.

RULES OF ELECTION

Gary Leach (CA)

Good morning. The rules for the Nomination and Election of National Officers are contained in the Uniform Code of Procedure for the National Convention, the section under Rules of Convention and they're Rules 17 Through 22.

Those are the ones I'll read.

Rule 17: Prior to the election of National Officers, the National Commander shall appoint, subject to the approval of the National Convention, a judge of election and such number of tellers as deemed necessary, provided that the total number of tellers so appointed shall be an odd number.

In a contested election, candidates going to the ballot shall be entitled to one teller of their choice.

Rule 18: Nominations for National Officers shall be from the floor on roll call of the Detachments alphabetically arranged. Each Detachment may present as many candidates as it chooses.

Rule 19: Nominating speeches for National Officers shall be limited to five minutes each. Not more than two seconding speeches shall be made for any candidate and said speeches shall be limited to three minutes.

Rule 20: When more than two candidates are nominated for any office, balloting shall continue until one candidate receives a majority of the votes of the National Convention, except in the election of National Vice Commanders.

Rule 21: In a contested election for National Vice Commanders, balloting shall continue until (a) majorities and (b) pluralities are established for one or more candidates under the

following provisions: If, on any ballot taken, less than five candidates receive the necessary majority to elect, the candidate or candidates receiving a majority vote shall be declared elected and a new ballot shall be taken for the remaining number of places to be filled.

The candidate receiving the lowest number of votes on the preceding ballot shall be disqualified. Except, should two candidates remain to fill one place, a new ballot shall be taken.

Rule 22: The National Convention will nominate and elect a National Commander, and five National Vice Commanders, in this sequence.

Mr. Chairman, this completes the reading of the Rules of the Convention pertaining to the Nomination and Election of National Officers.

APPOINTMENT OF JUDGE AND TELLERS OF ELECTION

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: As Chairman of this Convention, I now appoint the following election officials: Harold Thompson, Jr., Nebraska as Judge of Election; Ed Sheubrooks, Florida; Robert Avery, New York; Scott Williams, Virginia as

Tellers of Election.

I will entertain a motion to accept the appointments of the Judge and Tellers of Election.

PAUL HAYSE (IL): Paul Hayse, Alternate NEC, Illinois, makes a motion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I have a motion. Is there a second?

CHRIS BEDEL (AK): Chris Bedel, Alaska, second that motion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's been a motion and it's been seconded. Is there any discussion?

Hearing none, all those in favor of accepting the appointments of the Judge and Tellers of Election, signify by saying aye.

All opposed by saying nay.

... *Gavel.*

The ayes have it. Motion carries.

If these gentlemen would please come to the stage, we will begin with the nominating and election process. Nominations for National Commander, 2023-2024.

PNC JAMES R. HARTMAN (MD): Mr. Commander, PNC James Hartman, Detachment of Maryland. I move that we suspend the rules of this convention pertaining to National Commander and nomination of election of National Vice Commanders, which rules shall be reinstated at the conclusion of the election of National Vice Commanders, I so move.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Motion on the floor. Is there a second?

JOHN LAWRENCE (LA): John Lawrence from Louisiana seconds.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Motion and seconded. Is there any discussion? All those in favor, say aye. All those opposed, say nay.

Ayes have it. Motion carries.

National Adjutant Anthony Wright will you now call the roll call of Detachments.

The purpose of the roll call is to receive nominations for the National Commander of the Sons of the American Legion.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: During the nomination process, each Detachment will be called

alphabetically. Each Detachment has the option to nominate a person for office, second the nomination or pass.

At this time, I'd request that everybody does use the microphones for the court reporter's purposes. We're going to start with Alabama.

DETACHMENT OF ALABAMA: Alabama yields to Maryland.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Maryland.

DETACHMENT OF MARYLAND: Request permission for Past National Commander Chuck Gannon to approach for the purposes of a nomination.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: We'll grant Mr. Gannon permission.

PNC CHARLES E. GANNON (MD): Thank you. I thought if it was all right with JR, we'll get Sean back up here to do this.

It's been 50 years since I did my first nomination on a floor like this. And it was very different then. The audience was about the size of one of these sides here. We were outside in a pavilion with a roof with the wind blowing, and Bob

Faust was about 50 years younger, our first, actually, elected Commander.

But really what has changed is the age. And it's not that we need to elect 10-year-olds and 15-year-olds as Commanders, but when you get home you need to remember the little guys, because if we don't start teaching them as little guys, they won't be interested when they get to be big guys. So, take that home with you.

Commander, officers on the dais, delegates, guests and friends, good morning.

Leadership, and I quote, "is more than the ability to be out front. Leadership requires a sense of how to improve." End of quote. That's what JR Hall told me a month ago when I sat down with him to get some facts. That's what he believes leadership is.

So now, allow me to present a profile in leadership. JR has been applying that philosophy since 2002 as a member of Glen Burnie Squadron 40, where he served in many elected and pointed positions, including commander several times.

If you walk into that Post, you can feel it. He's not just an SAL member, he's part of that Post, and because of him, his friends -- the SAL -- are part of that Post.

While organizing and working projects, many involving veterans, JR learned how important it is to remember those veterans of yesterday.

He soon discovered that sense of pride that comes along with directing yourself and dedicating your work to the person that is responsible for your eligibility.

In his case, that's his grandfather, Edward Hall, a World War II veteran. You will hear during the fall next year, "Remember More Than Yourself." That's JR's theme.

Taking the next step in leadership has become involved in the Southern Maryland District, and this is quite the story.

Again, holding many elected and appointed positions, he found himself in the middle of a rebuilding of a district back to its position of prominence in the Detachment of Maryland. He

organized a number of Past District Commanders to help a district that was floundering and he began setting new goals and implementing new programs that eventually rekindled the Southern Maryland District back to the respected place in the Detachment of Maryland. By the way, that district is home to three Past National Commanders.

Leaders always reaching out, reaching out, for the next challenge. And in Donald JR's case, that was the Detachment activities.

The Detachment of Maryland was not floundering but new ideas and ways to make it better are always welcome. He brought that with him. Ideas, ways to do things better.

Several of his endeavors that he championed first was the creation of Laps of Love. A fun -- that's the keyword here -- a fun activity that involves the little guys, the middle guys, the big guys the old guys in the wheelchair making money for just walking around a track.

In the case of Maryland, for the first time, we actually donated, from a regular project,

for Child Welfare Foundation, something we had never did. We gave to Child Welfare Foundation but we never had a project dedicated that. Because of JR, we now do.

The big thing that happened under him, he's always been a fan of Special Olympics, even before he got involved in the Sons of the American Legion. And the Detachment was involved. But we just showed up, participated, went home.

He thought we needed more than that. So, he gathered a group of leaders of the Detachment of Maryland and went to the Special Olympics and says we want to sponsor one of your events totally.

Well, that sounds like maybe no big deal. But said can you handle a bowling tournament? That doesn't sound like a big deal.

You're talking about two -- two -- regional tournaments. One statewide tournament. Now, it's not so much that you had that title, but you kind of come up with about \$35,000 a year and 40 volunteers.

Because of JR, we've done that. That's

gone on now for almost 10 years.

I slow down a little bit because I'm remembering back to my little discussion with JR earlier this month, and I'll give you another quote. "Take all steps." "Take all steps." Don't go sideways. Don't take any shortcuts. Do it completely or don't do it at all.

When he was Commander, his project was Special Olympics. Under his leadership, they raised \$80,000. That doesn't sound like much either. Oh, you're from the Detachment of Maryland, that's easy. That's on top of the other \$60,000 they raised for other projects.

But he was responsible for that \$80,000 that was set aside to help us get through the first couple of years of that endeavor to do the bowling tournament.

Now he finds himself on the steps of the National organization. How lucky can one man be, that someday he'll stand behind a podium like this and talk to an audience like this that knows what it's all about to be a volunteer.

New challenges needing new ideas, how to improve. You've just seen the little fellows and the gals up here. One of his first working ideas was a youth program as part of the National Convention. Learning while having that keyword fun.

And if it's not fun, they're not going to come. He has guided a few of the commissions, and in every case brought new ideas on how to improve. He didn't just stop there. He ran around to other commissions and committees, not just giving ideas but taking in ideas, passing them along.

If you have ever been on a conference call that he attends -- they're not all conference calls that he has to -- he always has an idea. And a lot of them are not his but they came from someone else.

You carry that on. You make sure everybody knows what works.

But JR has another life. That life that you need if you're going to move up in the Sons of the American Legion and do well in most

organizations, you have to have a family and they have to be behind you.

He has that. JR and Margie met in a church social, hard to believe, huh? They've been married for 37 years. That's a long time with one man.

If you've ever seen the TV show "Blue Bloods," there's always a scene with the family having a meal together at least once during the week.

Believe this or not, the Hall family -- unless JR is somewhere where he just can't get there and hope during that week someday, he can have something, a picnic or something, with all of his three children, his seven grandchildren and normally a couple of guests.

He could probably have a Squadron meeting in that little gathering, but they do that weekly.

And if you watch the show "Blue Bloods," they have a big guy on the end of the table. We have a big guy on the end of the table. God knows they don't look alike. But they have two things in

common. One pretends to be a leader. The one on this end of the table is a leader!

But his leadership has not always been in just the Sons of the American Legion. In 1985 he started working with the Glen Burnie Recreation Council. He became a councilmember. He coached all the youth sports.

He even became a coach of a high school and did rather well.

If you know anything about JR, he still has players and fellow coaches come to him for his counsel.

When you put all this together, we know he has the confidence and the ability to work with youngsters and adults alike. Now, everything you heard over the last five or six minutes -- I'm probably running over a little bit -- brings us to the conclusion that JR is the right man at the right time as we begin the transformation of a program that's going to change not only what we do but how we do it and the culture of the Sons of the American Legion.

JR possesses and has shown he knows how to put all this experience and education into everything he is involved in.

He has proven that he is truly more than just someone that can stand out front but he possesses the qualities and sense of how to improve.

We, the Detachment of Maryland, know that JR is prepared to be an integral part of E-24 as they begin in a couple of days being gathered to make the family of The American Legion better.

As a duly certified delegate to the 51st National Convention, I proudly place the name of Donald L. "JR" Hall, Jr. into nomination for the office of National Commander for 2023-2024. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Just for clarification purposes, the Detachment of Maryland nominates the name of JR Hall for National Commander. It was just a misstatement by Chuck. He's not running for National Vice Commander. It's

a nomination for National Commander.

We'll continue alphabetically.

Alaska.

DETACHMENT OF ALASKA: Yields to
California.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: California.

DETACHMENT OF CALIFORNIA: California
requests that Past National Commander Michael Fox
be recognized for the purposes of a second.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Permission is
granted.

PNC MICHAEL C. FOX (CA): Good morning,
Sons and guests. I could stand up here for an hour
and talk about an individual, about the thousands
of hours he volunteers on a monthly basis, about
the people he inspires around him. But what's
important to our organization is a true leader, a
man that's selfless, a man that inspires everyone
around him.

There are many qualities of a leader, but
leadership is the fundamental ability to motivate
those around you. Leadership is by true definition

of someone that we need to command the podium. Not only to inspire you but to motivate you.

We as an organization have a man that we have the ability to elect in the high office of National Commander.

As we think about the things that we do at home, we think about the people around us. It's fitting that so many years ago I met somebody here in Charlotte, and within a matter of months, this person became a family member of mine, a true brother, a true inspiration to do better.

As members, we want somebody to constantly motivate us, but a true leader never asks his fellow comrades to do anything that they haven't done or won't do beside them. A leader is somebody that you want to get behind, somebody you want to follow into battle. Somebody that you want to have your back as well as has theirs.

JR Hall is the man for the job. JR Hall is a man that can lead us into the future.

JR, please stand up. You've become family to me, to our Detachment, and to this

organization. There's nobody in this room that I feel that deserves this more than you. It is an honor and a privilege to second the nomination as a duly registered delegate to the 51st National Convention for Donald L. "JR" Hall, Jr. You are a true leader. Thank you.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: California seconds the nomination for JR Hall for National Commander.

At this time, I will ask the delegation chairman or whoever is going to second the nomination to slowly start moving to the microphones. I'll give everybody about 30 seconds before I start. We're flying through it today.

JR is excited and motivated. All right. We're going to be a little faster.

Alabama.

DETACHMENT OF ALABAMA: Alabama seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Alaska.

DETACHMENT OF ALASKA: Alaska seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Arizona.

DETACHMENT OF ARIZONA: Arizona seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Arizona
seconds. Arkansas. Arkansas.

DETACHMENT OF ARKANSAS: Seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Arkansas
seconds. Connecticut.

DETACHMENT OF CONNECTICUT: Connecticut
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Connecticut
seconds. Delaware.

DETACHMENT OF DELAWARE: Delaware
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Delaware
seconds. District of Columbia. District of
Columbia. District of Columbia.

Florida.

DETACHMENT OF FLORIDA: Florida seconds.
NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Florida
seconds. France.

DETACHMENT OF FRANCE: France seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: France
seconds. Georgia.

DETACHMENT OF GEORGIA: Georgia seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Hawaii.

DETACHMENT OF HAWAII: Seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Idaho.

DETACHMENT OF IDAHO: Idaho seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Illinois.

DETACHMENT OF ILLINOIS: Illinois proudly
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Illinois
seconds. Indiana.

DETACHMENT OF INDIANA: Indiana seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Iowa.

DETACHMENT OF IOWA: Seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Iowa seconds.
Kansas.

DETACHMENT OF KANSAS: Seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Kansas
seconds.

Kentucky.

DETACHMENT OF KENTUCKY: Kentucky
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Louisiana.

DETACHMENT OF LOUISIANA: Louisiana
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Maine.

DETACHMENT OF MAINE: Maine seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Massachusetts.

DETACHMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS:
Massachusetts seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Mexico.
Mexico. Mexico.

Michigan.

DETACHMENT OF MICHIGAN: Michigan proudly
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Michigan
seconds. Minnesota.

DETACHMENT OF MINNESOTA: Minnesota
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Minnesota
seconds.

Mississippi.

DETACHMENT OF MISSISSIPPI: Mississippi
makes a motion that we elect JR by acclamation
since there are no remaining nominations.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: I've been
counselled we cannot do that for National
Commander.

Mississippi.

DETACHMENT OF MISSISSIPPI: Seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Mississippi
seconds.

Missouri.

DETACHMENT OF MISSOURI: Missouri
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Missouri
seconds. Montana.

DETACHMENT OF MONTANA: Montana seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Montana
seconds. Nebraska.

DETACHMENT OF NEBRASKA: Nebraska proudly
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Nebraska
seconds. Nevada.

DETACHMENT OF NEVADA: Nevada seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Nevada seconds.
New Hampshire.

DETACHMENT OF New HAMPSHIRE: New
Hampshire seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New Hampshire
seconds.

New Jersey.

DETACHMENT OF NEW JERSEY: New Jersey
proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New Jersey
seconds.

New Mexico.

DETACHMENT OF NEW MEXICO: New Mexico
proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New Mexico
seconds.

New York.

DETACHMENT OF NEW YORK: New York
unequivocally seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New York
seconds.

North Carolina.

DETACHMENT OF NORTH CAROLINA: North
Carolina seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: North Carolina
seconds.

North Dakota. North Dakota. North
Dakota.

Ohio.

DETACHMENT OF OHIO: Ohio seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Ohio seconds.
Oklahoma.

DETACHMENT OF OKLAHOMA: Oklahoma proudly
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Oklahoma
seconds.

Oregon.

DETACHMENT OF OREGON: Oregon seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Oregon
seconds. Pennsylvania.

DETACHMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA: Pennsylvania
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Pennsylvania
seconds.

Philippines.

Puerto Rico.

DETACHMENT OF PUERTO RICO: Puerto Rico
most definitely seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Puerto Rico
seconds. Rhode Island.

DETACHMENT OF RHODE ISLAND: Rhode Island
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Rhode Island
seconds.

South Carolina.

DETACHMENT OF SOUTH CAROLINA: South
Carolina seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: South Carolina
seconds.

South Dakota.

DETACHMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA: South Dakota
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: South Dakota
seconds. Tennessee.

DETACHMENT OF TENNESSEE: Tennessee
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Tennessee
seconds.

Texas. Texas.

DETACHMENT OF TEXAS: Texas seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Texas seconds.

Utah. Utah. Utah.

Vermont.

DETACHMENT OF VERMONT: Vermont proudly
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Vermont
seconds.

Virginia.

DETACHMENT OF VIRGINIA: Virginia
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: West Virginia.

DETACHMENT OF WEST VIRGINIA: West
Virginia proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: West Virginia
seconds.

Wisconsin.

DETACHMENT OF WISCONSIN: Wisconsin
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Wisconsin
seconds.

Wyoming. Wyoming. Wyoming.

DETACHMENT OF WYOMING: Wyoming proudly
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Wyoming
seconds. I'll go through the roll call just one
more time, Detachments that didn't answer give them
one more opportunity. District of Columbia.

All right. Harold just told me they did
not register. North Dakota. North Dakota.
Philippines.

Philippines did not register. Utah.
Utah is not present.

All right. That completes roll call. We
have one nomination for National Commander that's
Donald JR Hall from the Detachment of Maryland.

... Rising applause.

PNC ROBERT H. FAUST (CA): Mr. Commander,
I'm Robert Faust from the Detachment of California.
I'm very pleased to move that the National Adjutant
be authorized to cast one vote representing the
entire voting strength of this convention for
Mr. Donald "JR" Hall Jr. to be elected National

Commander of the Sons of the American Legion. I so
move.

... Applause.

There's been a motion on the floor.

Is there a second?

RICHARD KILBY (CT): Richard Kilby, ANEC
Connecticut, proudly seconds.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's a
motion. There's a second.

Any discussion? All those in favor, say
aye. All opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. The motion carries.

... Applause.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: As National
Adjutant, I cast one vote representing the entire
delegate strength of this Convention for the
election of Donald "JR" Hall as National Commander
of the Sons of the American Legion.

... Cheers and Applause.

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Donald L. "Jr." Hall, Jr. (MD), National Commander

Here we are. We made it. Thanks, Papa.

This whole trip has been for one guy. Edward Hall, World War II vet.

I'm not going to take a lot of time. I want to say thank you to every one of the Detachments out there for getting me here.

All of you played a part. All have had a chance to talk to me, probably know about my grandfather, but you're going to learn more this year because he's why I'm here, and there's somebody why you're here.

Each and every one of us represents somebody. This year that's what we're going to do. We'll talk more about that later on here. But I want to get out of the way and let everything move on get to this afternoon.

I'll be following a great Commander. I want to thank Chris Carlton for helping me get here. My good friend, Michael Fox -- last couple of years they kept me abreast of everything so I would know how and what to do to get here.

I want to thank Mike and Chuck, both, for their nominations today. Such an honor. This is

such an honor to be able to fulfill a dream to represent my family and my grandfather. Thank you.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: At this time, I would like to make our new Commander, Don "JR" Hall, a Distinguished Guest of the 51st National Convention. Thank you for all the times that we've had to talk. I don't think we ever had a conversation that didn't last an hour or so.

... *Applause.*

... *Gavel.*

... *Applause.*

... *Gavel.*

I now call Past National Commander Bob Faust to the podium.

NOMINATIONS NATIONAL VICE COMMANDERS

PNC Robert Faust (CA)

PNC ROBERT H. FAUST (CA): Robert Faust, Detachment of California, delegate to this convention. Give me a moment. I'll get the right one out here.

Mr. Commander, since the Rules of the

Convention have been suspended; I move that nominations for the Office of National Vice Commander be made from the floor of the Convention. I so move.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's a motion on the floor. Is there a second?

SHAWN DAVIS (MN): Shawn Davis, NEC, Detachment of Minnesota, delegate. Seconds.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's a motion on the floor that's been seconded. Is there any discussion?

All those in favor, say aye. All those opposed, nay.

Ayes have it. Motion carries.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: For those that aren't aware, we'll follow the same rules for electing the National Vice Commanders that of The American Legion. There will be no seconding speeches, just one nominating speech.

At this time, those individuals that were handed a piece of paper, could you proceed to the microphones. First one will be Mr. Tim Weaver.

TIM WEAVER (MN): Mr. Adjutant, Tim Weaver, delegate from Minnesota, request permission for Past National Commander Douglas Bible be recognized for the purpose of nomination for the office of National Vice Commander.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Yes.
Permission is granted.

PNC DOUGLAS P. BIBLE (MN): Good morning.
It's still morning.

Many of you know Robert Bristo. Many of you don't, but by the end of the year, I can assure you, you will know Robert Bristo.

I'm going to give you a few facts and a couple of interesting facts about Robert.

Robert's eligibility is for membership to the Sons of the American Legion is through his father, Joseph Bristo, who served from 1942 to '46 in World War II.

Robert is a graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in sociology, psychology and secondary education.

Robert was married to the love of his

life, Zaneta, who passed away in 2022.

Robert is now semi-retired and works as an Uber driver in his free time. He's provided over 12,000 rides in the past five years and on each and every one of those rides, Robert promotes The American Legion Family.

You can ask him. He has signed up more members than I think anybody in our Detachment.

Robert, of course, has held the offices in his Squadron. He's been district commander for five years. He was chairman of the -- belonged to the Brain Science Foundation. He was president of The American Legion Family Hospital Association, Detachment Vice Commander, Detachment Commander two years, and National Executive Committeeman. Graduate of NMI 1, 2 and 3 and last year served as Central Regional Membership chairman.

Couple things you don't know about Robert. Robert loves karaoke, and believe me, he can sing. So, if he visits your Detachment, try and find a karaoke place.

And Robert loves bingo. That's kind of

interesting. So, if you see him playing bingo, don't even bother because he's going to win.

Robert may not be tall in stature, but he is a giant in heart. Robert would give you the shirt off of his back, assist you in anything you ask and give you his 100 percent.

We in Minnesota have seen what Robert can do, and he will do all his all for the national organization of the Sons of the American Legion.

As a delegate to this Convention, I am proud to nominate Robert Bristo from the Detachment of Minnesota for National Vice Commander 2023-2024. Robert, you do not need to stand on that chair because you're already there. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Robert Bristo from Detachment of Minnesota has been nominated for National Vice Commander.

Chris Sherbourne.

CHRIS SHERBOURNE (OK): Mr. Adjutant, Chris Sherbourne, delegate from the great state of Oklahoma, request NECman Chris Cook be recognized

for the purpose of a nomination of office of National Vice Commander.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Permission granted.

CHRIS COOK (OK): Good morning.

Commander, guests, friends and all Legion Family. It is my honor and privilege to introduce to you Terry Harris.

A member of the Sons of the American Legion since 1964, Terry's eligibility comes from his adoptive parents who both served in the United States Army.

Terry is a charter member of Prunedale, California Squadron 593. His father was instrumental in starting the Squadron and was on the advisory committee.

Terry held his first office at eight years old, serving the executive committee.

Terry eventually transferred to Squadron 18 in Cameron, West Virginia, which was his mother's hometown. Terry's father retired from the Army in 1969 and settled in Kansas.

When The American Legion Riders were adopted by the Department of Kansas, Terry started the Larned Riders Chapter 106.

It was at this point that Terry became a very active Sons.

Terry has served in numerous leadership positions at all levels of the Sons, including Squadron Commander, District Commander, and then in Kansas a Detachment Commander from 2018 to 2020.

Anything with the kids has been Terry's passion. He's previously served on the National Children and Youth Committee and helped plan the National Sons of the American Legion Youth Academy at the National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

He currently serves on the membership committee at the national level. He has served as the lead ride captain for the Kansas Legacy Run for eight years.

Terry has been instrumental in the setup and planning of committees for the Department of Kansas Big Red 1 Turkey Run, where a full Thanksgiving dinner is provided to families at Fort

Riley, Kansas.

He's helped with the planning of Operation North Pole, a great Christmas party, which is held for the children of the deployed at Christmastime. The Detachment of Kansas has provided \$10,000 donation to each of these events to make them happen for several years.

Terry has an even greater lifelong commitment with his amazing wife of 45 years, Wyanette. Wyanette is a member of The American Legion Auxiliary.

Terry has an adopted son, Bob, who is a member of the Sons. Terry has served his family and the Sons of the American Legion with honor and will now admirably serve as National Vice Commander for the Sons of the American Legion. If this man is not qualified to be National Vice Commander, I do not know who is.

As a duly elected delegate of this Convention, I nominate Terry Harris for National Vice Commander.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Terry Harris has been nominated for National Vice Commander.

James Stewart.

James Stewart (CO): Commander, request the Chair recognize Past National Vice Commander Michael Cotten of Delaware for the purpose of a nomination for the position of National Vice Commander.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Permission is granted.

PNC MICHAEL COTTEN (DE): Let me tell you a little bit about John Cook from New Hampshire.

John was born in Boston, Massachusetts. Youngest of ten children. He had a very strong military influence growing up.

His father, Leo Cook, was a mechanic in the Army. His mother, Margaret, served in the Marine Corps. His brothers, David, Fred and Louis joined the Marine Corps and all served together in Vietnam.

John's sister, Lorraine, and brother, Leo, served in the Army.

John's eligibility in the Sons of the American Legion is through his mother's service in World War II.

After high school John spent two years in Merchant Marine holding the position of QMED, which is a Qualified Member of Engineering Department on the oil tanker U.S.N.S. Hudson.

In 1997, he joined the Sons of the American Legion Squadron No. 46 in Conway, New Hampshire. And since joining, he's been active and held the office of Squadron commander and adjutant in 2017.

He's a lifetime member of Squadron 8 in Dover, New Hampshire, and holds the office of Squadron adjutant. John and his wife Denise are both retired and live in Madison, New Hampshire and enjoy traveling when not snowed in.

His passion for serving and honoring our veterans led him to run for the office of Vice Commander for the Detachment and held that position for two years, then was elected Detachment Commander for a two-year term from 2016 to 2018.

John currently serves as Detachment Alternate NEC and CWF chairman and is currently on the National Membership Committee for the Eastern Region where the East Region has had a very successful membership helping the Sons attain an all-time high record.

It is clear and evident that these past accomplishments and the motivation this man possesses for our organization and the support for our veterans, as a delegate to this convention, the Detachment of Delaware proudly nominates the Son that can get the job done, Mr. John Cook, from the Detachment of New Hampshire for the office of National Vice Commander 2023-2024.

... Applause.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: John Cook has been nominated for National Vice Commander.

Mr. David Boggs.

DAVID Boggs (VA): Mr. Adjutant, I, David Boggs, delegate from Virginia request Linden Dixon be recognized for the purpose of nomination for office of National Vice Commander.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Permission is granted.

LINDEN DIXON (VA): I've been instructed before we start that I have to get in proper uniform for this.

... Applause.

Commander, guests, delegates to this 51st National Convention of the Sons of the American Legion, as a 30-year member of the Sons it now gives me great pleasure to be able to place the name of a great man, a proud Son and a friend to be candidate for National Vice Commander.

The Department of Virginia is very proud of Linwood Moore and wholeheartedly throws its support behind Linwood, a member in good standing since 1998 of Virginia Colonial Heights Squadron 284.

Linwood's eligibility in the Sons is through his father's service, James T. Moore, United States Army Veteran of World War II.

In his 24 years as a member of the Sons of the American Legion, Linwood has held nearly all

elected Squadron and Detachment offices. He has served on Squadron, Detachment and National committees and is a graduate of the Sons National Management Institute and Commander's Training.

Linwood is a dedicated family man and lives with his wife, Rose, in Chesterfield County, Virginia.

Together, they have two sons, Jason and Gregory, and four grandchildren, Jubilee, Marcus, Colson and Jackson, and all are members of The American Legion Family.

Linwood's wife, Rose, is a past Department president. Linwood is a very dedicated Sons member, volunteering many hours with the Squadron and his Post in Colonial Heights.

Linwood also continues to serve as a Virginia Boys State counselor and has done so for 16 years.

Linwood firmly believes that membership is the lifeblood of this organization and feels that our generation and the generations that come need to be educated on the many benefits and

programs that the Sons of the American Legion has to offer.

Linwood has the endorsement of his Squadron and his Post, the Detachment and Department of Virginia, and it is an honor to place the name of Linwood A. Moore to the high office of National Vice Commander.

... Applause.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Linwood Moore has been nominated for National Vice Commander.

JEFFREY FLYNT (CA): Jeff Flynt, delegate from California, request Past National Commander Robert Faust be recognized for the purpose of a nomination for the office of National Vice Commander.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Permission has been granted.

PNC ROBERT H. FAUST (CA): Commander, gentlemen on the dais, guests, my fellow delegates. I have the honor of being able to nominate for the office of National Vice Commander west Mr. James R. Fischer from the State of California.

James' eligibility for membership is through his grandfather in his World War I service and his father in his Korean War service.

James has three sons, all of which are members of our organization. James has held many positions in his Squadron and has held all elected positions in the Detachment of California.

He served as Detachment Commander in 2018. He continues to serve on various committees and commissions at the Detachment level, has provided guidance for us in order to achieve the results that California has accomplished.

James has attended the National Detachment Commanders Training course. He's also completed NMI 1, 2 and 3.

This year, James served as the Western National Membership chairman. And through his outstanding efforts, hard work, he has made the west once more the best in terms of membership with us having over 105 percent in membership.

I nominate James R. Fischer for the high office of National Vice Commander West.

... *Applause.*

PNC JAMES R. HARTMAN (MD):

Mr. Commander, Past National Commander Hartman,
delegate from the Detachment of Maryland,
Mr. Commander, I move that the nominations for the
office of National Commander be closed.

FROM THE FLOOR: Vice Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I believe
there's a motion on the floor to have the
nominations for the office of National Vice
Commander be closed.

Is there a second?

PNC MICHAEL C. FOX (CA): Michael Fox,
Past National Commander, delegate to this
convention, second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's a
motion that's been seconded. Is there any
discussion?

JOHN LAWRENCE (LA); Mr. Commander, John
Lawrence from Louisiana, Alternate NEC.

We did not call for any other nominations
from the floor by the adjutant. I believe usually

Robert's Rules of Order, we call for other nominations from the floor before we close the nominations.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: We did for Commander. I was getting ready to say something when Mr. Hartman did approach the podium. I thought he had a question under what was going on presently.

So, with that said, is there any other nominations for National Vice Commander.

CHRIS COOK (OK): Point of order Chris Cook. My apologies, Chris Cook, delegate of Oklahoma. The rules for nominations for Vice Commanders were suspended before the nominations started. Once again, Chris Cook, Detachment of Oklahoma, since the rules were suspended, there was a motion on the floor to suspend the nominations. That was duly seconded. There was discussion.

So, if the motion prevails, the nominations will be over and you will have your five. If it fails, then we should go through the roll call.

FROM THE FLOOR: Commander, call for the vote.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's a motion on the floor that's been seconded. Is there any more discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, say nay.

The ayes have it. The motion carries.

PNC MICHAEL C. FOX (CA): Mr. Commander, Michael Fox, Past National Commander, duly elected delegate to the 51st National Convention.

I move that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote five times for the entire delegate strength of this Convention and that the nominated five candidates be elected National Vice Commanders of the Sons of the American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: We have a motion that the National Adjutant be authorized to cast one vote five times for the entire delegate strength for this Convention and the five candidates, John R. Cook, Linwood A. Moore, Robert

L. Bristo, Terry A. Harris and James R. Fischer Sr.
be elected National Vice Commander by acclamation.

Is there a second?

RICHARD KILBY (CT): Mr. Commander,
Richard Kilby, Detachment of Connecticut, ANEC,
seconds that.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: There's been
a motion and a second.

Is there any discussion?

Hearing none, all those in favor, say
aye.

All those opposed, say nay.

... *Gavel.*

Ayes have it. The motion carries.

I now call on the National Adjutant.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: As National
Adjutant for the Sons of the American Legion, I
cast one vote five times for each representing the
entire delegate strength of this convention for
Robert Bristo, John Cook, Terry Harris, Linwood
Moore, and James Fischer.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: I declare

John R. Cook, Linwood A. Moore, Robert L. Bristo,
Terry A. Harris, James R. Fischer Sr., elected
National Vice Commanders of the Sons of the
American Legion.

... Applause.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the newly
elected National Vice Commanders to the podium. At
this time, I'd like to make all the newly elected
National Vice Commanders Distinguished Guests of
the 51st National Convention.

... Applause.

Gentlemen, with the Colors of our Nation
in place, join me in offering a right-hand salute.
Two.

The 51st National Convention of the Sons
of the American Legion will now stand in recess
until 12:30 p.m. today to allow our members to
attend the joint Patriotic Memorial Service at
11:00 a.m.

... Gavel.

*... Recess taken from 10:00 am to 12:30
p.m.*

... At 12:30 p.m., Sunday, August 27, 2023, the members reassembled for the 51st Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were had:

CALL TO ORDER

Christopher Carlton (IN), National Commander

Sergeant-at-Arms, please secure the doors. Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome back. Please rise.

... Gavel.

With the Colors of our Nation in place, join me in offering a right-hand salute.

Two.

Please be seated.

At this time, I yield the podium to Past National Commander Joe Gladden for our master of ceremonies today.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

PNC Joseph W. Gladden (MD)

It's an honor to be here today. I want to thank JR for giving me an opportunity to be the master of ceremonies for the installation of the

2023-2024 officers.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please bring before me the newly elected National Vice Commanders.

... *Applause.*

... *Gavel.*

At this time, can I have the installing officer Past National Commander of The American Legion Mr. Rick Santos please come forward for the purposes of installation.

... *Laughter.*

PNC RICK SANTOS (MD): You have been chosen to fill the various offices of the National Organization of the Sons of The American Legion.

You will, I know, vindicate the trust that has been reposed in you, and fulfill in every way the obligations that trust entails.

You will at once familiarize yourselves with the duties of your particular offices, and you will proceed upon those duties in the same spirit of devotion and endeavor that characterized your fathers' service in any of the Great Wars, out of which came their basis for membership in The

American Legion and your own in the Sons of The American Legion.

You must know that the welfare and success of the programs of the Sons of The American Legion depends largely upon you; and you must also know that upon your shoulders equally rests the burden of preserving the integrity of the Sons of The American Legion.

You must protect and advance its good name before the people of this Nation. You must exalt it in their eyes. You must make them know, as we know, its purposes and its policies.

Ever remember the tolerant spirit that animates its members. There is no rank among us, for each serves as the equal of his comrade; and all strive toward the same goal, which is the realization in the life of the Republic of the ideals of Justice, Freedom, Democracy and Loyalty.

Ever remember that the cardinal principles of the Sons of the American Legion are: The care of the dependents of those who have answered the final call, and of those who are now

suffering from disease and want, the rightful education of the children of our country, and devoted service to the community, state and nation.

Are you now willing to assume the responsibilities of your office?

ALL: I do.

... *Gavel.*

Please rise. Gentlemen, I'm going to face you, if you don't mind. You will raise your right hand and repeat after me, giving your names where I give mine.

... *Oath given.*

Please lower your hands. Please lower your hands.

... *Gavel.*

We make a good student. Please be seated.

... *Laughter.*

Into your hands are placed the important responsibilities of assisting the Commander in all of his duties. You will stress to the membership and to the Nation the programs and goodwill of The

American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion.

I will now turn the podium back to Past National Commander Joe Gladden for official information and program.

PNC JOSEPH W. GLADDEN (MD): At this time, I'd like to have the newly installed National Vice Commanders assume their spots towards the front of the stage, please. At this time, we will have the placements of the caps and badges of the National Vice Commanders.

East National Vice Commander John Cook will be placed by Denise Cook.

South Vice Commander Linwood Moore will be placed by Rose Moore.

Central Vice Commander Robert Bristo will be placed by Becky Nelson and Mary Yonken.

Midwest Vice Commander Terry Harris will be placed by Wyanette Harris.

West Vice Commander Jim Fischer will be placed by Rachel Foucher.

Place the caps and place the badges. If

everyone would face the audience. Take your pictures. Thank you, Vice Commanders. If you will take your seat at the table and have your guests take their seat in the back.

... *Applause.*

Sounds like their baby graduated.

... *Laughter.*

At this time, if I could have Past National Rick Santos please come back to the podium for purposes of uninstalling National Commander Chris Carlton.

RECOGNITION

Retiring National Commander Past National Commander,
The American Legion

PNC RICK SANTOS (MD): Commander Carlton, your duties as Commander of this organization have been completed. Yours has been a year marked with earnest endeavor and success to a satisfying degree. Yours has been a great privilege and a rich experience.

The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion have observed your faithful and

untiring efforts and extend to you their sincere appreciation of the services which you have rendered.

Congratulations and well done. Thank you for your service, your dedication and commitment, Commander.

... *Applause.*

PNC JOSEPH W. GLADDEN (MD): Thank you, Chris.

If you could take your seat for the moment.

INSTALLATION OF NATIONAL COMMANDER

Our next installation person will be a person that's near and dear to my heart. I didn't have the opportunity to second his nomination; and so, while I've got the podium, I'm going to say a few words.

It's hard to believe how long ago it was that JR and I first met each other. I think of some tragic things, like when the Challenger blew up and 9/11 and you knew right where you were.

Well, I knew meeting JR -- and I look

back, I know it was an important moment in my life but I don't remember exactly right where we were, but I do know that meeting him changed my life.

I am a big believer in things happen for a reason. And back in those -- it was probably in the middle 2000's or so, I had ambitions of becoming National Commander and it didn't happen and it didn't happen.

And like many of you out in the audience, maybe looking towards the future, you think it's not going to happen but if you keep working it will.

But I'm a big believer that things happen for a reason because if I had gone in to be National Commander when I thought I should have gone in to be National Commander, then JR wouldn't have been part of my journey to become National Commander.

I'm so thankful to the Lord that he knew when it was time for me because he knew that he was going to put JR in my life.

And I'm really thankful for that. JR is

just an incredible guy. You heard -- some of you, did some of you didn't hear some of the nomination speeches this morning, but JR is a guy that is an idea guy. He's constantly thinking about ideas.

I told him once that there's this movie, it's called "Night Shift," and in that movie, Michael Keaton is this guy that's continually coming up with ideas on how to do things and do things better and how to make money.

I told JR, "You're like Michael Keaton, mayonnaise in a can." That's JR. He's the guy that invented mayonnaise in the can, with all the programs of The American Legion.

I'm so excited. We've been riding this journey now for a number of years. JR has just been working the way he always works, working at home, working in the Squadron. He was Squadron Commander until probably just last year.

I think he finally turned it over because he didn't want to be National Commander and Squadron Commander at the same time.

Good friend of his stepped up and took

over that position. That's just who JR is. He not only works in the Squadron, he works in his region, he works in the Detachment of Maryland.

I'm so proud to call him my friend. So proud to call his family my friend and his wife Margie my friend. Sergeant-at-Arms, at this time please conduct before me the newly-elected National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion, grandson of Edward Hall, Donald "JR" Hall, Jr., to this podium.

... *Gavel.*

... *Clapping in unison.*

... *Music.*

Donald "JR" Hall, Jr.

... *Music.*

... *Cheers and Applause.*

... *Gavel.*

So, you know, with all kinds of technical things, a number of years ago I was coming in. And Bill Matoska and John Kerestan, our past former SAL liaison, was in the back of the room. And we were doing the production like this.

And he says, "Man, what did you get, a professional speaker?" Because JR was up here introducing me. He said, "Wait until the next guy comes. We'll have fireworks."

I had fireworks planned to be up on the screens, but because of technical difficulties beyond the control of our wonderful adjutants over here there were no fireworks other than in JR's heart.

At this time, I'd like to bring forth Past National Commander Rick Santos for the purposes of the installation of the newly elected National Commander.

PNC RICK SANTOS (MD): Commander, to you is entrusted a very sacred duty - that of teaching and protecting the cardinal principles of the Sons of The American Legion throughout the Nation. To you is entrusted supervision of the duties of all other officers of the National Organization. To you will come the indigent and the distressed and it is your duty to see that no worthy comrade is turned away without full justice.

It is your duty to see that freedom is ever the watchword of those with whom you may come in contact. Loyalty to the National Organization, its membership, and The American Legion, are requirements which you now assume. You are more than the presiding officer for meetings. You are guided by the Constitution and by the decision of the National Organization, yet the responsibility for the success of this year's programs is largely on your shoulders.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DONALD L. "JR" HALL,
JR: They're big.

PNC RICK SANTOS (MD): Your heart is just as big, too. You must initiate and carry programs through to completion. You must thoroughly familiarize yourself with the policies and traditions of the Sons of The American Legion. To you I extend the congratulations of The American Legion, and I wish you well.

Are you now ready to assume the responsibilities of your office?

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Yes, sir.

PNC RICK SANTOS (MD): Please rise.

... *Gavel.*

Raise your right hand. Repeat after me,
giving your name where I give mine.

... *Oath given.*

You may lower your hand.

Will the newly elected National Vice
Commanders please take their place by the
Commander's side and face the audience.

INTRODUCTION

New National Officers

I present to you the officers of your
choice. I congratulate you on the selections you
have made. Now that you have chosen them to guide
the destinies of this Organization, it is your duty
to aid them in every way. Help them keep the Sons
of The American Legion a free organization of free
men, faithful to its principles and ideals.

Commander, will you please move here,
sir.

Commander, I present you a gavel. It's
your symbol of authority. Also wield it -- big

shoulders -- always wield it in the best interest of the National Organization, The American Legion and our nation. Your first official act please seat your audience and officers with one rap of the gavel.

... *Gavel.*

... *Applause.*

PRESENTATIONS

PNC JOSEPH W. GLADDEN (MD): At this time, we will be having the presentation of Past National Commanders cap, badge and pin.

Will First Lady Veronica Carlton place the Commander's cap, please, and pin.

... *Applause.*

At this time, will Past Commander's father Myron Carlton place the badge.

... *Applause.*

PNC CHRISTOPHER A. CARLTON (IN): At this time, I'd like to make my father a Distinguished Guest to this 51st National Convention.

... *Applause.*

PNC JOSEPH W. GLADDEN (MD): At this time

will junior Past First Lady Veronica Carlton please present new First Lady Margie Hall with the First Lady's Badge.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Could we have the past First Ladies also approach.

PAST FIRST LADY VERONICA CARLTON (IN): I don't understand why I got chose to do this as the newest past SAL wife, but all of us would like to present you with a name badge for you on your travels, when you go. I will let you put that on. It's magnetic.

... *Laughter.*

FIRST LADY MARGIE HALL (MD): Thank you.

... *Applause.*

PNC JOSEPH W. GLADDEN (MD): They're scheming already up there.

... *Laughter.*

... *Gavel.*

... *Clapping in unison.*

... *Music.*

I hate to say, don't pay attention to the ladies behind the curtain but I'm not sure where

they went. Okay, let's just sit down.

... *Laughter.*

... *Gavel.*

At this time, we'll have the presentation of the National Commander's cap and badge. At this time, Past National Commander Bill Matoska will place the Commander's cap on Commander Hall.

... *Applause.*

And now we'll have new First Lady Margie Hall place the Commander's badge on Commander Hall.

... *Applause.*

Now it's my great honor, I would like to present to you the 2023-2024 National Commander of the Sons of the American Legion, Mr. Donald "JR" Hall.

... *Cheers and Applause.*

At this time, I'd like to present the Commander with his gavel.

... *Gavel.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Here we are again, another year, another great year that Commander Carlton led us in.

I want to thank Commander Carlton for so many lessons that he taught me. The first lesson I learned from Commander Carlton was last year, when he was on stage, and I'm going to prove to him that he taught me the lesson, and I'm not going to forget my wife. So, I want to thank my wife.

... Laughter and Applause.

I want to thank my wife for always being there for me, supporting me, and always, always being by my side.

This journey didn't start today, though. This journey started in 1943, when my grandfather, Ed Hall, went to the Army and fought for our country. And today, all I am is a representative of my grandfather's service.

We're going to talk more about that. We're going to go through a lot of things. But I want to take time to acknowledge a couple of the guests that are here that I'm going to be so lucky to serve with and give them a chance to speak. In a couple of days, we're going to have probably the best National Commander ever. I said so. You

believe it.

... Laughter.

Coming from the great state of Wisconsin, please welcome my friend and will be my Commander, Mr. Dan Seehafer.

... Applause.

DANIEL J. SEEHAFFER (WI): Holy Moley.

... Laughter.

I'm almost speechless. That's a very humbling, humbling intro. And I thank you for that, but I also believe we're going to have a great, great family team.

... Applause.

And I can feel it already, and not that feeling -- because feelings can be so mixed -- but there's something different going on right now. And I think we can feel it. I think you would agree, there's something that is just about to happen this upcoming year. And something special.

And we talk about it. I know I basically have spilled the beans on it but I'm really about servant leadership. And right there is the

Commander, right there, talking about that.

... *Applause.*

So, when we talk about competence, when we talk about character, when we talk about commitment, I want you to think of this man right here, and what a special, awesome upcoming year we -- not him, me or even Lisa -- what we are going to have -- we. And there will be this number (raising an index finger) that we're going to think about -- one, as in "Be the One." So that's enough for me.

... *Applause.*

Thank you, JR, for sharing your moment because take it in. This is a special moment. And let's work together, being the one, changing lives and saving lives. That's what we are about. Never forget that. And never stop. Together, forever.

... *Applause.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: I do want to say, with Dan is his wife, Stacey. Stacey is sitting back there.

... *Applause.*

... *Music.*

I was in membership in Indianapolis, I went there, and I had the opportunity to stay and speak on behalf of the Sons of the American Legion. And when I did, the Commander, he brought on a speech that just fired everybody up, and he walked off the stage with "Eye of the Tiger" playing.

And that was the inspiration because it's all about inspiring people.

And when I got a chance to speak behind him, I said, remember, this song starts up, rise up, rising up, back in the streets.

And that's what we all need to do. We do too much in our Posts. We're talking to people that are already members. We've got to get out in the streets and get those members.

... *Applause.*

I want to introduce -- let me introduce to you the other part of our team that will also be elected very soon. The wildcat.

... *Laughter.*

She comes from Alaska. Almost sounds

like I'm going to announce a fighter or something -- hailing from Alaska -- coming out here, a great friend, and I'm telling you, with the three of us, we're going to have fun. You heard Chuck say it earlier. We're going to have fun. We're going to get out. We're going to get the work done. We're not going to sit still. We'll go out there, in the streets and get the work done. Please welcome my friend and soon to be elected President of the Auxiliary, American Legion Auxiliary Ms. Lisa Williamson.

... *Applause.*

... *Music.*

LISA WILLIAMSON (AK): With the gavel, I can use your gavel. I might keep it.

... *Laughter.*

Well, first of all, tough act to follow. Thank you, Dan. I've had a little extra -- I've had, thanks to COVID, an extra year to plan for this. This week, a lot of people came up to me, like, are you ready? Are you ready? Now I need another couple days.

... *Laughter.*

No, I am ready. I am super thrilled to be serving together with both Dan and JR.

It's not about me, and I've said this many times. My department's heard me say this. It's not about me. It's about our mission. And I truly believe that.

It's about our mission of supporting our military and our veterans and the families in our communities, and our family as a whole -- Legion, the Auxiliary, the SAL, the Riders -- as a whole, we can accomplish so much more as a family. And I truly believe that.

My family, my kids were raised in this family. JR's family. We're all family. And I truly appreciate this opportunity.

If there's one thing that COVID has taught us that nothing is 100 percent. And nothing is for sure. But should I be elected Wednesday morning; I am honored and I am humbled to represent The American Legion Auxiliary and to do it beside JR and Dan. Thank you so much.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: You know, a lot of people talk about -- a lot of people talk about Legion family, but you don't see them exercise it. And that's what we just did.

It's not just my day. It's all of our day. And I hope we just exercised the right that everybody should take and make sure that you take care of your family. Make sure your family's there. Make sure everybody knows who your family is.

I'm going to ask my family to start making their way up here so we can move quickly when we do things, up around the stage here.

And I want to tell you me and Lisa are lucky because when they heard that we were going to be together they gave us a preacher to go with us.

... Laughter.

So, all along the way we'll have somebody there that we know is in contact that can get us through.

I'm going to have my wife and family come

up. And I'd like to start off before I give anybody else the right to be a Distinguished Guest under me to make my family Distinguished Guests of this Convention.

... *Music.*

PNC JOSEPH W. GLADDEN (MD): That was JR's wife Margie. And there is Chrissy and her husband Tim; TJ, grandson; Donny, his son; crystal, his daughter-in-law; Cody, his grandson; Dee, his daughter; Kaden his grandson -- K-dog, sorry, K-dog. His friends call him K-D. MacKenzie, his granddaughter; Stanley; and Brian. Uncles? Uncle Stanley cousin Brian. His West Virginia cousin.

... *Laughter.*

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Thank you. You can all return to your seats.

I bring them up and do that because they have made a lot of sacrifices. Had to move some parties or do it without me. But you don't do this without your family. You can't do it without your family. I have such a great family.

At this time, I'd like to show off how

much my Maryland family cared and came here today.
Maryland, would you please stand, be recognized.

... Cheers and Applause.

They showed up, didn't they?

FROM THE FLOOR: JR, we love you!

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: I love you too.

FROM THE FLOOR: We love you, honey

bunny.

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: That's nice.

I'm going to be a honey bunny.

... Laughter.

Thanks to the family for all the support.

Maryland, I couldn't be here without you. I
couldn't be here without you.

My slogan for this year, "Representing
More Than Me." Think about it. Don't we all
represent more than just ourselves?

As a member of the Sons, I represent my
grandfather's service. As a member of the Sons,
you represent your family's service. As a member
of the Auxiliary, you represent your family's
service. And if you served, then you represent

your branch of service. You represent your family. Representing more than me is big. It's big. It's why I'm here. I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for my grandfather's service. That's what it's all about. I got to be the best I can be because of him.

I know, even though he's not with me, he tripped me. He'd do something while I was walking to get me back if I didn't do it right, because my grandfather was that kind of sneaky guy. He would get me back.

I'll do my best to represent these folks right here, Maryland. I'm going to do my best.

... Cheers and Applause.

I am going to do my best to represent every blue cap member of the Sons of the American Legion because for the Sons that's really where the work gets done. The Blue Cap members is what it's truly all about.

... Applause.

You know, as a Son, one of your family members, they took the oath to fight for our

country if needed and to give their life.

Are you as Sons going to make that membership worth it? If they're willing to give their life, are you willing to make your membership that good? Are you going to represent them that strong?

If not, turn in your card. We don't need you. We need the ones that are getting ready to work. We need the ones that are going to get out there and make sure our veterans are getting what they need because we're getting on VoterVoice.

We're backing legislation to tell them to give our veterans what they need. We need the ones that make sure the children of the veterans are getting what they want. We need the ones that are working in the community. That's what we need. We don't need somebody that's a bar member. We need real workers.

... Cheers and Applause.

So, I ask you to do a little soul searching. Are you representing your family the best you can? Are you as committed today as when

you signed up? At times, we all get into our routines, and you know we just do what we know we do, what works. And is that enough?

Doesn't it bother you when you hear, well, that's just how we do it? Let's recommit ourselves to finding new and better ideas. New ways of doing things and showing our commitment to our family's service.

The Sons had a great year last year, hitting a new all-time high in membership of over 375,000 members.

... *Applause.*

Can we get to 400,000?

FROM THE FLOOR: Yeah!

NATIONAL COMMANDER HALL: Yes, we can. I heard yesterday, Butch Ray said, everybody sign up one member and we're there. 375,000 times two takes us over 700,000. So, we really should get to 400 pretty easy.

Let everybody know what you're doing. Ring your bell. When you get back to work and you get outside the Post, make sure everybody knows.

Use every form of getting on Facebook and in the newspaper and in the news and let everybody know what The American Legion Family does!

So many great things are going on all the time, and the only people to hear about it is the person that you're working with! We've got to get the word out there! We've got to let everybody know who and what we are!

We must share our story with everyone. Did you know that less than 10 percent of our country is veterans? That means there's over 90 percent that's eligible possibly for the Sons or Auxiliary.

We need to get that 90 percent. And we need to find out what they can do. Everybody might not be able to stand up all day and work something, but maybe they can bake a cake and raise some money for veterans. Maybe they can do something at home.

Everybody can do something for The American Legion Family. Let's get everybody out there who's representing more than themselves.

... *Applause.*

American Legion Family Day, it's coming up April 27th. It actually started last year. It was rolled out but not with a lot of flare. I'd like to have a commitment from everybody in the room, this year we make American Legion Family Day something big.

Get a hold of the press in your neighborhoods. Get a hold of your community. Bring them in your Post. Show everybody what we do. Make it a four-pillar day.

I'm a four-pillar guy. If you know me you know that about me. Do something. Have a blood drive that day. Put some free hot dogs out there, a moon bounce. That will get the kids and those young parents back into your Posts.

And then let them know what we do. Let them know what OCW is about and what CWF is about. And let them know what we stand for and what we're about.

We're about taking care of our veterans and we're about taking care of our children and our community. Let's do that on American Legion Family

Day. April 27th, all over the world, we ought to open up all the Post doors and bring everybody in and have a great day celebrating with our people and our communities and making it a special day.

With so many leaders in this room, you have to ask why we need to be inspired more. Because there's not a lot of inspiration that happens at times. We've fallen into routines, and that's not good.

We've got to be inspired! We've got to be inspired. Take time, talk to a veteran. Ask them about their service, maybe something that happened. And if that don't inspire you, I don't know what can.

I have a friend with me here today that I met in fourth grade. He became a member of the U.S. Army, an Army Ranger. Worked at the Pentagon and thought that he needed to come here today to support me. Don't he know my job's to support him? Thank you for being here, Eddie.

... Applause.

It's time we roll up our sleeves. I say

thank you to a man on the stage with me here, I call him Poppy, Bill Matoska. Years ago, he me took aside and he said, you want to get involved in this? I said, I do. He said, roll up your sleeves, let's get to work.

I followed him. He's led me. He's worked with me. I should say "on me" to get me ready for this day. Poppy, I can't thank you enough.

... Applause.

Let's support the Four Pillars. I'm going to throw out a Commander's challenge this year. This one goes to the Blue Cap members, to become a national Four Pillar Squadron. All you have to do is this. A dollar a member for OCW. A dollar a member for CWF. A dollar a member for your department's Boys State and hold a blood drive.

That simple. \$3 a member and hold a blood drive, and you'll get a certificate from the National Organization that you're a Four Pillar Squadron. That's what every Squadron should be.

... *Applause.*

We need to keep our eyes and ears open, family. You probably heard me say it before. We play a critical part in "Be the One." Sometimes veterans don't like opening up to not another veteran, but we are family members. We have eyes and ears and we can see things happen. We can make sure that if we see a veteran that needs help that we find the help for them.

We need to make sure that we're ready to be the one. You don't have to be the one that takes the veteran in for help. All you have to do is be the one to get the help for him.

When I was Detachment Commander I went to work one day. One of my buddies came up to me and said, JR, Will's not doing good. I know you're a member of The American Legion. Can you come down here and talk to him?

I went down, talked to him. I said, what's wrong? He said, I just don't want to be here. Will was a veteran. Had struggles. The night before they found him naked, laid out in his

living room, having bad dreams and everything.

I said, Will, come on. Let's go home. Let me give you a ride home and go have lunch. He said, no, I don't want to be "here" no more. I don't want to be alive.

I didn't know what to do, so I reached out to my Department Commander Carolyn Baker. And I said, Carolyn, who can I call right now to get help? And she said, let me give you Russell Meyer's cell phone number.

Within 25 minutes we had him in Crownsville, inside there, getting him help.

I wasn't the one to be able to do that. I was the one to reach out to the right person. I was the one to make sure Russell Meyer would help me, Carolyn Baker would help me be the one to save his life.

Now he works and he's making \$82 an hour driving around with an ear pod in his ear and loving life.

... *Applause.*

So, I just ask you all, you don't have to

be the one to drag a veteran anywhere. Just be prepared to help when you know it. Be prepared to know who to call.

Find out when you go home. Who should I call if I come in contact with a veteran who needs help? Who should I call if a family member tells me that their family member is struggling and needs help?

Find out. Be ready. Be ready to be the one to do your part.

I want to thank Maryland. I want to thank Chuck Gannon and Joe Gladden, two of our PNCs, for all the work they did to help me today.

Commander Santos, Past National Commander of the Legion, for doing this here today.

I don't want to name everybody because I'm going to forget somebody. Tommy Deal thinks his job is almost done. It's far from done, Tommy. We have a lot more to do.

I have Post 40 members with me here today that came a long way to be with me. I thank you all. Thank you all. If I start saying the ones

that I'll miss, like my family members, I'm going to start crying. And I've stopped. I've held back all day without crying I'm going to try to keep up with that.

Thank you all for being here and being a part of this today. I'm going to go to work and represent my grandfather's service the best I can. Thank you all.

God bless The American Legion. God bless the U.S.A.

At this time, I'm going to make everybody on the stage a Distinguished Guest.

... Applause.

... Music.

PNC JOSEPH W. GLADDEN (MD): At this time, Commander Hall will be making Distinguished Guests of the folks up on the stage.

Past National President Linda Newsome, Past National Commander Rick Santos, veteran and first lady of the Detachment of Maryland's command, Commander Josie Lohman. Lisa Williamson's partner, Dan.

... *Gavel.*

Sorry, I didn't see you over there. The Maryland crowd is sitting down. Sorry about that. I have my back to you, too. Past National President Sandi Dutton. Darryl Williamson, I'm sorry. I thought you said partner when you were up here.

Past National Commander Bill Matoska's wife Shelly Matoska, queen bee. Eighth international Commander Eleanor Deal and aide to National Commander Tommy Deal, hardest working person in the Detachment of Maryland.

At this time, we're going to step back in the program slightly. Can I have Past National Commander Ray Giehll come forward, please.

Past National Commander Ray Giehll, are you around?

... *Music.*

If we could have junior Past National Commander Chris Carlton come forward, we're going to have Ray present his Past Commander's pin.

... *Applause.*

Will the outgoing National
Sergeant-at-Arms Greg Warner please come to the
podium.

While he's doing that, will incoming
Sergeant-at-Arms Mark Fayer come to the podium.

At this time, we'll be retiring the
national colors of National Commander Chris
Carlton.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please retire the
colors.

... *Music.*

And at this time will incoming National
Sergeant-at-Arms Mark Fayer bring forward the
colors of National Commander Donald "JR" Hall.

... *Applause.*

Sergeant-at-Arms, post the Colors.

... *Applause.*

We're almost to the end. I want to thank
everyone for attending today. It's been an
incredible ceremony.

... *Gavel.*

At this time, we'll have a closing prayer.

Please uncover.

Dear Lord, please watch over these officers as they lead not only the National Organization but lead the nation. May you grant them the wisdom to make the best decisions for us. May you grant them patience so that they will allow them to wait for others to understand their decisions and implement their plans.

May you grant them passion so that the grind of the job doesn't wear them out and will allow them to inspire others.

And, finally, grant them the vision to see the decisions they have made, the patience they have exhibited and the passion they have shown will allow their goals and plans to come true. We ask this in your holy name amen.

... *Gavel.*

That means you can sit. This now concludes our installation of the 2023-2024 National officers.

I congratulate all of them and wish all of them an incredible year of service.

And now I'll turn the podium back over to National Commander Chris Carlton for the conclusion of the 51st National Convention. At this time, we'll dismiss the folks on the dais other than the vice commanders.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Thanks for staying around. And, Commander, they shop at the same place. It looks just like mine. Do you mind if I borrow it for the rest of the meeting?

At this time, we will accept any donations that anyone would like to make. Please follow the path as guided by the Sergeant-at-Arms to the rear of the stage.

... Music.

DONATIONS

DELEGATE FROM FLORIDA: From the Detachment of Florida, we have a check for Child Welfare for \$13,650.

... Applause.

And for National Emergency Fund, \$7,938.

... Applause.

DELEGATE FROM WEST VIRGINIA: From the

Detachment of West Virginia, we have a check for Child Welfare Foundation, \$1,875.

... *Applause.*

DELEGATE FROM KENTUCKY: Mr. Commander, from the Detachment of Kentucky and Squadron 113 in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, \$500 for CWF.

... *Applause.*

DELEGATE FROM OREGON: Commander, from the Detachment of Oregon, I have a check for \$286 for CWF.

... *Applause.*

DELEGATE FROM ILLINOIS: Commander, from the state of Illinois we have National Emergency Fund for 560; Veterans & Childrens Foundation, 350; Operation Comfort Warrior, \$1,030; Legacy Scholarship, \$211; and CWF, 2,645.

... *Applause.*

DELEGATE FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE: Commander, on behalf of the Detachment of New Hampshire, I'm proud to present a check for \$2,617 for CWF and a check for \$3,134 for Operation Comfort Warrior.

... *Applause.*

JAMES STEWART (DE): James Stewart, Detachment of Delaware. With me is Commander of 28 -- he's also my historian for the Detachment. He has a check from his Squadron for CWF for \$250.

... *Applause.*

DELEGATE FROM VERMONT: Detachment of Vermont proudly presents a check for \$1500 for CWF.

... *Applause.*

TIM WEAVER (MN): Tim Weaver, Detachment of Minnesota. On Friday our Detachment delegates collected \$151.25 for CWF. And I also have a donation for the Veterans & Children Foundation in the amount of \$5,760.

... *Applause.*

HENRY JAMES (NJ): Commander, Henry James Hasselhan, New Jersey, Squadron 311, \$2,478 for CWF.

... *Applause.*

DELEGATE FROM TEXAS: From the great state of Texas, from -- who won the World Series? Texas did. \$3,700 from nine Squadrons from the Detachment of Texas.

... Applause.

DELEGATE FROM VIRGINIA: Detachment of Virginia, Squadron 284, \$300 for CWF. Squadron 284, \$300 for NEF. Squadron 284, \$300 for OCW. Squadron 284, \$300 for VCF. Squadron 17, CWF, \$100. Squadron 67, \$100 for NEF. Squadron 67, \$100 for OCW. Squadron 67, \$200 for CWF. Squadron 148, \$250 for CWF. Squadron 180, \$5,000 for CWF. \$2,500 from the Detachment of Virginia for CWF, NEF, VCF. And \$160 for VCF from the Detachment of Virginia for a grand total of \$14,610. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Thank you for your generous donations.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Is there any unfinished business to come before this Convention?

Is there any unfinished business? Is there any unfinished business to come before the National Convention?

NEW BUSINESS

Hearing none, is there any new business

to come before the National Convention? Is there any new business? Is there any new business to come before the National Convention?

GOOD OF THE SONS

Hearing none, is there anything for the good of the Sons of the American Legion?

GREG WAGNER (PA): Commander, Past National Sergeant-at-Arms --

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Could you check to see if the mic is on. There it is.

GREG WAGNER (PA): Commander, Past National Sergeant-at-Arms Greg Wagner. Everybody, just wanted to let you know if you want to take your state placard, they're against the back wall. Please grab it on your way out. Thank you.

JOE MAYNE (MN): Mr. Commander, Joe Mayne, delegate from the Detachment of Minnesota. I'd like to announce our new leading candidate for National Commander '24-'25, Joseph Navarrete from New Mexico.

... Applause.

And I'd like to yield to the Detachment

of New York, PNC Chris Cerullo, for our trailing candidate announcement.

... Applause.

PNC CHRIS CERULLO (NY): Thank you, Chairman Joe, Past National Commander, and thank you for giving our Detachment the honor and our Department Legion Auxiliary to be here to put the name of the second leading candidate, from Bronx, New York, Bill Clancy. Thank you.

... Applause.

PNC JOSEPH W. GLADDEN (MD): Mr. Commander, Joe Gladden, Past National Commander, Sons of the American Legion, from Maryland. On April 12th, 13th, 14th, we'll be having the homecoming for our newly elected National Commander JR Hall. Information is available and we'll have the handouts at the Fall NEC. It will be online soon, but we'll be distributing that information. But please put that on your calendar, 12th, 13th, 14th of April of next year. It will be an incredible weekend.

... Applause.

PNC MICHAEL C. FOX (CA): Comrade
Commander, Past National Commander Michael Fox. I
would just like to let all of the delegates know
and the guests, this year there's been an
unfortunate situation that has happened to the
Detachment of Colorado, by no doing of their own.

However, the Detachment of Colorado
worked very hard this year. And prior to the
misfortune coming their way, I would like everybody
to know that they met all the criteria to win the
Triple Nickel in the Sons of the American Legion.
Thank you.

... Applause.

JAMES NOBLE (NJ): Commander, Jim Noble
with the Children and Youth Commission. Permission
to approach the podium with a presentation.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Approach.

As he's approaching, today, we have
collected a total for Child Welfare Foundation,
\$35,473.10.

... Applause.

And for the National Emergency Fund,

we've collected a total of \$11,398.

... Applause.

JAMES NOBLE (NJ): Commander, with the T-shirt sales and the cornhole game raffle, we'd like to present to you, in cash, \$2,000, an even \$2,000, for the Veterans & Children Foundation.

Thank you, Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Thank you.

... Applause.

THOMAS MARSDEN (NJ): Commander, Tom Marsden from New Jersey. For the past two years, it's been promised that there would be openness on the things that were going to happen in this organization. I would like to ask that the new Commander make sure that more stuff is opened to what's going on instead of some of the things that have happened. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: And for the Veterans & Children Foundation, we have a total of \$8,824.

... Applause.

And for Operation Comfort Warrior, 4400.

... *Applause.*

As we close, I would like to say a quote:

People may forget what you say and people might forget what you do, but they will never forget how you make them feel.

And I challenge you in this upcoming year as the other quote I always use: Purpose is why we travel; passion is the flame that lights the way.

I hope you keep your passion and your purpose throughout this next year with our new Commander.

If there's no further business to come before this National Convention, I call upon National Chaplain Jeff Gibson Sr., to lead us in a closing prayer. Please rise and uncover.

... *Gavel.*

BENEDICTION

Jeff Gibson, Sr. (AL), National Chaplain

Before I do the closing prayer, really quick, those -- remember the little guys that were on stage? I've got to tell you all this. My wife

made sure. My wife was here yesterday. One of the little guys took a coin slapped it on the chair. My wife said, what's that for, she didn't know. He said you owe me \$10.

... Laughter.

Those little guys, they hustle because that's our future. Listen up. From all of us to all of y'all, if you're all leaving we pray for God's traveling grace and mercy. We hope to see you again, all y'all that have loved ones that's home, that's sick, we pray for God's healing and protection over them.

Let us go to the Lord in prayer. Let us depart in peace, learning to share love and charity with our neighbors. May we be joined together in common goal of service to our God and our country.

Let us drive safely and carefully to our homes. May God's blessing be with us all. Amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER CARLTON: Recover.

ADJOURNMENT

The Post-Convention National Executive Committee meeting will begin in 15 minutes in this

room after the closing.

With the Colors of our Nation in place,
hand salute.

Two.

I now declare the 51st National
Convention of the Sons of the American Legion
adjourned.

... Cheers and Applause.

*... At 1:35 p.m., Sunday, August 27,
2023, the 51st National Convention of the Sons of
the American Legion was adjourned.*

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CERTIFICATION OF COMPLETION

I, DENISE HINXMAN, Certified Court Reporter, do hereby certify;

That on August 25-27, 2023, I was present and took verbatim stenotype notes of the SAL National Convention entitled herein, and thereafter transcribed the same into typewriting as herein appears;.

That said convention was taken in stenotype notes by me, a Certified Court Reporter, and thereafter reduced to typewriting under my direction as herein appears;.

That the foregoing transcript is a full, true and correct transcription of my stenotype notes of said meeting.

Dated at Reno, Nevada, this 26th day of September 2023.

DENISE HINXMAN, CSR, RDR, CRC

JACQUIE GUTIERREZ, CSR, RDR, CRC