



NATIONAL UPDATE

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Newest commander a native of Virginia

Born and raised in a small community about an hour west of the nation's capitol, Clint Bolt is excited for the Sons, having been elected National Commander on Sunday by delegates to the organization's 48th National Convention. Bolt is a 22 year member of the Sons in Warrenton, VA Squadron 72. His eligibility is through his grandfather, a U.S. Navy veteran of World War II.

"I'm excited for the organization," says Bolt. "I see great horizons for us, especially in membership because of the passage of The Legion Act. I think this will open up doors for us. Membership is Job One, always has been and always will be. My goal is 400,000 members this year."

"I've got a half million dollar goal for CWF. We have reached that before and I think we can do it again. The other big area I want us to concentrate

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CWF donations just one success of many

More than 900 registered delegates to the 48th annual National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion poured into Indianapolis this week with good reason to celebrate a year's worth of success stories.

For several decades, the S.A.L.'s marquee philanthropy has been The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. This year's goal was set at \$371,020, or one dollar for every member. Not only was the goal shattered by raising more than \$427,000 (\$1.15 per member), but in May, contributions pushed the Son's all-time giving total above the \$8 million mark. A new administrative year began on June 1 and more money has flowed in, especially this weekend at the convention.

Sons' membership also reached an all-time high this year. There are now more than 370,000 S.A.L. members

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S.A.L. national dues to go up for first time in decades

The last time Sons raised their national dues was in 1982. S.A.L. membership has risen by several hundred thousand over that period resulting in more money coming in. Yet, a great many administrative costs have simply been absorbed by The American Legion in that time.

The free ride is over. Belt tightening at all levels of The Legion Family has resulted in Legion leaders asking the Sons to pay their fair share.

"They have come to us and said, hey we could use some help," says S.A.L. National Finance Commission Chairman William Hill. For the past eight months, Hill

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and his commission have been crafting a new budget that will do just that. But it requires more money than what comes in under the current two dollar per member dues structure.

Nine detachments passed resolutions this summer calling for a dues increase of varying amounts. The convention's Constitutional Amendments Committee consolidated those resolutions and brought a single resolution to the convention floor on Saturday calling for dues to rise to five dollars per member beginning in the 2021 fiscal year. On a voice vote, the increase was passed overwhelmingly.

The extra money will pay back The Legion nearly \$700,000 a year it currently spends for S.A.L. related printing, technology personnel and other costs.

"I think it's a good thing," says Hill. "We'll see residual benefits from helping relieve The Legion of some of their operating costs so they can focus on the Four Pillars. For us, we will put money into new technology that will allow us to do on-line renewals and membership transmissions. Another \$100,000 will go to membership initiatives and training."

Speaking to the convention delegates on Friday, American Legion Internal Affairs Commission Chairman Robert Newman congratulated the S.A.L. for taking steps that will make it more financially self-sufficient.

Below - Some of the most important work of the weekend was conducted away from the convention floor. More than 100 delegates served as members of ten convention committees that met Friday morning at the convention center. Some committees held more than one meeting during the weekend. Resolutions had to be considered, rules were established and judging was held to determine which detachments would come away as award winners.



Above - Smiles and pride after completing another Legacy Run. Sons helped raise more than \$300,000 during their exhausting 1,200 mile ride that began in Florida on August 18 and ended in Indianapolis on Thursday. More than 350 riders took part this year. From L to R - Phil Stander (IL), Earl Ruttkofsky (MI), Chris Krueger (KS), Dennis McDonough (KS) and Doug Heiser (IN).



Above - Outgoing National Commander Greg "Doc" Gibbs placing flowers at the Brittany American Cemetery in France in June. During his year he made 40 visitations around the country, spending 156 days on the road, which he admits was a semi-grueling experience yet wonderful and amazing. His visit to The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports finals in Colorado was one of his favorite trips because of the quality of young people he met there. Looking back over the year he has few regrets but wishes he might have skipped visits to a few of the natural wonders he was shown at various stops in order to spend more time at Legion posts, meeting and talking with Legion Family members. With so many records and benchmarks set this year it's hard to say anything was left undone. "People really went out of their way when I traveled around and I would have liked to be able to say thank you in some better and different and stronger ways."





Above - American Legion Boys Nation President Lou Acevedo is presented his new S.A.L. membership card by Sons and Legion officials from his home state of Massachusetts.

Below - Jaden Anderson, American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year and already a member of the Sons in Utah, was presented his 5 Star-10 Ideal Award on Saturday.



Above - The future of our organization rests in the hands of our youth. S.A.L. members in the crowd under the age of 18 were called up to the stage Saturday to be made Distinguished Guests of the convention. They were then excused to go enjoy a special room set up with fun activities.

Successes / from Page 1

worldwide, a mere 350 members shy of the year's goal. A total of 31 detachments met their 100 percent goals, while 13 set new all-time highs. One important reason for the continued rise in membership is the fact the S.A.L. saw an overall renewal rate above 90 percent this year. Another important factor could be that an emphasis was placed on attracting younger members into the ranks of the S.A.L. There are now over 5,000 squadrons in the organization dedicated to helping with the programs of The American Legion.

Only 1,638 squadrons turned in year-end reports this year. Yet, they reflect an amazing amount of work being done across the country and in overseas detachments. Sons donated more than \$10 million to Legion programs and logged more than 2 million hours of volunteer work. Those volunteer hours have a net worth in excess of \$60 million.

Many parts of the country were pounded by natural disasters this past year and Sons stepped up efforts to raise more than \$361,000 for the National Emergency Fund. Similarly, more than \$500,000 was raised and contributed to the Legacy Fund.

This year's milestones were nothing short of amazing and if more squadrons filed reports, S.A.L. statistics would jump off the charts.

Commander / from Page 1

on is the Veteran and Children's Fund, formerly known as the Endowment Fund. I was so proud earlier this year when The Legion stood up and helped out more than 3,000 children and more than 1,100 members of the U.S. Coast Guard."

"We are critically low in our representation at the VA hospitals. If we fall below having representatives at 25 VA hospitals we can be removed as a voting member of the VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee. We're too dangerously close to that number. My goal is 50 representatives on board by this time next year and I think that's obtainable."

Married for 32 years, Clint and his wife Becky have three children and two grandchildren, most of whom are Legion Family or veterans themselves.

"We've tried three ways from Sunday to figure out a Legion connection that would allow Becky to join the Auxiliary but she can't be a member."

When not crisscrossing the country on S.A.L. business, Clint is a restoration carpenter, doing fine cabinetry and woodwork on historical buildings. He also has a 1935 Chevrolet that he's restoring and wants to have ready in time for the Memorial Day parade next spring.

The awards are...

Membership

Hartline Award (*Detach w/ most new squadrons*) - Pennsylvania

Houghton Award (*greatest % increase in membership*)

Category 1 - Mississippi	Category 2 - Oklahoma
Category 3 - Wisconsin	Category 4 - Arizona
Category 5 - Florida	

Highest Renewal Percentage by Region

East - France	South - Mississippi
Central - Iowa	West - Alaska
Midwest - Nebraska	

Nation's Largest Squadron

Newport Harbor, CA Squadron 291 (1,570)

Triple Nickel Award

Wisconsin (*106% + 93% renewals + 5 new squadrons*)

Americanism

Atwood/Beyea/York Memorial Award
(*Best Americanism program*)

Detachment - Washington
District - Nebraska 6th District
Squadron - Antwerp, NY Sq 916

National Emergency Fund

Largest Donations Per Capita in nation - Arkansas

East - Connecticut	Central - Missouri
Midwest - Montana	West - Alaska

Children and Youth

Detachment - Washington
District - Southeast Shore District, Maryland
Squadron - Colton Square, CA Squadron 155
South - College Park, GA Squadron 51
Central - Wellington, OH Squadron 8
Midwest - Benson, NE Squadron 112
East - Leonardo, NJ Squadron 338

Child Welfare Foundation

Garland Murphy Award (*largest donation*) - New York
Udie Grant Award (*top Legion Family combined*) - Florida
Meritorious Achievement Award - Philippines

Largest Donations by Region

East - New York	South - Florida
Midwest - Colorado	Central - Ohio
West - Arizona	

Excellence Award (*largest per capita*) - Nevada

Largest Per Capita by Region

East - Vermont	South - Mississippi
Midwest - Colorado	Central - Ohio
West - Philippines	

Community Service

Scrapbook Winners
Squadron - LaPlata, MD Sq 82
District - Third District, Minnesota
Detachment - Maryland

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Charles B. Rigsby Award (*Volunteer of the Year*)
Nick Arceo - Littleton, CO Squadron 103
Kirby Kepler Award (*best squadron rehab report*)
Colton, CA Squadron 155
Allen I. O'Brien (*best District rehab report*)
District 6, Nebraska
Earl Webster Award (*best Detach rehab report*)
Washington

Historian

History Book Award
Squadron - Rochester, NH Squadron 7
Detachment - Vermont

Color Guard

Clyde Stillwell Award and Guidon
Detachment of New York Color Guard

Commander's Legacy Scholarship Awards

Largest Donation - Massachusetts	
South - Florida	Central - Indiana
Midwest - Nebraska	West - Arizona

Legislative

George B. Evans Grassroots Veterans Advocate of the Year
Lucas Herring - Barre, VT Squadron 10

American Legion Endowment Fund

Comery Legacy Award (*largest donation*) New York
Drain Founder's Award (*highest per capita*) Oregon

Snapshots of Service Awards

Americanism - Coldwater, MI Squadron 52
Children and Youth - Glen Burnie, MD Squadron 40
Veterans Affairs - Somers Pointe, NJ Squadron 352

Below - American Legion National Commander Brett Reistad joined with Sons Friday at their convention to celebrate the bushel basket full of successes recorded



ed throughout the year and to thank Sons for the support they continue to give The Legion. At stops around the country all year, Reistad was quick to point out that he is a dual member.