

P R O C E E D I N G S

of the

47th ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION

OF

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

August 24 - 26, 2018

Minneapolis Convention Center
Ballroom A - Street Level
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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... On Friday, August 24, 2018, at 1:00 p.m., the delegates assembled for the 47th Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were had:

CALL TO ORDER and POSTING OF THE COLORS
Danny J. Smith, Nebraska
National Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The assembly please come to order.

Could we have the music turned off at this point? You guys take orders pretty good. Want to remind everyone that's here, we have a recorder taking our minutes, a court recorder.

Please use the microphones so she can document this meeting. That means you'll have to plan ahead if you want to say something. You need to know that you need to be getting out of the aisle or sit close to the end and be prepared to take the microphone. I will do my best to repeat things. If it's not audible to me, I'm sure it's not audible to her.

So at this point we have a little PowerPoint slideshow that we hope works. We haven't tested it out, but we'll see what happens.

That's all right. We're going to move on.

Color guard will now post our Nation's colors.

. . . Applause.

The National Chaplain will invoke the blessing of
God. Please uncover.

INVOCATION
James Noble, New Jersey
National Chaplain

Heavenly Father, thank You for this glorious day and
the opportunity to spend time with our fellow members.

As we open up the annual convention, we take a pause
and thank You for Your leadership, for our National
Commander, Danny.

Under his guidance, we have accomplished many things
this year. As we celebrate those accomplishments, help us
to remember all things that have been achieved because of
Your influence in our lives.

Make our meetings be constructive, informational and
inspiring, as we do good things for the Sons of The
American Legion.

Bless all assembled and those who cannot be here to
share this time with us. Grant them health and happiness.
Amen.

. . . Chorus of amen.

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

. . . At this time, the delegation observed a Moment of silence.

POW/MIA EMPTY CHAIR CEREMONY
Danny Smith, National Commander

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 POWs, 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 Sergeant-at-Arms will now place the POW/MIA flag on the empty chair.

National Vice Commander Ken Warner will lead us in the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
Kenneth Warner, Pennsylvania
National Vice Commander

... At this time, the delegation recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: You may cover.

National Vice Commander Jay Marsden will lead us in recital of the Preamble to our Constitution.

PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE S.A.L.
Jay Marsden, Missouri
National Vice Commander

... At this time, the delegation recited the Preamble to the Constitution of the S.A.L.

BLUE STAR BANNER CEREMONY
Danny Smith, National Commander

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 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.

And the Blue Star banner is in place.

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

CALL TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION
Anthony Wright, Pennsylvania
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 47th National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion to be held August 24th through August 26th, 2018, in the Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Purpose: National Convention sessions, in accordance with the Uniform Code of Procedures for National Conventions, will be convened at 1:00 p.m., on Friday, August 24, 2018. The 47th Annual National Convention shall be convened for the following purposes:

To complete all business of the Sons of The American Legion for the fiscal year 2017-2018;

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

To consider and/or make amendments to the National Constitution and/or bylaws of the National Constitution of

the Sons of The American Legion;

To elect a National Commander and five National Vice Commanders, in that sequence, for the ensuing year, 2018-2019.

Elections shall take place on Sunday, August 26, 2018. 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:

Article V, Section 3. In the National Convention, each detachment shall be entitled to three delegates and one additional delegate for each 500 members or major fraction thereof, whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer of The American Legion, 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 alternate for each delegate.

Article V, Section 4. Each duly registered delegate shall be entitled to one 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 his 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 his credentials and has paid such registration fees as may be required. In addition, all Past National Commanders of the Sons of The American Legion, the National Commander, the National Vice Commanders of the Sons of The American Legion shall be delegates to the National Convention with votes to be exercised in their respective detachments, except in the vote of the National Commander, whose vote shall be exercised only in his capacity as chairman of the National Convention.

Roll call of Officers and Detachments.

ROLL CALL

... The National Adjutant, Anthony W. Wright, called the Roll, and the following members were present:

NATIONAL OFFICERS

National Commander
Danny J. Smith (NE)

National Vice Commanders

Kenneth P. Warner (PA)
 Mark A. Cannito (SC)
 Jay E. Marsden (MO)
 Joseph R. Navarette (NM)
 Donald S. Ramirez (CA)

National Adjutant

Anthony W. Wright (PA)

National Assistant Adjutant Emeritus

Harold E. Thompson, Jr. (NE)

National Assistant Adjutants

James "Ed" Sheubrooks (FL)
 Robert J. Avery (NY)
 David M. Ridenour (IN)
 Scott A. Williams (VA) - EXCUSED
 Scott J. Thornton (OH)
 Jeffrey E. Hicks (NJ)

National Chaplain

James Noble (NJ)

National Historian

Jerry J. Cole (NE)

National Judge Advocate

Joseph Paviglianti (NY)

National Sergeant-At-Arms

George B. Sevick, Jr. (NE)

National Assistant Sergeant-At-Arms

Brian K. Waters (PA)
 Lyle G. Larson (KS)
 Raymond P. Giehll, III (IN)
 Matthew Chebro (GA) - ABSENT
 Gregory A. Falco (NY)
 David L. Rippe (NE)

Past National Commanders

Jeffrey C. Frain (AZ) - EXCUSED
 Michael K. Seaton (CA)
 Robert A. McBride (OH) - EXCUSED
 J.R. Stillwell (IL)
 John J. Smolinsky (MA) - ABSENT
 Robert H. Faust (CA)
 James R. Hartman (MD)
 Gregory D. Reis (IL) - ABSENT
 Grant M. Jamieson (MI) - ABSENT
 Charles E. Gannon (MD)
 John M. Sherrard (CA) - ABSENT
 David P. Stephens (IN)
 Christopher R. Cerullo (NY)
 Frederick L. Hartline (OH) - EXCUSED
 Douglas P. Bible (MN)
 Richard L. League (MD) - ABSENT
 David R. Faust (WI)
 Robert A. Worrel (IN) - ABSENT
 Eugene L. Sacco (CA)
 Roland D. Matteson (AZ) - EXCUSED
 Joseph M. Mayne (MN)
 John T. Dietz (KY) - ABSENT
 Jack E. Jordan (TX) - ABSENT
 William E. Matoska (MD) - ABSENT
 Byron J. Robichaux (LA)
 Richard L. Cook (OK)
 Kevin N. Winkelmann (TX) - ABSENT
 Clifford A. Smith (MA)
 Steven C. Laws (NC) - ABSENT
 Neal C. Warnken (KS)
 Michael J. Deacon (IA)
 William L. Sparwasser (MD) - ABSENT
 Earl R. Ruttkofsky (MI)
 Raymond P. Giehll, Jr. (IN)
 Thomas E. Cisna (IL)
 Mark E. Arneson (GA) - ABSENT
 David L. Dew (TX) - ABSENT
 James K. Roberts, III (FL)
 Christopher J. Huntzinger (PA)
 Joseph W. Gladden (MD) - ABSENT
 Michael W. Moss (CO)
 Kevin L. Collier (AK)
 Brian J. O'Hearne (MA) - ABSENT

Roll Call of Detachments

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas - ABSENT
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
Florida
France
Georgia
Hawaii - ABSENT
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
Philippines - ABSENT
Puerto Rico - ABSENT
Rhode Island - ABSENT

**South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia - ABSENT
Wisconsin
Wyoming**

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

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Mr. Commander...

Mr. Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Sir.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Yes, would you please mark Mr. Williams present? He is in the office working.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: So noted.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Was Nebraska really here? That was kind of weak, Harold.

... Laughter.

These guys thought Nebraska had a lot more noise than that.

I now declare this 47th National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion convened.

**OPENING REMARKS
Danny Smith, National Commander**

Couple of comments: We're having a little issue with the video feed from here to there. So I apologize for that. We're going to try to do the PowerPoints that we had for this morning or this afternoon probably tomorrow morning.

Again, we're sorry. Once we recess, we're going to work out the issues. But they all worked earlier. We know they did. But we're going to go ahead and do a little ad-lib here with my comments.

We had a little video that we were going to play with this. This last week I went down and rode the Legacy ride the first day with The American Legion Riders. Got a little wet. And that's kind of an understatement, anybody that was on that ride that first day, but I had a good time.

Once again, the brotherhood and the sisterhood with our family members and The American Legion family, definitely overwhelming.

On that ride, the first day, I wore my father's dog tags and carried a memorial flag. I asked the Riders to continue that journey of that flag and those dog tags to this convention.

We had a nice video and PowerPoint about everyone's

legacy. And we hope to get the problems worked out and show that to you tomorrow.

But at this time, I would like to ask that American Legion Rider escort to please bring the dog tags and the memorial flag forward.

... Applause.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm not afraid of the mic. Have a seat.

Back in January, Danny came to Maryland on his visitation. While there, I took Danny over to Fort McHenry, the place of the birth of the National Anthem. And at that time we raised a flag in honor of Danny's father. So that indeed was truly an honor for myself to be a part of that and I know for Danny as well.

So then we started the run on Sunday. As Danny said, we started off in the morning, and it was raining already. And we rode about 250 miles through the rain to get to the end of today. And by the end of the day the only thing dry was probably Danny's flag, which he had in his backpack, because everything else was totally drenched on all of us. It was an incredible day.

And at that time Danny said, "Joe, we would like to take my father's flag and carry it on the entire Legacy

Run." He knows the meaning of the Legacy Run and what it means to the children of our fallen soldiers and children of our disabled veterans.

So while Danny handed that flag off to me and asked me to each day turn the flag over to a different recipient for them to carry it on that day. So per the Commander's instructions that we did. So I had the honor on Monday to carry the flag. And on Tuesday I turned it over to Doug Heizer from Indiana, the new Detachment Commander. Then on Wednesday we turned it over to Past National Commander Bill Sparwasser. And then on Thursday turned it over to Past National Commander Earl Ruttkofsky. At this time I'd like to turn the mic over to Earl for his presentation.

EARL RUTTKOFSKY: Commander, at this time we'd like to present you with your flag. It's one awesome ride this year. It had its challenges. We were a little wet. But the Commander rode. And that was cool. So at this time I'd like to bring you back the flag of your father.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: My brother Jay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Are you looking for me?

Could I ask all Legion Riders to please stand.

Thank you. Remain standing, please.

... Applause.

These guys make it look easy. Danny and I are pretty good friends. Pretty moving for me.

So, Commander, it's been a great honor for The American Legion Riders to participate in honoring your father and his service to our country while serving in the United States Air Force during the Korean War. On behalf of approximately 135,000 riders and their families, we return to you your father's flag and dog tags.

By allowing us to escort them from Hutchinson, Kansas, here to our National Convention in Minneapolis truly shows your unselfishness and dedication to The American Legion family. Thank you for allowing us to share this special occasion with you and your family and for serving as our National Commander for the Sons of The American Legion.

We know your father will never be forgotten.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you all. I appreciate it. We had a great time. I know Donna had a good time, wherever she's at. She was right down there. Maybe we'll do it again. Thank you.

... Applause.

You're dismissed. Oh, boy, I guess that's why I did a video. It would have been a lot easier.

I now call upon Shawn Davis, National Convention Committee Chairman, for an update on convention activities and welcome.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME
Shawn M. Davis, Minnesota
National Convention Committee Chairman

Good afternoon, everyone.

... Chorus of good afternoon.

Come on, it's not that -- good afternoon!

... Chorus of good afternoon!

That's better. Thank you, Commander Smith. And National officers, delegates, guests and all American Legion family, I'd like to introduce myself. I am the Detachment Commander for the Detachment of Minnesota and the Convention Chairperson for this convention.

So I'd like to, on behalf of Squadron 117 in Thief River Falls, in the Red River Valley, and on behalf of Squadron 109 and Two Harbors, along the North Shore of the big lake they call Gitche Gumee, and on behalf of Squadron 595 in La Crescent in the Mississippi River Valley, and on behalf of our newest squadron, in Slayton, Minnesota, in

the southwest grassland prairie -- oops, hit the button too fast, wrong direction. Technical error. And I'm the technical person. Go figure -- and on behalf of all the other squadrons throughout the great detachment of Minnesota and their members throughout the entire state, both here and afar, I would like to bring you greetings on behalf of all 11,429 members and welcome you to the 47th Annual Sons of The American Legion convention here in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

... Applause.

So now let me start with the most important advice I will give you today.

The bathrooms are located to my left, your right, and around the corner.

But here's also some other hints to help you get you through this stay here in Minneapolis. If you're out and about in the convention center and need some assistance, look for any of our volunteers. They're wearing these shirts.

They're glad to help you out. They're manning the help desk. You'll see them at our department family kiosk in the exhibit hall. And that includes if you have any questions on where to find any posts in the Minneapolis

Twin Cities area, we'll be glad to give you directions.

Getting there is another issue with construction, but we can't help you with that. If you're out and about downtown in our Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District, feel free to find any of the ambassadors we have in their tennis ball yellow shirts. They patrol all 120 blocks of the downtown area and they can help you out with any questions you have.

Now, we do have the Detachment of Minnesota party tonight. It's being held at Stevie Ray's Comedy Cabaret at the Chanhassen Theater. Tickets are still available. If you are interested in coming, feel free to see Marcia Bible on the back table in the back of the room.

We'll take care of you and get the situation arranged for those tickets. Once you have the tickets, just a reminder, the buses will be leaving from here at the Convention Center at 6:00. Please be here by 5:45 so we can get everyone loaded and then on our way to the show.

Now, I admit, not everyone's going to be able to go to the show. Maybe some of you will be attending the Minnesota Vikings game tonight. Well, just to give you some information: That's being held at the U.S. Bank

Stadium, home of the last Super Bowl. And we hope you enjoy the game.

But did you know that that Super Bowl was built on the grounds of our last stadium, the Metro Dome, had a tendency to deflate whenever it snowed. It snows a lot here in Minnesota. And with all that snow in Minnesota, we've developed some peculiarities. And here's some hints to help you with some of those peculiarities as you navigate around town and deal with us.

No, we do not have an accent like in Fargo. Though, it does sneak out once in a while, especially if you find a meat raffle. If you don't know what a meat raffle is, just ask. There's no greater joy than getting several pounds of meat for \$1.

Now, for those of my friends in Wisconsin and elsewhere, my apologies: This is not a bubbler (referring to a photo). It is a water fountain. We're kind of firm on our terminology here. And also if you ask for a soda, be ready to get carbonated water. We call it pop here.

With that in mind as well, you know, we like our food here: From our Scandinavian dishes of Lutevisk and Lefse, to some of the new dishes from Asia and Africa.

We love the winters, the food that comes with it,

because it's a lot of great opportunities to try something new. And there's nothing better than what we call hot dish. It's not a casserole. It's hot dish.

And the ultimate hot dish for many of us is a tater tot hot dish, which, by chance, you can find in the Convention Center exhibit hall. Not as good as Mom's -- sorry, Mom -- but it's not bad.

And with all that spare time we have in the winter thinking about food, well, we get some creative ideas around here: No, instead of putting the cheese on the hamburger, let's put the hamburger inside the cheese. Someone thought this up and decided to call it a "Juicy Lucy". Yummy.

You'll find it at a lot of restaurants around town. Just don't ask us which restaurant had it first. Friendships have been lost in this great debate.

Now, with that, let's talk about the convention pins. They are available in the back hall on the table back there.

They are \$4 apiece, or three for \$10. Please, take some home, share them with your friends and rest of your detachments. We also have two types of ornaments for sale, three-dimensional ornaments. There's an American

Legion family version celebrating the Centennial. And the other is an S.A.L. ornament. They're \$20 apiece. Please pick them up before they are gone. They are going like hotcakes, and they make a great gift. Take them all for your entire family.

We also have American Legion Centennial challenge coins for sale. This was a gift from the Detachment of Minnesota to the Department of Minnesota. They're \$20 and make a great collector's item.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Or \$10.

SHAWN DAVIS: \$10. Sorry. Thank you. Hey, inflation; as they get fewer and fewer, we're going to start selling for higher prices.

Another reminder, talking with the parade committee, the parade is this Sunday, starts at 4:00. Check in with your department for your lineup times.

Just, for example, Minnesota is not lining up until 5:45. The parade is going to go many hours at this point. When you proceed along Nicollet Mall, the reviewing stand will be at 12th and Nicolette. When you reach the Convention Center, you can come in and vehicles will continue on Nicollet.

The parade goers can come into the Convention Center

for our party. And the bands, they can go behind the Convention Center and take care of things there. There will be food and drink available for purchase there.

So with that, enjoy your stay. Enjoy your time. Spend lots of money. We do appreciate that. And enjoy the convention.

And, Commander Smith, before I finish up here, if you'll come forward, I'd like to present you with the convention pin from the Detachment of Minnesota and the family ornament, three-dimensional, celebrating the Centennial of the Legion.

... Applause.

So with that, as a delegate to this convention, I ask my report be accepted.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: We have a motion to accept the Convention Committee Report.

DELEGATE FROM MINNESOTA: Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: From Minnesota, John? Is that what you said -- Scott. Scott from Minnesota seconds. You're not a delegate at-large. We'll have to have somebody else second.

DELEGATE FROM NEW YORK: New York seconds.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Atta boy. Any

discussion? Hearing none, all in favor of accepting the report signify by saying aye. Opposed, no. Motion carried.

At this time, Chairman, I would like to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th Annual Convention.

SHAWN DAVIS: I'm honored, sir. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I'd like to call on William Kelly, Legislative and Rules Committee Chairman, for his first report on the convention rules.

Mr. Kelly.

While he's coming forward, I would ask that the Past National Commanders assemble and get ready to approach the podium after he's done with the report.

**FIRST REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE
AND RULES CONVENTION COMMITTEE
William D. Kelly, Chairman
Legislative and Rules Convention Committee**

Good afternoon.

... Chorus of good afternoon.

The Legislative Rules Committee met at 11:30 this morning. Our main job was to pass the rules of the convention.

At this time I would like to make a motion that we

accept the rules for the 47th Annual National Convention for the Sons of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: We have a motion to accept the convention rules. Is there a second?

DELEGATE FROM ILLINOIS: Second by Illinois.

DELEGATE FROM ALABAMA: Second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Alabama seconds. Any discussion?

Motion on the floor, duly seconded to accept the convention rules. All in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed, no.

Motion carried.

I have to apologize, Past National Commanders. We have a couple of distinguished guests that we want to bring forward first.

We are going to deviate a little bit from the schedule here on the distinguished guests.

National President Diane Duscheck is an enthusiastic, dedicated, 56-year "Paid Up For Life" member of American Legion Auxiliary Abendroth-Connolly Unit 282, Markesan, Wisconsin.

She gained her eligibility through her father, Roland, who served during World War II. And her

membership also honors the service of her brother, Phillip, who served during Vietnam.

Diane's caring and giving personality has reached many over the years as a seventh and eighth grade science teacher and representative of the teachers union.

She retired from teaching in 2014 but never lost that passion for service to others, volunteering her time and talents serving Easter Seals Wisconsin, Milwaukee's Mitchell Park Horticulture Domes and, of course, The American Legion Auxiliary.

Her passion to serve started as an active junior member, and she has served The American Legion Auxiliary at the unit, district, department and now the national level. Since that time, as a junior member, Diane has shared her talents and leadership ability mentoring, promoting and serving The American Legion Auxiliary.

In 1995, she began to serve at the national level as NECwoman. Since then, Diane has continued as an active leader being elected and serving as Central Division Vice President in 1999. She has served as a member of or chaired numerous national committees.

Without further ado, ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm Sons of The American Legion welcome to my

friend, the National President of The American Legion Auxiliary, Diane Duscheck.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort National President to the podium.

... Applause.

GREETINGS

**Diane Duscheck, National President
American Legion Auxiliary**

Good afternoon to all of you. Have a seat. Make yourselves comfy here. So, Commander Danny, Sons of The American Legion officers, members and guests, it's a good afternoon, isn't it?

You know, what a pleasure it is to see all of you again. And if the lights weren't shining in my eyes, I could actually see you. But from the back, you all looked really good, when I was in the back of the room.

I have enjoyed traveling so much to your departments and meeting the Sons of The American Legion representatives. I'll tell you, you've been welcoming. You've been enthusiastic. And I can tell that you're always dedicated to what's going on.

And you always leave me with a smile. So I have enjoyed being there very much. I feel that this year I've

been really blessed to be able to enjoy the company of Commander Danny and wife Donna, Commander Denise and her husband, Mike.

And on the foreign travel, I took along with me our National Executive Director from The American Legion Dubbie Buckler. As a Legion family, we've worked to build brand loyalty as we traveled around. And by brand loyalty, I don't mean that we were all wearing Auxiliary emblems or Legion emblems or S.A.L. emblems.

What I actually want to refer to is what is the idea that we represent when we go into a department. And what do people think of us when they see us and they go, oh, that's Legion family over there. So we're really trying to build an attitude, one where they can see we're dedicated to our mission. We're dedicated to one another. We want to spread kindness, goodwill everywhere we go. Commander Danny, I always look forward to running into him when I'm in a department.

He's truly a passionate person. He's passionate about the aims and purposes of The American Legion, the protection of our youth. And even the welfare of the veterans.

He is absolutely an inspiration. By the way, have

you caught his fireside chats? Aren't they great?

... Applause.

I know that you are really concerned about youth. So I want to tell you about a couple of the kids I've run into as we've traveled around. And Commander Danny was with us on a bunch of these.

So up in Alaska, met a seven-year-old whose name was Logan. When Logan was going to be turning seven, his mother asked him, "What do you want for your birthday?" He said, "Money." Sounded like a good excuse to me. She said, "What do you want money for?" He's going, "I need to help out the veterans in the veterans homeless shelter downtown."

So Mom helped him set up a Gofundme account. I want you to know he raised over \$1,500 on that account.

... Applause.

Then he went down to the homeless shelter to find out what they really needed down there. And he was told jelly and socks. Now, they don't necessarily go together, and you may be going, may be wondering: Why jelly?

Everybody brings peanut butter to a homeless shelter, but nobody brings the jelly. How can you have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich unless someone serves the

jelly?

So Logan and his mom went to buy these things. The store was so impressed with what he was doing, they gave him another \$50. He went around and his mom brought cartloads full of socks and jelly and delivered them.

Now, we honored Logan for his dedication to veterans. And then one of the Legionnaires got up and said: Come on, guys, let's donate again. So at the luncheon where we were, I want you to know that little Logan, who is about this tall, went away with over \$800 in his hand. And he had that grasp in his little fist as he went running back to his mom going, "Mom, mom, I've got \$800." So he's ready for his next project.

Another young man I met was Justin. I met him in Washington. Starting off in third grade, he was really excited to learn about veterans from World War II. He said these people serve, and they're just so incredible; their valor is amazing.

Ever since that time he's been sort of engaged with what's happening with World War II veterans. So he started in third grade. I met him, oh, about eight months ago. He's about this tall. I come up to about his shoulder. He graduated this summer, and he's already

raised \$130,000 which is enough to send 145 World War II veterans to Washington D.C.

... Applause.

And the last young person I want to tell you about I met just a couple weeks ago. And this is a young lady who was on her way home from Hoosier Girls State. She was asleep in the back seat. You know how Girl and Boy States are. She was done with the week. She was sound asleep. And all of a sudden her dad pulled over on the edge of the road. A car in front of them had veered off the road, going down an embankment, through a ditch, and came to rest in the field.

As she woke up, being taller than her dad, though her dad was running, Faith passed her dad, down the hill, in order to get to the car. The gentleman in there had had a massive heart attack.

So Faith's dad, Faith, and a good samaritan that they haven't tracked down yet, did CPR on this gentleman for 20 minutes. And then when the EMTs came, they helped put the man on a backboard. They carried him down through a water-filled ditch, up an embankment, and got him into the ambulance. I want to tell you these are the youth that we're looking, that at some point in time we're going

to be filling in our shoes in order to take care of veterans, military and their family.

Commander Danny, and all of your Sons of The American Legion members that are here, I hope you have a great conference while you're here, your great convention, get a lot of business done, and enjoy celebrating everything wonderful that's gone on.

Thank you so very much and thank you for lending Danny to us for an entire year.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Now, we've had the opportunity to travel a lot. And, by chance, meet up at different locations. And there were some planned trips we took together as an organization with The American Legion.

And you always wonder what people are like behind the scenes. I'm going to tell you this: National President Diane is the exact same person behind the scenes that you see here today: Kind, caring, passionate and giving.

And it's just been a wonder to serve with you. And at this point I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th National Convention.

NATIONAL AUXILIARY PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you

very much. I appreciate that.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DANNY SMITH: One more presentation: Citation of Appreciation is presented to Diane Duscheck, National President, the American Auxiliary, in recognition of outstanding contributions and in appreciation for dedicated service to the programs of the Sons of The American Legion given this 24th day of August 2018, in the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Signed by National Commander Danny Smith and National Adjutant Anthony Wright.

NATIONAL AUXILIARY PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you so much.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: If you'll please remain standing for our next distinguished guest. Our next guest joining us this afternoon hails from the great state of Wisconsin. And she is the first female National Commander of The American Legion.

She's a Paid Up For Life member of The American Legion Auxiliary; but, more importantly, she's a member of The American Legion.

National Commander Rohan joined The American Legion

in 1984, earning her eligibility for membership by service in the United States Army during the Vietnam War era. She served her country as an instructor in the Quarter Master course at Fort Lee, Virginia, separating from duty at the rank of specialist in 1976.

Following her service in the United States Army, Denise was employed with the University of Wisconsin, Madison as the Assistant Purser of Student Loans, retiring in 2012.

In her 33-plus years as a member of The American Legion, Denise has compiled an exceptional resumé at all local levels, including in the service record Denise has served as chairman or member of numerous committees.

As an officer, Denise has served The American Legion as Post Commander, District Commander and Department Commander.

While Post Commander, Denise established Sons of The American Legion Squadron 333 and chartered Boy Scout Troop 333.

On the national level, she has served on the Legislative Commission, Veterans Policy Oversight Committee, Vice Chair Americanism Council, Veterans Employment and Education Commission Chair, National

Membership and Post Activities Chair, National Association
Department Historian American Legion Vice President and
Facilitator at National American Legion College.

Her dedication and can-do attitude has earned her
many awards over the many years of service. Included in
this are: Wisconsin American Legion Auxiliary Veteran of
the Year. Wisconsin Female Veteran of the Year.
Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker Accommodation and
President George Bush Lifetime Achievement Award.

Coming from a family that has a rich heritage of
service to their community and church, Commander Rohan
developed an exceptional standard of values and beliefs
that she promotes in her daily life.

Holding in high regard the values of: Family comes
first; integrity matters; justice should prevail; service,
not self; honesty is a given, humility is a gift. These
core values make Denise the exceptional Legionnaire she is
today and an excellent National Commander.

Please join me in welcoming our National Commander
of The American Legion, Denise Rohan.

GREETINGS
Denise Rohan, National Commander
The American Legion

Howdy. I was hoping there was going to be one more fireside chat before this is over. So I brought the marshmallows. I got the chocolate, and I got the graham crackers. And I just hope that I get to spend 'smore time with you.

... Laughter and applause.

I gotta get official now. Thank you. I'm going to let you sit down. There we go. Thank you.

What a great year it has been. And I have enjoyed your National Commander's fireside chats. And so hopefully we'll get to see 'smore of that before it's over and I'll get to spend some more time with Danny and his wife, Donna.

We've been having a great year. Oh, we have been doing so much and you have been doing so much. It's hard to believe the year is almost over. And anytime we needed some more of anything, the Legion always knew we could count on our Sons of The American Legion, as well as our Auxiliary members.

Anytime we needed some more members, you would help us out. When the hurricanes started hitting Texas and Florida, Puerto Rico and other parts of our nation, as well as wildfires, tornados and floods, and we needed some

more money for the National Emergency Funds, you were there to help us out.

Our Child Welfare Foundation wouldn't be what it is without the Sons of The American Legion.

And we had some more troops deploying, and our Sons of The American Legion was there at those deployments handing out GI Josh dogs to the children of our military personnel who were being deployed.

All of the help that you have given to our families, over \$2 million, the Sons have given this year. But that's just the cash donations.

It really comes over to 45 million -- \$45 million worth of support that you have given over just this last year. And that's just what gets reported on your reports.

And I know that there are a lot of squadrons that aren't reporting everything.

I had the opportunity of being on the Legacy Scholarship Fund ride with The American Legion Riders. And so many of you Sons members were on that ride, helping the children.

You know, to quote Whitney Houston: I do believe that children are our future. And the work that you are doing each and every day makes a difference in the lives

of our veterans and their families and our military personnel and their families, as well as our nation's children, our Americanism programs, teaching -- teaching what it means to be an American and how important it is you give back, just like what each and every one of you do.

You are true possessors of a priceless heritage. And I am so happy and so proud that someone planted inside each and every one of you the love for this nation, so much that you care. You care about one another. You care about this country. You care about our veterans.

We are a family. We care about one another. And as you continue to learn and grow, I hope that you continue to mentor all of those who come on behind you, because as we teach about America, we are growing this great nation to be an even greater nation way into the future.

It's all the work that each and every one of you do. So I say God bless to the person who planted the idea of caring about the country inside each and every one of you. Thank you for all of the work that you do to help take care of our nation, of The American Legion family, of each other.

You, you are the Sons of The American Legion, the

family. We're all in it together. I'm so proud of all of you, and I can't thank you enough for all the work that you do.

I hope you have a fantastic convention. Learn a lot. Take that information home and share it whenever you possibly can. Continue to grow. Continue to be the great citizens that each and every one of you are.

Continue this great family into another 100 years. God bless each and every one of you and God bless our great nation. Thank you so much.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: She said that was enough. We were going to let you go on.

Commander Denise, what a year. Appreciate your support, your friendship, along with yours, Mike. What awesome friends.

Certificate of Appreciation is presented to Denise H. Rohan, National Commander of The American Legion, in recognition of outstanding contributions and in appreciation for dedicated service to the programs of the Sons of The American Legion. Given this 24th day of August 2018 in the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Signed by National Commander Danny Smith, National Adjutant

Anthony Wright.

NATIONAL COMMANDER ROHAN: Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER DANNY SMITH: I'd also like to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th Annual National Convention.

MIKE ROHAN: Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: National Commander's aide, Mike, come on up on the stage. I'd like to make you a distinguished guest.

NATIONAL COMMANDER ROHAN: I hate to say it, but he's my favorite S.A.L. member.

... Applause.

... Laughter and applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: You know when we were together and my number one aide -- I'm not sure, I guess Donna should be my number one aide -- and Dave, my real aide, if they weren't around, Mike was there to help me out. And I appreciate that. And I will cherish your friendship for the rest of my days. Thank you so much.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: We're really mixing them up today and hopefully we don't forget anybody.

At this point we're going to jump to National Executive Secretary Dubbie Buckler. Dubbie Buckler is in her tenth year serving The American Legion Auxiliary as National Secretary. She brings years of corporate executive experience to her position as National Headquarters Executive Director, the counterpart to the National Adjutant.

Dubbie brings an impressive background to her chief management role for the country's largest women's patriotic service organization. Dubbie graduated in the top 40 from Butler University and completed her graduate fellowship in judicial administration at the Indiana University School of Law, a combined law and MBA-level program, where she ranked No. 1 in her class.

She was in public service for 25 years; 16 in criminal justice where she was in charge of Juvenile Division of the Marion County Prosecutor's Office. She was the first woman elected county treasurer for the Indianapolis and Marion County, the 11th largest city, which included serving as president of the county commissioners under UNI-GOV.

She obtained her honor of Outstanding County Treasurer and Finance Officer in the United States. She

moved from government to the private sector where, as a director of business development in Anthem, a Fortune 50 company, she helped lead the merger of three newly acquired insurance companies.

She was drawn to the nonprofit sector serving as CEO of a national breast cancer subsidiary for eight years.

She then became the managing publisher of an award-winning magazine. She's received many national and state honors for her business and civic achievements. Her membership in The American Legion Auxiliary honors her father and Army Air Corps major in World War II and her son an OIF Navy veteran, who did a tour in Iraq.

Please join me in welcoming my friend, National Executive Secretary for The American Legion Auxiliary, Dobbie Buckler.

... Applause.

I guess Dobbie had to split real quick. So just ease it on down. I won't read that again, but we'll bring her back as soon as she gets back. Now we're going back to the original schedule, if that helps you guys in the back any.

Our first group of distinguished individuals represents the senior leadership within The American

Legion that oversee, review and make recommendations to our actions, resolutions and finances.

Please join me in giving these gentlemen a warm welcome. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort forward Internal Affairs Commission Chairman Robert E. Newman, S.A.L. Subcommittee Chairman George West; and, of course, make sure you bring Internal Affairs Division Director Jack Querfeld along with you.

... Applause.

I called for three, I got two.

I'd really like to have Jack come up, if he would still do so. But that's up to you.

First to speak, Mr. Newman.

GREETINGS

**Robert Newman, Chairman
The American Legion Internal Affairs Commission**

Thank you, Commander. I'll tell you what, congratulations. And good afternoon to each and every one of you.

... Chorus of good afternoon.

You can do better than that.

... Chorus of good afternoon!

There you go. Sitting up here, looks like there's

like five people down here in front and you can't see anything back that way.

Greetings to the strongest program of The American Legion.

... Applause.

As Chairman of the Internal Affairs Commission, I have the honor and privilege of providing oversight to the great work accomplished by your members on behalf of The American Legion and our country's servicemembers.

Year after year, the outstanding efforts made by members of the Sons of The American Legion in your local communities and detachments are a key component of the success our American Legion posts have in our communities.

Over \$7.5 million in donations, hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours, that is what this program brings to the table.

As proud possessors of a priceless heritage, that is definitely something to be proud of. On the national level, you have had a busy year. Your membership numbers have continued to beat the year-to-date membership numbers in 2017, as your program grows. Your strategic planning ad hoc committee has submitted their report and the direction of these committees are going forward.

The future of the Sons of The American Legion is bright. And I can tell you the Internal Affairs Commission is committed to making this happen.

Have a great convention. And I ask you to truly celebrate what you've accomplished this year. And thank you, Commander Smith, for allowing me this time.

At this time, I'm a proud member of Squadron 97 from the great Detachment of Indiana.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Always happy to have a dual member on board. Chairman Newman, at this time I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th Annual Convention.

ROBERT NEWMAN: Thank you so much.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you for your service. Now I'll call on the subcommittee George West.

GREETINGS

**George West, Chairman
S.A.L. Subcommittee**

Thank you, Commander Smith. Officers on the dais, delegates to this convention, fellow comrades all, good afternoon to you.

... Chorus of good afternoon.

I consider it a great honor to have the opportunity to offer praises to you all, especially just after hearing of the fabulous accomplishments that you all have made from the squadron level on up to the leadership that National Commander Smith has exhibited every day since being elected in Reno last year.

You have heard the dollar figures from Chairman Newman, which in itself is again quite impressive. However, we all know it requires many, many volunteer Sons of The American Legion man-hours to make these things happen as they do.

As S.A.L. Subcommittee Chairman, and on behalf of the entire S.A.L. Subcommittee of The American Legion, Internal Affairs Commission, we thank you and congratulate you on another outstanding year of caring and sharing for our veterans, their families in the aid of the youth of our country.

Commander Smith, your direction from the top, with your theme of "Following their footsteps, making history," has certainly come to fruition this past administrative year.

You, Sons, one and all, have made a difference, and

you continue to do so every year.

Not to be outdone by my chairman, which I know better, but I'm going to do it anyway.

... Applause.

Commander Smith, as a proud member of the Sons of The American Legion myself, I want to thank you for a wonderful year of leadership. I've been honored to serve under your command as our Commander, and I want to personally say thank you to you very much for all you have done and continue to do for us. Thank you, sir.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Chairman West, before you leave, it is indeed an honor to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th Annual Convention.

... Applause.

Internal Affairs Division Director, Jack Querfeld, would you like to say a few words?

JACK QUERFELD: You don't need to hear from me.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: That's good. That's a good thing. If you would come to the podium, I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th Annual National Convention. I appreciate your guidance and support this past year.

... Applause.

JACK QUERFELD: Thank you, Commander Smith. And thank you, Sons. I appreciate being a distinguished guest for the Sons. I've been working with them for 23 years and each year you keep improving. So keep going. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Guess what, we're halfway done, and I got the agenda finally.

... Laughter.

Our next distinguished guest is leading candidate Brett Reistad, a Vietnam War-era veteran of the United States Army, serving honorably from 1974 to 1978 as an infantry mortarman assigned to the prestigious Third Infantry, regiment known as The Old Guard, at Fort Myer, Virginia, the Army's oldest active duty infantry regiment and official ceremonial unit and escort to the president.

A 37-year honorary life member and past Legionnaire of the Year of American Legion Post 270 in McLean, Virginia, Brett rose through the Post, District, Department and National offices and appointments.

Proving to be an effective and respected leader, he served for 13 years as Department Historian and as

Department Commander of Virginia from 2005 to 2006.

Achieving an all-time high in membership and earning the Gold Brigade Award for recruiting more than 50 new members, Brett is also a dual member of the Sons of The American Legion, Manassas, Virginia Squadron 10.

Please join me in welcoming leading candidate for National Commander of The American Legion Brett Reistad to our convention. Sergeant-At-Arms, please escort.

... Applause.

GREETINGS
Brett Reistad
Leading Candidate for
National Commander of The American Legion

Commander Smith -- I can't see anybody out here. Commander Smith, distinguished guests and fellow Sons, good afternoon.

... Chorus of good afternoon.

What a great time it is to be a member of The American Legion family.

And not to be outdone by the previous speaker -- I didn't do this last year because I didn't have it with me last year -- but let me do this.

... Applause.

I'm quite sure that will make my Detachment of

Virginia colleagues very happy.

... Applause.

I was asked to keep my comments short. I know you have a lot of speakers and a lot of business to conduct. I am just very, very excited to be here and to be a leading candidate for National Commander.

And I am equally as excited to have the opportunity to be able to serve with your leading candidate Greg "Doc" Gibbs. What a wonderful guy.

... Applause.

And for the trifecta, Kathy Dungan, for The American Legion Auxiliary, another dynamic person. I think we're going to have a great team for 2018-2019.

... Applause.

As you know, our focus next year is going to be on celebrating The American Legion's 100th anniversary. And my theme for the year is "Celebrating our Legacy," which you'll see on the sleeves of the membership shirts for next year, which I hope you have purchased and I hope you like.

I am not only focusing on our centennial and the great things that this organization has done, but also on our membership.

As I've told my Legion counterparts, if we can't make this year be the year that we stop this slide or decline in membership, I don't know when it will be.

We have the members out there. We have the greatest opportunity, this being our centennial, to be able to sell ourselves. And we have the greatest American Legion family. And that is you and our sisters from The American Legion Auxiliary.

I am thrilled to have this great opportunity and to get to work with you this next year and to get to work with Greg. I hope I can count on your support. I know I can count on your support, I don't have to hope for it.

So I just wanted to -- I wanted to say hello, and I look forward to having the opportunity to mingle with you over the next several days. And I hope some of you have the opportunity to stay through Thursday to be able to enjoy our election and our afterparty.

So Commander Danny, I appreciate the opportunity to be here and thank you for the invitation. And I like this cap, by the way. Fits me well.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I'm sure another in a long line of fantastic leaders for The American Legion. I

know you'll serve the organization well.

At this point I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th Annual National Convention.

... Applause.

BRETT REISTAD: Thank you, everybody.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Next on our agenda, second leading candidate James W. Bill Oxford. Bill joined The American Legion in 1986, earning his eligibility through service in the United States Marine Corps from 1967 to 1970.

He served as an aviation electronic technician on the 86 Intruder. After leaving the Marine Corps, he immediately joined the North Carolina National Guard as an MDA guardsman.

He attended the North Carolina Military Academy Officer Candidate School where he was commissioned in 1973 as a second lieutenant in the Transportation Corps. He served as a platoon leader, a company leader, or, excuse me, a company commander, a battalion commander, and also held several state level staff positions. After transferring to the Army Reserve and serving with the Military Traffic Movement Command, he retired as an O-6 colonel with more than 34 years of service.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome second leading candidate James W. Bill Oxford.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort Candidate Oxford to the podium.

... Applause.

GREETINGS

**James W. Bill Oxford
Second Leading Candidate for National Commander of
The American Legion**

Please take your seats. Wow, it is really bright here. Any Marines in the crowd?

Show me those hands. I know if I get in trouble where my help is. You got my back. And I also know if trouble's going to start, that's probably where it's going to start. Semper Fi, brothers.

It's truly an honor and a privilege to be here. And I want to say thank you, Danny, for the opportunity.

And as we think about where we are and where we're going, I'd like to recognize Danny for his selection nomination and election as your National Commander last year.

He's done a fabulous job. And I can say that from experience because, I'm serious as I can be, he has.

We have had the opportunity to attend several

different conferences and different things across the nation. And, in fact, we were in Alaska together when we heard the story about Logan and his jelly and socks. And I had planned to talk about that, but Diane took part of my speech.

Anyway, when we think about the leadership, I would also congratulate y'all on the selection and nomination of your National Commander candidate Doc Gibbs. He's done a great job and will be a great Commander.

And I also want to recognize Clint Bolt, who will be your candidate Commander in 2019, when I hope to become your National Commander. Those three gentlemen are outstanding leaders.

When I think about leadership, there's a difference between the leaders and a leader. You elect the leadership of this organization. But a leader steps up to create the direction and then the emotion, the enthusiasm to create movement in that organization.

And Danny, Doc and Clint are the leaders that it will take to lead us into the next hundred years of this organization's livelihood.

Those are outstanding candidates. And I congratulate you on their nomination and hopefully

selection and election next year with Clint, next week with Doc. So they will do a great job, I'm sure, of that.

When we think about -- or when I think about history, my history goes back to 1986 with the Legion when I first joined, but after that, I spent a lot of years working as a laborer.

I ran a plant maintenance crew, and we took care of all the operations of a maintenance crew. But along with that, as I was working for a living, I also spent 30-plus years in the Reserves and the National Guard.

During that time I had the opportunity to do a lot of other things. I was the chairman of the Board of Aldermen in a small town I lived in. I worked with baseball, softball, soccer, football as an official, as a coach, as an administrator.

And I told you -- I brought that out because I think we all have a civic responsibility to make our country, our community and our organizations better.

Now, I'd like to think I was able to do that because of all the time and effort and work I put into those organizations. But you have stepped up to make this organization better because of your dedication and service and work that you put into it.

Thank you for that. The service that you all provided to America's veterans could never be understated or overappreciated. I want to say thank you very much for that.

Remember that civic responsibility as we move into the next 100 years. We are celebrating our 100th anniversary, and we've been able to do that because Legionnaires, the Auxiliary, the Riders and the Sons. Those four organizations have created the organization that we have that is considered The American Legion. Thank you for what you're doing.

And I'd like to -- everybody knows the World Series, American Legion World Series just completed in Shelby, North Carolina. And I'm proud to represent Shelby today.

And, Danny, I know you were tied up with the Legacy Run, but I'd like to present you with a memento from the 2018 World Series in Shelby, North Carolina.

... Applause.

And I've got one more. Is the Delaware Commander here? Delaware won The American Legion World Series. Is the Delaware Commander here?

I've got a memento from him from the World Series also.

... Applause.

Is this the Delaware Commander?

Come on up. That Delaware team was outstanding in the World Series.

Thank you very much for the time. Looking forward to working with everyone in 2019-20.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Candidate Bill, I know we ended up in a lot of the same locations this past year, and we always had a great time. I enjoyed your many stories that you shared of your past service.

So it is indeed an honor to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th Annual National Convention.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Hold your ball (referring to gift to Commander).

... Laughter.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Glad he said that, not me.

... Laughter and applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Let me take you back in time, a time about ten minutes ago, when I read a bio of a lady -- I'm not going to read it again. So you're just going to have to remember it.

Please bring forward National Secretary Mary
"Dubbie" Buckler.

... Applause.

She was following the schedule, and we weren't, I
guess. Welcome to our stage.

GREETINGS

**Mary "Dubbie" Buckler
National Executive Secretary
American Legion Auxiliary**

Am I allowed to touch these (referring to
microphone)? I'm not as tall as Commander Danny.

Commander Danny, thank you so much. Adjutant Tony,
how are the butterflies?

Butterflies doing good?

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Doing good.

MARY "DUBBIE" BUCKLER: It's a pleasure to be here.
And I really had it on my schedule that I was supposed to
be here at 2:15. So when I'm rounding the corner at about
2:07, I think I'm doing fine, and I keep hearing that "you
were just introduced." So I'm Dubbie.

I've been with The American Legion Auxiliary now --
this is my tenth year. And I can't believe it has been 10
years. The old expression time does go fast.

I want to thank all of you for what you do. My

membership in the Auxiliary honors my father and my son and I have a lot of other family members as well. And so my other son, who did not serve in the service, is a member of the Sons. So we are indeed a Legion family. And we're very proud of it.

I want to take a moment of personal privilege and just tell you what a wonderful year this has been working with your National Commander, Danny, and his lovely wife, Donna. They are terrific. And I know you're going to have many opportunities to applaud them, but can you join me in showing my appreciation to them?

... Applause.

This is The American Legion Auxiliary's 98th convention. We didn't have our first convention until a couple of years after the Legion had theirs.

We've been looking forward to, when we turn 100, just as you all have -- and one of the things that I've shared with you in my previous visits, is that we took a long, hard look at where we were. And the brutal facts are we've been on a many-decade decline in membership. And if we didn't do something, what was going to happen?

So we realized that if we didn't do anything, we were going to be out of business in about 30, 35 years.

So many of you know we embarked on what we call our Centennial Strategic Plan.

Five goals to help position The American Legion Auxiliary to grow and hopefully help the Legion family to grow with The American Legion: Build brand loyalty; strengthen departments and units; develop leadership at all levels; foster an internal culture of goodwill; and if we do those four things, we will enhance membership strength.

And we've invested now over a million dollars in resourcing our Centennial Strategic Plan. We're about three and a half years into it now.

And we started out with about 200 initiatives, all ideas, things that we needed to do to move the organization forward. In some instances bring it up into the 21st century. Expand the way we could get more people involved. Recognizing that women -- just like everybody else, women have precious little discretionary time, and with what they do with their discretionary time, they have many, many more options than they did 20, 30 years ago.

So we're highly competitive with an awful lot of demands on people's time. The reason people belong to The American Legion Auxiliary is two reasons: They're either

so proud of what they see it doing that they want to be a member and financially support it, or they're so personally fulfilled that they want to continue the experience.

So I emphasized -- when I was talking about our Centennial Strategic Plan, I emphasized Goal 2, foster a culture of goodwill, because we've got to be more welcoming, more inviting, and we've got to find more ways to get a wide variety of people involved in the organization. We can't just continue to do things the same way we've always done them.

So the number one question I get asked is: What difference is it making? So I want to answer that in two ways. One, The American Legion Auxiliary needs to continue. We have over 20 million veterans in the United States, and our federal government will never be able to take care of them.

We have to have the Legion family. We have to have The American Legion Auxiliary. Our annual impact, if we were paid for all the volunteer service we do, for all the scholarships we award, the money we raise, the money we spend serving our mission, the money we spend helping our veterans and our communities, our annual impact is worth

over \$1 billion.

... Applause.

This past year it was 1.1 billion, with a B, dollars. And I encourage you to all start quantifying the impact you make as Sons of The American Legion.

When people hear that number, it makes them take notice: Oh, my gosh, they must really be doing something. That might be an organization I want to support. Or if I'm eligible, I want to join.

So that's the number one reason why we have spent that investment in our Centennial Strategic Plan.

The other question I'm asked is: What's it doing for membership? Well, over the past 20-plus years, our membership had been declining at a rate of about 10 percent a year. You can do the math. It doesn't take long before that railroad track doesn't have any place to go.

Since we have invested in the Centennial Strategic Plan, now three and a half years into it, our rate of decline has improved. It's still declining, but it's only declining by 6 percent per year.

So over the last four years, the rate of decline has been 6 percent instead of 10 percent, which is what it was

before we did this.

And last year, 2017 to 2018, our membership dropped only 3 percent. Now, it's still declining, but you can't get better -- I mean, you can't grow until you start leveling off so that you can get better.

So at least we're moving in the right direction. And I think all of you, because I know that the Sons of The American Legion have been very supportive of many of the things that the Auxiliary does, I hope you feel like we're supportive of the many things that you do.

You're a wonderful group of people. Again, I'm delighted to be here. You're tired of hearing people standing up here talking. So with that I thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Donna and I had to -- not had to -- we had the opportunity -- that came out wrong, I'm sorry -- we had the opportunity and the pleasure of being on several trips with both you and National President, and what two outstanding people. Hopefully we created a new friendship that lasts for a long time.

MARY "DUBBIE" BUCKLER: Indeed you have.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: And I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th Annual National

Convention.

MARY "DUBBIE" BUCKLER: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Now, if you've heard me speak this past year, you maybe heard me talk about how we're all unique; we all have our own unique appearance, our own unique backgrounds. But our love of this organization, that flag and this country, I think, is all shared among all of us.

And it takes a lot of effort to get us to where we've gotten to today. And at this time I would like the Past National Commanders that are with us today to join me on stage. This is your leadership that has got us to this point, ladies and gentlemen.

Your Past National Commanders.

... Applause.

We either need a bigger stage or something. We have quite the assembly of knowledge here.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SEATON: A second floor.

Thank you, Commander. Mike Seaton, Past National Commander, California. It's my honor as the Senior Past National Commander to thank you for your year of service

and to also make you a distinguished guest to your convention.

... Applause.

So on with the show.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you, gentlemen.

Our next distinguished individual chairs the 100th Anniversary Committee of The American Legion.

Please join me and welcome Past National Commander, the Chairman of the 100th Anniversary Committee, David Rehbein.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort Chairman Rehbein to the podium.

... Applause.

CHAIRMAN DAVID REHBEIN: He says I can leave you standing if I want. But then I know that there's somebody out there that's got an apple or a tomato or something, so...

It's my privilege to be in front of you today for just a few minutes to talk about the 100th anniversary, the centennial of The American Legion. This is a day, this weekend, that we've been looking forward to for five years, because that's how long we've been in the planning

stage.

Well, planning is over. Execution begins this weekend because our centennial begins this weekend. We will spend the next year, actually through Veteran's Day of 2019, celebrating the centennial of The American Legion, remembering our history, relearning, in some instances, the legacy that our founders created for us. Because that's been the first half of our theme. That's what's driven us: legacy and vision.

Relearn the legacy of The American Legion, remember why we are where we are and how we got here, and then use that legacy to create the vision for the second century.

Just because we're celebrating the centennial doesn't mean we're looking completely at the past. All organizations -- as you just heard the National Secretary of The American Legion Auxiliary say, all organizations have to continue to look to the future.

And so that legacy -- and you'll see that legacy in the convention hall. You have part of it in the back here.

Let me talk a little bit about some of the accomplishments that we have made as a committee, as an organization, to help relearn that legacy and to spread

that legacy through the organization.

A place where posts could go, a website where posts could go to post their history to talk about their legacy, now has 2500 American Legion posts that have put their history out there for people to see.

Now, that was originally aimed at the posts putting their history up there, but we're turning it around. It's not going to be an internal website anymore. It's going to be a public-facing website so that the people in that community and across that state and across this country can see what our posts have done. Because it's not all about the national organization and our national accomplishments; it's about what the posts have done.

And the posts have done some very interesting, amazing and significant things in their home communities, in their departments.

There now exists a database of the Veterans Memorials in this country. There are over 2,150 memorials that are entered in that database. As you know, in places across this country, we are fighting to keep some Veterans Memorials. As part of that fight, we need to know where all the Veterans Memorials are.

That's a searchable database. You can go online and

see what's been entered from your detachment, from your state, and I wish you would, because I'm convinced that there's still Veterans Memorials out there.

Just because we go into the centennial year doesn't mean we're going to close entries into that database. We need to keep adding to it.

In the exhibit hall, we have an American Legion chronology. If you have not seen it yet, go take a look. Because it talks about the legacy. It is many feet long. It does not contain everything. It couldn't be long enough to contain everything. And don't look at it as a starting point, as only a look-back.

As you look at that chronology, dig a little deeper into some of those things. There are only one or two statements about something that happened. There's much more to all of them.

There's also the G.I. Bill exhibit. And you have a smaller version of that back here. And I'll tell you the reason why that smaller version exists.

We created that G.I. Bill exhibit, the full-sized museum quality exhibit, to go places to be there for several months. It started out at the World War II museum. It went to Patriotic Hall in Los Angeles, up to

the Montana Military Museum, to the Gold Star Museum in Iowa, and then down to the George H. W. Bush Library and Museum in Texas.

And now it's here. It can't go to places like our department conventions because it's too big, because it costs too much to ship someplace if you're only going to have it there for three, four days. That's the reason for the smaller version.

So when you have a detachment convention or detachment meeting, or we have a department meeting, we can get that to educate our folks.

We are estimating 425,000 people have seen that G.I. Bill exhibit. We spent a fair amount of money creating that. It needs to stay on the road. It's no good sitting in national headquarters.

And so we're looking for places for it to go. It's going to go down to the George W. Bush Museum and Library.

We're looking at the state Veterans Service building in Atlanta. We're looking -- I can't say the name of the ship in New York Harbor. Anytime you run out of a word, just ask, somebody will give it to you. It will be going to those kinds of places. Right now we think we can keep it on the road through 2019.

But we're going to be looking for more. And that's not the only exhibit I would like to see created. Because that was a very significant accomplishment of The American Legion. We altered history through the G.I. Bill. We altered history in another way. We altered history with Agent Orange, and radiation, and toxic substances. Because up until the Agent Orange lawsuit, those kinds of service-connected disabilities were not recognized.

And now we're talking about burn pits in Afghanistan. And so those men and women that are serving today that are going to come home with disabilities because of chemical exposures, because of radiation exposures, because of things that they experienced from their own government, are now recognized at the same level that combat injuries are. And that's important.

We altered history when that happened. And we need to continue to tell that story just like we need to continue to tell the G.I. Bill story.

So that's something I hope you'll see down the road. I know one thing you will see down the road, but you have to be watching TV to see it, most of you, that will be The American Legion float in the Rose Bowl parade this coming January. Watch for that

It's been a long time since The American Legion family has been represented in that parade. It will happen again this year as part of our centennial.

And you'll see some videos. And these are different. How many of you know -- let me digress for a moment. How many of you know about the film festival on Monday?

... Applause.

You need to go. Find out about that. Because if you go to that on Monday, you'll see a full-length Hollywood movie, starring Donald O'Connor and William Frawley, named "The Sons of the Legion." And it's about your organization and a couple of young men struggles to remain part of your organization.

But we have another group, a young group out of the Hollywood post that has helped us create kind of a documentary. It's two young veterans traveling around the country, not only discovering what The American Legion is but discovering why The American Legion is, starting with a place in Plattsburgh, New York, before World War I. We've done that one differently because it will be in three- to five-minute segments. So you can just show one of them at the squadron meeting, but they'll all tie

together into a 30-, 35-minute show that you can show the whole thing at your detachment meeting.

That's still in the process of being finished, and I'm looking forward to it very much.

The other thing you'll see at the film festival is the first membership movie ever made for The American Legion, in 1926, by members of that same Hollywood post, because they were very active in the industry.

So go to that film festival. In fact, I think in a lot of ways that film festival might be more about the Sons of The American Legion than it is about The American Legion. Don't miss it.

And, lastly, we're starting the centennial year. Doesn't mean the work's done.

I want to ask something of each and every one of you, and I want to ask something that you go home and ask of your members.

Many of our posts are not as involved in the centennial as they could be. Maybe because they don't realize what talents they have. Maybe because they don't realize what history they have. Maybe they don't believe that they have the skills to do the kinds of things that are necessary. But you do. And you can go home and offer

those skills, and help them rediscover that history.

Be the people that read those minutes from the '30s and the '40s, and '50s, and the '20s if they exist. Be that person that sits down with that book and looks for things that are unique to your American Legion post and help tell the community about those things. Because, like I said, the planning is over. The execution is starting. Be part of that execution. Be part of the work.

When you look back on it a year and five months from now or whatever -- whatever it is, until Veterans Day of 2019, look back with pride knowing you were part of helping your post celebrate their centennial. Doesn't matter whether they're 100 years or old not, The American Legion is.

And every American Legion Post is part of the centennial. And every American Legion, Sons of The American Legion squadron, is part of that centennial.

So that's where we stand. Take a look around this convention, because it's special. You won't see some of these things at a National Convention again.

Make plans to be in Indianapolis, because there will be some things that happen there that will also be special that you may not see again.

Mr. Commander, thank you for your work this year. I want to thank you and your national officers for everything the Sons of The American Legion accomplishes not only this year but as you continue to build your own legacy and create that vision for the Sons of The American Legion.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Past National Commander Dave, another individual that I would have never met without this organization. And I hope you're feeling like I do: I consider you a lifelong friend. I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th Annual Convention.

... Applause.

CHAIRMAN DAVID REHBEIN: Some people you only have to get to know for about ten seconds before you know they're going to be a friend forever, Commander.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: We're always looking for something exciting and new to add to our convention that not only inform you but entertain you, and this will be a new informational section more than an entertainment. But it could be entertaining also.

We have with us today Lt. Col. Ret. Mark H.

Ochsenbein with Soldier's Wish to present a wish here on our stage this afternoon. So would that group please join me.

... Applause.

PRESENTATION
Lt. Col. Mark H. Ochsenbein, Ret.
Soldier's Wish

Thank you very much. My name is Mark Ochsenbein. Again, my name is Mark Ochsenbein, and I am a veteran of the United States Army. Spent 22 years in the Army. Loved it, every bit of it.

Now I've got the great honor of being a volunteer executive director of Soldier's Wish, which is a national organization based out of Tulsa, Oklahoma. And because of donations from organizations like yours, we're able to go out and help our fellow veterans, our active duty military personnel, and a group that many forget, and that's their families.

And we meet the unmet needs, and there are many, many, many needs out there to help our veterans. And my hat's off to you all for all that you do and serve and help our veterans throughout this world. And I just can't say enough, the gratitude that I have in what you all do. And I truly appreciate it. I'm also a member of Squadron

81 out of Gonzales, Louisiana.

... Applause.

Both my sons are also Sons of The American Legion out of Squadron 81, also out of Louisiana. One lives in North Carolina and the other is in Tennessee.

Well, we're here today to give a wish to a veteran and her family that is in need. She was a Navy vet.

... Applause.

And she comes to us today with her beautiful daughters, three of them, twins, 13, and the oldest is 16, here with us. And we're going to give a wish.

I will tell you one of my hardest jobs, toughest part of my job is finding wishes, because veterans do not like to ask for help. Family members of veterans do not like to ask for help.

And so we reach out to partner with organizations to help us find veterans that are in need. And we have reached out to MACV here in Minnesota. I hope many of you all, at least those who live in Minnesota, have heard of them. MACV is an acronym. It's Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans. I've got that right.

And I've got John here with me who works with this great organization. And we partnered up with him before

to help our veterans. We've also got Kim down front. She's a case manager. She's down here taking photographs for us.

So I went to the president of MACV. He's a retired two-star general out of Minnesota. And I said, "Neil, I need some help." He said, "I know just the person."

And so he and the group, and Kim, nominated Myesha Lafitte, Navy veteran. Myesha transitioned to Minnesota in May of 2018 from Texas, fleeing a bad situation. She had to get her and her daughters to safety. She has experienced several unfortunate events. And the family has been without a home for over a year and have actually lived out of their vehicle for months.

MACV heard about this and have helped them just recently secure quarters. And just getting into quarters, into a home, doesn't solve everything. She's got a very minimal monthly income, and I hope she doesn't mind me saying, of about \$700. She's currently looking for a job. She homeschools her girls that I believe now have graduated.

She doesn't quit. She's not looking for a hand-out, but we're going to give her a hand-up today. And we're only able to do this because of great people like you to

help us help our veterans.

So what we're going to do, Myesha and girls, come on up here -- John, I want you to be a part of this. And John's with us. They need help with rent. And we're going to do that. They need help with furnishings. They have no home furnishings. And just incidentals, nothing.

So Soldier's Wish, through MACV, we're going to donate \$5,000 to help them. Thank you so much.

... Applause.

It's a great honor to do that. It makes my heart feel good. I'm a retired colonel. I was a special ops guy. I've never cried so much until I got in this job. And Myesha, it's yours.

MYESHA LAFITTE: Thank you. Thank you all, Sons and Colonel and MACV. We came here from Texas with nothing but each other. And now we have a home in Redwing. And it's awesome. Everything is starting over. So I thank you all so much. I haven't received a wish in my life. So this is awesome.

... Applause.

MARK OCHSENBEIN: Thank you. I'll tell you all, thank you so much. You have no idea what this means to this family. It's because of great people like you

because we were able to do that. We do many, many wishes throughout the United States. And it's our honor to be able to honor this veteran and help this family out.

Thank you so much.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed an honor to introduce our next guest: A gentleman that has been joining us here on our stage for a number of years to present awards as Child Welfare Foundation president. This year he also comes to us with a couple new titles: National Executive Committeeman for the Department of Florida, and First Gentleman to the Department of Florida Commander Diane Boland.

Please join me in giving a warm welcome to a true friend, not only of mine, but I'm sure of all of yours, Child Welfare Foundation President Dennis Boland.

Joining Dennis this afternoon from National Headquarters of The American Legion, Assistant Director, Meagen Sweet.

... Applause.

PRESENTATION and AWARDS
Dennis Boland, President
Child Welfare Foundation

I'm sure most of you know how proud I am to wear this cap. I'm very fortunate, my father survived World War II and had his legend, as many of your fathers had theirs or mothers.

Today you met the legendary Past National Commanders up here. They would not be there if it wasn't for you. You made them what they are.

And you can also take this to the bank: Any one of you can hold that position that they held. Your dedication has such magnitude, it's hard to comprehend at times.

I was introduced as the first whatever of Florida, which my wife is the Department Commander this year. And I am so proud of her.

... Applause.

Her theme this year is: Dedication, communication and education.

Dedication, you have proven that. You look at your figures -- and I'm so proud that Florida sits up here, their 23rd all-time high in membership. But overall, your membership and your dedication has proven that you're number one.

Communication, it's amazing that when we ask you for

something to do, you have a chain of command that it flows so smoothly. And whatever we ask, you don't give a hundred percent, you give 110 percent. That is, as I've referred to a lot, is awesome.

Education. You're constantly educating yourself. I gotta talk about Florida, because Florida has the Sons of The American Legion, Legion College. The Department of Florida American Legion saw what they did and said, wow, maybe we can do that.

But that's the kind of initiative that you have. You take that first step knowing that it's going to be a great program. Sometimes the Legion, we're afraid to take that first step because we don't know where we're going to go. But you have never been hesitant. You have done such an outstanding job.

The accolades that I want to give you, I just can't find the words. You are part of my family.

And like I say, you are my family because I love working with you wherever we go in the United States or our other five departments, foreign departments, you will find a family member, not biological, but that person will believe what you believe. Not many organizations can say that about us, that we have such an awesome family that is

growing.

Your growth is just phenomenal. And I wish The American Legion could follow suit in what you do. We haven't figured that out yet. But eventually we will.

You know the Child Welfare Foundation, that's been my body. A lot of you have probably heard prior to this -- and I hope there's some new people here -- but my involvement with children -- I went to a Children's Miracle Network Hospital. And I saw a baby that you could put in your hand. And we were part of seeing that baby get to grow up. That was my niche. That was my commitment.

I don't know what your commitment is, but it has to be just as good as mine because you're here and you're caring and you're concerned about the Sons of The American Legion and your programs and what we do for our veterans and for the children of our nation.

With that said, I'd like to at this time tell you that this past year -- I'm sure you might have gotten these figures already, but so far this year the Auxiliary donated \$71,721.34 to the Child Welfare Foundation; The Legion, we donated \$122,249.76; and the Sons of The American Legion, as always, \$327,504.07.

... Applause.

I've often said I could lose my job because it should be called the Sons of The American Legion of The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. So far I haven't. So nobody's telling on me. Anyhow, we've raised this year \$562,052.59. And as most of you know that last year we gave out \$636,467 to 28 children nonprofit organizations.

This year -- and of course in October our board of directors will meet. And we have right now 151 grant applications.

And the application selection will be October 14th, 2008. And you will have one of your members, who is the liaison to the board of directors, bringing what you would like to see as far as grants be given out, because your committee receives the same book that I receive and they go over it and then they give their recommendation to the board of directors.

Doesn't necessarily mean we will go along with it, but the majority of the time the board of directors, we will give, do 75 percent of your wishes.

Don't forget, we have the Children and Youth booth, Foundation booth, at Booth 312 to 314. Please stop by and

thank and visit our exhibitors that are there.

Again, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for being part of my family.

At this time I'd like to make some presentation of awards.

Meritorious Achievement Award. "There is a wonderful mythical law of nature that the three things we crave most in life -- happiness, freedom and peace of mind -- are always attained by giving them to someone else." Written by Peyton Conway March.

Achieving the highest increase in per capita giving for 2017-2018, the Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Louisiana. The board of directors gratefully recognize your outstanding support of The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. Service to the critical needs of America's children is made possible through your caring and generosity.

Is there someone here from the Detachment of Louisiana?

... Applause.

The Excellence Award: You will find, as you look back on your life, that the moments that stand out are the moments when you have done things for others -- written by

Henry Drummond.

Achieving the highest in per capita giving 2017-2018, Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Nevada. Anybody from Nevada?

... Applause.

Come on down. Board of directors gratefully recognize your outstanding support of The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation service to the critical needs of America's children is made possible through your caring and generosity.

... Applause.

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, dedicated to betterment of all children since 1954, the U.S. Udie Grant Legacy Award 2017-2018 presented to the Legion family Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Florida, in recognition of outstanding service for The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

We thank you. No person can ever -- I can't read it, it's so small. Oh, well, we love you for it.

... Applause.

The Garland D. Murphy Award presented by The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Sons of The American Legion to the Detachment of Ohio for the program

year 2017-2018.

Anybody out there? I know Bill Towns is out there.

In recognition of their designation as the number one detachment in total contributions received from their volunteers in support of our annual program designed to meet the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of our nation's children through productivity and meaningful grants.

Signed Executive Secretary Meagen Sweet and
President Dennis Boland.

... Applause.

Last but not least, Commander Danny. I know if his wife was here she would probably rather have some of the apple pie that I make.

But, Dan, on behalf of the board of directors, it's an honor to give you a five diamond Child Welfare logo lapel pin. Dated.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you, Dennis, it's truly appreciated. And on behalf of our entire delegation, I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th National Convention.

... Applause.

Thank you. Congratulations to all that received awards and recognitions from Child Welfare Foundation and your support this past year.

When I visited -- don't run off yet, Dennis. When I visited their spring meeting, Dennis was a little worried we hadn't hit \$300,000 at that point. I think we were well below that.

And I promised him at that time that we would go over 300,000. And you did it. As always, you gave and gave and you gave some more, and you got us to where we needed to be.

Thank you all so much for your support of our premier program, the Child Welfare Foundation.

... Applause.

Congratulations, once again, to everyone. Fantastic work in supporting the Child Welfare Foundation.

CLOSING REMARKS and SALUTE TO THE COLORS
Danny Smith, National Commander

Well, I know we've reached that point you've all been patiently waiting for, I'm sure.

I want to extend to you a heartfelt welcome to Minnesota. Enjoy your evening of camaraderie. Be safe. And remember that while you're wearing the emblem of our

organization, the Sons of The American Legion emblem or any emblem of The American Legion family, you represent the organization in the eyes of the public. So please do pay that emblem the respect that it is due.

The 47th Annual National Convention will now stand in recess until 9:00 a.m. Please join me in a salute to the colors.

. . . At this time, the delegation rose and rendered a right-hand salute to the Colors.

Hand salute. Two.

This meeting will now stand in recess.

... At 3:30 p.m., the Convention was recessed to reconvene the following day, August 25, 2018, at 9:00 a.m.

Second Day

Saturday, August 25, 2018

... On Saturday, August 25, 2018, at 9:00 a.m., the delegates assembled for the 47th Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were had:

CALL TO ORDER and SALUTE TO THE COLORS
Danny Smith, National Commander

The colors of our country being in place, join me in a hand salute by the numbers.

. . . At this time, the delegation rose and rendered a right-hand salute to the Colors.

One. Two. Please uncover.

The National Chaplain will invoke the blessing of God.

INVOCATION
James Noble, National Chaplain

Good morning, Lord. Thank You for another glorious day. We ask that You guide our hearts, our heads, our hands as we continue our convention sessions.

Grant Your guiding presence to our Commander Danny and our Vice Commanders as they lead us in today's activities. Amen.

... Chorus of amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Vice Commander Mark Cannito, please come forward and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mark Cannito, National Vice Commander

... At this time, the delegation recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: You may cover. National Adjutant Wright will now call the roll.

ROLL CALL

... The National Adjutant, Anthony W. Wright, called the Roll, and the following members were present:

NATIONAL OFFICERS

National Commander
Danny J. Smith (NE)

National Vice Commanders

Kenneth P. Warner (PA)
Mark A. Cannito (SC)
Jay E Marsden (MO)
Joseph R. Navarette (NM)
Donald S. Ramirez (CA)

National Adjutant
Anthony W. Wright (PA)

National Assistant Adjutant Emeritus
Harold E. Thompson, Jr. (NE)

National Assistant Adjutants
James "Ed" Sheubrooks (FL)
Robert J. Avery (NY)
David M. Ridenour (IN)
Scott A. Williams (VA) - EXCUSED
Scott J. Thornton (OH)
Jeffrey E. Hicks (NJ)

National Chaplain
James Noble (NJ)

National Historian
Jerry J. Cole (NE)

National Judge Advocate
Joseph Paviglianti (NY)

National Sergeant-At-Arms
George B. Sevick, Jr. (NE)

National Assistant Sergeant-At-Arms
Brian K. Waters (PA)
Lyle G. Larson (KS)
Raymond P. Giehll, III (IN)
Matthew Chebro (GA) - ABSENT
Gregory A. Falco (NY)
David L. Rippe (NE)

Past National Commanders
Jeffrey C. Frain (AZ) - EXCUSED
Michael K. Seaton (CA)
Robert A. McBride (OH) - EXCUSED
J.R. Stillwell (IL)
John J. Smolinsky (MA) - ABSENT
Robert H. Faust (CA)
James R. Hartman (MD)

Gregory D. Reis (IL) - ABSENT
 Grant M. Jamieson (MI) - ABSENT
 Charles E. Gannon (MD)
 John M. Sherrard (CA) - ABSENT
 David P. Stephens (IN)
 Christopher R. Cerullo (NY)
 Frederick L. Hartline (OH) - EXCUSED
 Douglas P. Bible (MN)
 Richard L. League (MD) - ABSENT
 David R. Faust (WI)
 Robert A. Worrel (IN) - ABSENT
 Eugene L. Sacco (CA)
 Roland D. Matteson (AZ) - ABSENT
 Joseph M. Mayne (MN)
 John T. Dietz (KY) - ABSENT
 Jack E. Jordan (TX) - ABSENT
 William E. Matoska (MD)
 Byron J. Robichaux (LA)
 Richard L. Cook (OK)
 Kevin N. Winkelmann (TX) - ABSENT
 Clifford A. Smith (MA)
 Steven C. Laws (NC) - ABSENT
 Neal C. Warnken (KS)
 Michael J. Deacon (IA)
 William L. Sparwasser (MD) - ABSENT
 Earl R. Ruttkofsky (MI)
 Raymond P. Giehll, Jr. (IN)
 Thomas E. Cisna (IL)
 Mark E. Arneson (GA) - ABSENT
 David L. Dew (TX) - ABSENT
 James K. Roberts, III (FL)
 Christopher J. Huntzinger (PA)
 Joseph W. Gladden (MD) - ABSENT
 Michael W. Moss (CO)
 Kevin L. Collier (AK)
 Brian J. O'Hearne (MA) - ABSENT

Roll Call of Detachments

Alabama

Alaska

Arizona

Arkansas - ABSENT

California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
Florida
France
Georgia
Hawaii - ABSENT
Idaho - ABSENT
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
Philippines - ABSENT
Puerto Rico - ABSENT
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont

**Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming**

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Good morning.

... Chorus of good morning.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: That's what I like.

Enthusiasm. Looking forward to a great day. It will be a long day. We will not be recessing.

So if you need to take a break, feel free to come and go, please come back. I think you're going to see this -- hopefully some exciting new things to this year's awards presentations.

There will be some adjustment in the agenda, and first adjustment will be we have two distinguished individuals with us this morning, both Past National Commanders of The American Legion -- Past National Commander Dale Barnett and Past National Commander Bob Turner, and they're here with our Boys Nation representative, I believe. Please give them a warm Sons of The American Legion welcome.

... Applause.

Sergeant-at-Arms, escort our guests to the front.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TURNER: Good morning,
S.A.L.

... Chorus of good morning.

I was told last night that I should wear my S.A.L. cap, but for those of you who know me, I'm active in the S.A.L. back in Georgia. Good morning, Georgia.

... Chorus of good morning.

There's a couple of them over there. Most of you know that I have the honor of serving as the treasurer for the Child Welfare Foundation, been there for several years.

And my main reason for being here this morning is to say thank you. My goodness, you run circles around everybody else, and we appreciate what you do.

We'll be looking at awarding some grants in the fall. And there's over 100 applications already. We've got a book that's about three inches thick, and it's going to take some time and effort, but I can assure you that we'll be giving special consideration to those grants that you put your stamp of approval to.

Thank you all so very much. I appreciate what you do. Keep up the good work, and God bless.

... Applause.

Now, you know we've been very fortunate in Georgia that we have four Past National Commanders. Two of them are deceased, but the latest one happened in 2015-2016. I'm sure that most of you have probably heard the name before, but I'm happy to introduce to you Past National Commander Dale Barnett.

... Applause.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER BARNETT: Thank you, S.A.L. And I've got to start with some thank yous. You know, in life it seems like the more you give, the more you get.

And it just seems like I just keep getting and getting and getting. And I want to thank some special people. One you just heard from, Bob Turner, for being my personal mentor in The American Legion and what he's done for The American Legion family, for the youth of America. Mr. Bob Brown, the NEC from Georgia.

Tim Aboudara. But I want to tell you that there were some special things that's happened in the month of June to me. One, I got to see one of my Boys Staters become the commander of Georgia, Jamie Holloway. And when you see one of your kids --

... Applause.

-- and of course there's Brandon Roberts, and there's so many that lives, because of the S.A.L., that you've touched. And I had the great honor of becoming the Director of Activities of Boys Nation this year, following in the footsteps of Bob Turner.

And during our graduation dinner, I was called forward to the podium. Wasn't quite sure why. And that was announced that I was being inducted into the S.A.L. Hall of Fame in November.

... Applause.

I can't put into words my feelings. But as Tim Aboudara described all the things that the Sons of The American Legion do for the youth of America, encouraging them if they were eligible to participate and join and become active in the Sons of The American Legion. And those kids gave a standing ovation, not to Dale Barnett, but to the Sons of The American Legion, for all you do for the youth of America, for our nation's veterans.

And I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for giving me this opportunity to share that story with you and tell you how much I appreciate the honor of becoming a member of your S.A.L. Hall of Fame. God bless you all. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Past National Commander Turner, would you please join me. It's indeed an honor to be able to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th annual National Convention.

... Applause.

Past National Commander Barnett, once again, it is indeed an honor to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th Annual National Convention.

... Applause.

Thank you, gentlemen. And thank you for what you do for Boys Nation, Boys State, all those great American Legion programs.

... Applause.

I now call upon Credentials Committee Chairman Harold Thompson, Jr., from Nebraska for the first report of the Credential Committee.

FIRST REPORT - CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE
Harold Thompson, Jr., Chairman
Credentials Committee

The Credentials Committee chairman Harold Thompson called the Credentials Committee to order on August 24th, 2018, at 11:00 a.m. for the purpose of taking the

necessary committee action on the convention resolution. None was presented.

There is a possible of 882 delegates and 47 delegates at large for a total of 939 possible delegate votes from 55 detachments. We had 38 detachments preregistered with 652 delegates, 46 alternates and 71 guests registered.

On Thursday, we had 48 detachments with 918 delegates, 47 alternates and 85 guests registered.

On Friday, we had 49 detachments with 921 delegates, 48 alternates and 94 guests registered.

I will give you the final report after the close. Members attending the committee meeting was Harold Thompson, Jr., Nebraska; Ed Cleary, Arizona; Robert Kelly Jr., California, was absent; Walter Kruse of Colorado; Ed Sheubrooks of Florida; Paul Usk of Georgia; John Buhle of Illinois; Joe Schulte of Indiana; Mike Sodden of Kansas was absent; Ray Edwards of Maryland was absent; Jeff Hicks of New Jersey; Robert Avery of New York; Scott Thornton of Ohio; Kevin Ivery of Pennsylvania was absent; and HB Hill, Jr. of Virginia.

Please type your delegate list or print clearly for the nametags can be done right the first time. And if you

have guests, please add those names on the guest registration sheet. Please make sure you get your registration sent in on time. If you have some delegates that will not be attending, please leave a blank line and then list the delegates that are not coming.

Also, only the delegate chairman, delegate secretary or the department adjutant is allowed to pick up the entire delegation for your state. Detachments, make sure your delegation knows where they are to pick up from your state. We had 17 detachments that did not send in their registration.

At the present time, we're only six detachments that did not register. They were Arkansas, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Mexico, Philippines and Puerto Rico. With no further business, Ed Sheubrooks moved to close the meeting, seconded by Jeff Hicks of New Jersey. The meeting was adjourned at 11:07, August 24th, 2018.

Roll call. Alabama seven, seven registered. Alaska six plus one for a total of seven, seven registered. Arizona, 18 plus two for a total of 20, 20 registered.

Arkansas, four, none registered. California, 25 plus four, for a total of 29, 29 registered. Colorado, nine plus one, for a total of 10, 10 registered.

Connecticut, six, six registered. Delaware, eight, eight registered. District of Columbia, three, none registered.

Florida, 41 plus one, for a total of 42, 42 registered. France, three. Georgia, 12 plus one for a total of 13, 13 registered.

Hawaii, three, none registered. Idaho, four, four registered. Illinois, 31 plus three, for a total of 34, 34 registered. Indiana, 80 plus three for a total of 83, 83 registered.

Iowa, 11 plus one for a total of 12, 12 registered. Kansas, 16 plus one for a total of 17, 17 registered.

Kentucky, nine plus one, for a total of ten, ten registered. Louisiana, seven plus one for a total of eight, eight registered. Maine, eight, eight registered. Maryland, 35 plus six for a total of 41, 41 registered. Massachusetts, 14 plus two for a total of 16, 16 registered.

Mexico, three, none registered. Michigan, 49 plus two for a total of 51, 51 registered. Minnesota, 26 plus two for a total of 28, 28 registered. Mississippi, four, four registered. Missouri, 10 plus one for a total of 11,

11 registered. Montana, five, five registered. Nebraska, 16 plus one, for a total of 17, 17 registered.

Nevada, four, four registered. New Hampshire, 15, 15 registered. New Jersey, 22, 22 registered. New Mexico, six plus one for a total of seven, seven registered.

New York, 61 plus one for a total of 62, 62 registered. North Carolina, eight plus one for a total of nine, nine registered. North Dakota, five, five registered. Ohio, 65 plus two -- or 63 plus two for a total of 65. Oklahoma, six plus one for a total of seven. Oregon, six, six registered.

Pennsylvania, 124 plus two for a total of 126, 126 registered. Philippines, three, none registered. Puerto Rico, three, none registered. Rhode Island, four, four registered. South Carolina, six plus one for a total of seven, seven registered. South Dakota, four, four registered.

Tennessee six, six registered. Texas, 15 plus three for a total of 18, 18 registered. Utah, four, four registered. Vermont, 11, 11 registered. Virginia, 12 registered. Washington, eight, eight registered. West

Virginia, eight, eight registered. Wisconsin, 10 plus one for a total of 11. Wyoming, five, five registered.

That makes 921 delegates registered. We have 48 guests or 48 alternates and 49 guests. That completes the preliminary report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you, Harold. All right. I would like to now call on John Jennings, the Constitutional Amendments chairman, to come forward with his report.

REPORT - CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS
John Jennings, Chairman
Constitutional Amendments Convention Committee

Good morning!

... Chorus of good morning.

Boy, you all are awake. That's pretty impressive. Constitutional Amendments Convention Committee met yesterday at 11:30.

I would like to do something a little out of context because I'm not going to read it because it takes too long that way. But if all of the assigned by your detachment committee members to the Constitutional Amendment Committee meeting, would you please stand. There should be about 13 of you standing.

Anyway, I want to thank each of them for participating. But above all, everyone that attended that meeting yesterday, would you please stand. We had over 35 people in the room yesterday. And thank you, gentlemen. Sit down. Thank you for your support and thank you for being there.

We had a very good turnout. I know that there was a lot of conversations running around about resolution and there was a lot of discussion, open-ended discussion, some good, some indifferent. But we worked through it as a committee.

And the committee has made a recommendation on S.A.L. Resolution 1 National Convention 2018. The title is Update Membership Qualifications Article IV - Eligibility Section 1. Originated out of the Detachment of California. I'm going to read this resolution in its entirety the way it was accepted by the Constitutional Amendments Committee:

WHEREAS, the Sons of The American Legion are proud members of The American Legion family; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Sons of The American Legion are proud possessors of the heritage of their

family military service to the United States of America;
and

WHEREAS, the members of the Sons of The American Legion are committed to the principles of service and mutual helpfulness to the veterans of military service as members of The American Legion family; and

WHEREAS, the family structure in the United States of America has changed over time -- it is often time no longer a nuclear family structure; and

WHEREAS, members are presently forced to quit the organization if their living relatives in The American Legion decide to forfeit his/her membership or allow the dues to go unpaid; and

WHEREAS, a prospective member of the Sons of The American Legion shall not have to wait to have a qualified veteran die in order to honor their heritage; and

WHEREAS, we can streamline and tie the eligibility statement to the National Constitution of The American Legion and eliminate further amendments as it pertains to periods of service for the qualifying veteran to be used in membership in the Sons of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, the preservation of the core principles of the Sons of The American Legion can and will be moved

forward by the preservation of their membership and the expansion of their membership guidelines; and therefore be it

RESOLVED, by the Sons of The American Legion in annual convention, assembled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 24-26, 2018, to strike verbiage "of members of The American Legion" from the first sentence in Article IV - Eligibility, Section 1; and be it further

RESOLVED, to replace the aforementioned stricken verbiage with "of veterans who qualify for membership in The American Legion"; and be it further

RESOLVED, to strike the verbiage "and such male descendants of veterans who died in service during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Granada, Panama and the Persian Gulf War during the delimiting period set forth in Article IV, Section 1 of the National Constitution of The American Legion, or who died subsequent to their honorable discharge from such service"; and be it finally

RESOLVED, to amend/change/update Article IV - Eligibility, Section 1 of the Sons of The American Legion Constitution to read: "Section 1 - All male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of veterans who qualify for

membership in The American Legion shall be eligible for membership in the Sons of The American Legion.

That concludes the reading of the Resolution that was presented and approved by the Constitution Amendments Convention Committee meeting yesterday afternoon.

A lot of discussion took place, as I alluded to earlier, but we worked our way through it.

And as a delegate to this convention, I move for acceptance of this Resolution as presented.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: We have a motion to accept S.A.L. Resolution No. 1, National Convention 2018.

CHRIS COOK: Mr. Commander, Chris Cook, Oklahoma.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Chris Cook, Oklahoma.

CHRIS COOK: Yes, sir. I second the motion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The motion has been seconded. We have a motion to accept S.A.L. Resolution No. 1 National Convention 2018 and duly seconded.

Before we get into discussion, I would ask that you use the microphones, make sure you speak clearly, state your name, your detachment, direct all comments through the chair, not at one another.

We are gentlemen here. We need to conduct ourselves as such. Please restrict your sidebar conversations to

the back of the room. This is very important, and everyone needs to hear what's going on in the discussion.

And it's difficult to see, so you're going to have to tell me right or left or where you're at. I think we have somebody at the microphone over here.

BILL CLANCY: Mr. Commander, Bill Clancy from New York. We'd like to request ten minutes to caucus on the matter.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Yes, sir. I will grant ten minutes, ten minutes -- and it will be ten minutes. I have 9:32. At 9:42 we'll come back in and have discussion. You want your caucus before you have your discussion?

BILL CLANCY: After discussion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: After discussion, okay. So let's have the discussion, and then we'll have a recess before you folks vote.

Any discussion? This might be easy. I see somebody headed to a microphone.

TOM MARSDEN: Tom Marsden, New Jersey.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: New Jersey is recognized.

TOM MARSDEN: As a point, I'm a 59-year member of the Sons of The American Legion. I feel by accepting this

Resolution as not having your father have to be a member of The American Legion is changing us from the Sons of The American Legion. We will be just another type of auxiliary at that point in time. And I feel we're hurting the organization in that way. I'm sure there's other ways we can repair this. It was a great first attempt. But in my opinion we're hurting the organization. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I'll go to the center microphone in the back.

DOUGLAS BIBLE: Mr. Commander, Douglas Bible, Past National Commander, Minnesota. I agree fully with Mr. Marsden. I feel this is a disservice to our organization. We're Sons of The American Legion. We're not just sons of veterans.

If you want to be a Sons of The American Legion member and your father is not a member of The American Legion, sign them up for a year. Keep your membership active if he does not want to. That makes you eligible.

I feel we need to defeat this motion, this Resolution.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you. I'll come back over to this microphone.

RON ROBERTS: Ron Roberts, NEC, Mississippi.
Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Sir.

RON ROBERTS: You're aware, but I'll let the other people know. I'm a dual member. I was a Judge Advocate for Mississippi for six years, and during that time I served on the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee for seven years.

So I'm familiar with Resolutions trying to get passed that assembly. I can tell you right now this one will never make it because the Sons are attempting to amend the National Constitution of the Legion. We have no authority to do that.

The idea is unique. I am against it because it will never make it, for one thing, and it's not following the guidelines as prescribed in the Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies for writing Resolutions in the proper format.

So Mississippi will be against it. And I ask that my fellow members consider this carefully. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you. I'll jump over to this microphone.

BOB BROWN: Mr. Commander, Bob Brown, NEC from Georgia. I concur with the Past National Commander and the gentlemen from New Jersey and Mississippi. We feel it's subverting the constitution of The American Legion.

I'm proud to be a son of not only a father and a mother that both served in the military during World War II, and I think we're doing a disservice to them.

You have the eligibility dates. You have so much else involved. I don't know what the reason for bringing this forward. I understand what they're trying to do, but I think this is the wrong way to do it. Thank you, Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you. I'll jump to the back microphone. I believe they were waiting prior to you, Linwood. Sorry.

JIM ROBERTS: Mr. Commander, Jim Roberts, Detachment of Florida, Past National Commander. I brought this up during the meeting yesterday for the constitutional amendments, and I just want to go on record again today to indicate that I feel that this Resolution is not in proper form.

And the reason is the Article IV, Section 1, Eligibility in the National Constitution and bylaws

indicate all male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of The American Legion and such male descendants of veterans who died in service during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama and the Persian Gulf and the War on Terrorism during the delimiting period set forth in the Article IV, Section 1 of the National Constitution of The American Legion, or who died subsequent to their honorable discharge from such service, shall be eligible for membership in the Sons of The American Legion. The resolved clause.

Third resolved clause: "To strike the verbiage and such male descendants of veterans who died in service during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Granada, Panama and the Persian Gulf War during the delimiting period set forth in Article IV, Section 1 of the National Constitution of The American Legion or who died subsequent to their honorable discharge from such service.

If we're going to make an amendment to our constitution and bylaws, what is written in the Resolution should reflect what is written in our constitution and

bylaws. There's an important piece missing -- the War on Terrorism should be added to the Resolution.

The Constitutional Amendments Committee, I don't believe, had the authority to make that change, and I feel it needs to go back to the Detachment of California, the origin of this Resolution, to be updated.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you. I know you're patiently waiting, but I just want to remind everybody we have a 30-minute limit on debate. So, if you're interested on joining in on the debate, you need to get close to a microphone, and only two delegates from each detachment will be allowed.

At this point I'm going to ask, we've had all against, I believe, at this point. Are there anyone at the microphone that's in favor?

I'm going to jump to the individual in the back. I'm not sure -- Father Gary, is that you?

FATHER GARY GUMMERSHEIMER: It is, sir.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Good morning.

FATHER GARY GUMMERSHEIMER: Good morning, Mr. Commander. Gary Gummersheimer, delegate of Illinois and a member of that committee that dealt with this yesterday.

I appreciate all the questions that have been raised such as are we truly a Son if we're not members.

I think one thing that we're missing, though, in all of is that if my father chose to join The American Legion and then, for whatever reason, two, three, four years down the road gets upset with The American Legion and cancels his membership, what does that do to me?

Because the way everybody seems to be interpreting it now, I'd lose my membership in the Sons because my father who is eligible for membership is not a member.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Come to order.

FATHER GARY GUMMERSHEIMER: And that's, I think, the question. And the other thing about subsequent to -- I mean prior to the end of the war, somebody dying, that person was eligible for Legion membership. If you look at the Resolution as it's written it says anyone who was eligible for Legion membership. That means if they're living or dead. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Linwood, I'll give you the opportunity. You've been patiently waiting.

LINWOOD MOORE: Linwood Moore, NEC Virginia. The way I see it is once you're a member, you're always a member if you signed up legally with your father's DD 214

and also if he was a veteran and he's a member of the Legion.

If he dies, I see where you're still a member. You will not be asked to leave or give up your membership, or if he decides not to renew his membership for some reason.

But Virginia votes against this Resolution.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you, sir. I'll jump to this microphone over here.

JOHN CHILDRESS: Yes, sir, John Childress from Beckley, West Virginia. West Virginia is definitely against this. We do not approve of this measure.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you, sir. Back microphone.

MATT PARSONS: Matt Parsons, Detachment of California, alternate NEC, author of this Resolution. And I just want to clarify several points that have been made.

The ruling of the National Judge Advocate for The American Legion on the subject that was brought up by Mr. Gummersheimer is exactly what Gary said.

Depends on the section of the country that you live in how you interpret this rule. But the ruling from the National Judge Advocate is that if your father says to

hell with The American Legion politics, throws down his card, that day you're out, too.

And that's the whole reason that this Resolution has come forward. We were requested by national staff to prepare this Resolution and to write this Resolution to correct a hypocrisy that's in our National Constitution and bylaws.

And I might remind everybody in this room that after World War I, when the Sons of The American Legion was founded, you did not have to have your qualifying veteran be an American Legion member.

This Resolution brings us back to our roots. Whether it's 100 percent right or 100 percent wrong remains to be seen. But it's at least a good starting point for us to go forward and correct the wrong statement in our document.

And I know that Mr. Roberts from Florida brought up the lack of the War on Terror. And the section of the constitution that I was given did not have that in it, so that's why it was written without it.

I believe that to be a scribner's error and something that we should be able to correct. If it's sent back to California, we can certainly correct it. Or if we

can correct it on the fly, that would be better in the interests of positive change.

And I might use myself as an example. My grandfather served in World War II. My father served in Vietnam. My grandfather was a 60-year member of The American Legion when he died.

My father was one of those guys that threw down his card and said, "I'm not going to be a member." And a lot of guys in here say just pay his dues for a year. If you pay his dues for a year, it's a snapshot in time. And my dad literally told me, "If you sign me back up, it is an act of defiance against me." And I said, "I'm not into defying my father." I don't know about anybody else in this room, but that's not how I roll.

And if you're going to take a snapshot in time, we're open to a lot of litigation if you're only taking that snapshot when you join the Sons of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you, sir. I think you've exhausted your two minutes.

MATT PARSONS: Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: And just for further comment, and I know we're all grown-ups here, or most of

us are, but it's a very passionate issue. I would respectfully ask that you watch some of the language you use.

Not that what you said was that terrible, but there are some individuals in the room that might find that offensive. So if anyone else has any comments, please -- I know you're passionate about this, but please try to refrain from profanity.

Any other discussion? Any other discussion? This is your opportunity, gentlemen. I don't believe I see -- one more coming up.

DELEGATE FROM TEXAS: NEC Texas. Blair. Point of order. Can I have the Judge Advocate read what's in The American Legion's --

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: You want the Judge Advocate to read --

DELEGATE FROM TEXAS: What's in The American Legion Constitution, not ours, to that.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Probably not right at hand.

JUDGE ADVOCATE PAVIGLIANTI: I don't have it in front of me. Let me just -- I think the question goes

back to what the eligibility statement is written in there.

So Past National Commander Roberts is correct in so much as a piece is missing from it. However, the National Executive Committee four years ago, under Resolution NEC 6 for the spring meeting, six years ago, adopted a Resolution that allows a National Adjutant to make administrative corrections to all Resolutions, NEC or national convention. This would fall into that realm where there is a slight missing commentary attached to it.

It does not change, by the way, any of the essence of the Resolution or any of the essence of the intention of the Resolution. Therefore the National Adjutant will make that correction. It is duly authorized for that particular purpose.

As it relates to, then, referring back to The American Legion's National Constitution, the resolved clause within the Resolution clearly connects back to that article and back to that element as far as covering and being guided by The American Legion's National Constitution.

This Resolution does not remove us from the oversight of The American Legion. In fact, the last

Resolution clause within the Resolution, a Resolution statement, connects us directly to that, regardless of whatever is written within ours, which is what happens right now.

We are a program of The American Legion. We first and foremost fall under the guidelines of the Internal Affairs but thereby are then guided by the premises and the aspects of The American Legion's constitution and bylaws.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you. Just in case you didn't, did you catch the last individual from Texas? Okay.

Any other discussion? Seeing none, all in favor of adopting -- we're going to try a voice vote first. All in favor of S.A.L. Resolution No. 1, National Convention 2018?

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Point of order. Point of order.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: New York requested caucus after discussion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Well, we'll just see what happens on the voice vote. I think I'm going to rule that

we go into recess, but let me go through the plan. All right.

All in favor of S.A.L. Resolution No. 1, National Convention 2018 signify by saying aye. Opposed no.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I am not able to determine a two-thirds majority, so I will grant the 10-minute recess to discuss amongst yourselves and we'll have a roll call vote.

We're in recess until 9:56.

... At this time, the delegation recessed.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: It will be a roll call vote. I know everyone knows their alphabets, I hope. Be lined up ready to go when you think it's about your time.

I know that there may be -- is everybody clear on their delegate strength? Anthony's going to clarify what your vote is. I know there's some at-large votes that may not be here that may be in question, so Anthony will clarify that. Are there any other questions at this time? Matt Parsons.

MATT PARSONS: Sir, Matt Parsons, Alternate NEC, California. I'd like to request the Resolution be sent back to California for further study and withdraw the Resolution.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The motion was -- the motion on the floor was made by the chairman. So I'll turn around and ask him what his decision is.

The committee is not changing their action. So we'll have a roll call vote.

I'll call on the National Adjutant Wright to call the roll. And please, gentlemen, let's keep the background noise to a minimum. Let's get through this in a timely manner.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Roll call vote will be based on the credentials report that you heard earlier this morning by our credentials chairman, and then at-large votes are going to be based on those who have answered roll call this morning.

The other thing I need to know is the number of nays, yeas or if you abstain for the record.

So without further ado, we're going to start. Alabama, you have seven votes.

DELEGATE FROM ALABAMA: Seven yea.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Seven yea for Alabama. You said yea, correct?

DELEGATE FROM ALABAMA: Yes.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Alaska, you have six registered delegates, one at large. You have a total of seven.

DELEGATE FROM ALASKA: Seven nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Seven nay for Alaska.

Arizona, you have 18 regular delegates, zero at large, 18 votes.

DELEGATE FROM ARIZONA: Arizona, 18 nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: 18 nay, Arizona.

Arkansas, not here.

California, you have 25 registered delegates, two at large for total vote of 27.

DELEGATE FROM CALIFORNIA: All votes for yea.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Can you say that again?

DELEGATE FROM CALIFORNIA: All 27 yea.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: California, 27 yea.

Colorado, you have nine registered delegates, one at large for a total of 10 delegates.

DELEGATE FROM COLORADO: Colorado has four yea, six nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Colorado has four yea, six nay.

DELEGATE FROM COLORADO: Correct.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Connecticut, total of six votes.

DELEGATE FROM CONNECTICUT: Connect has six yea.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Six yea for Connecticut. Delaware, eight votes.

DELEGATE FROM DELAWARE: Delaware, eight and nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Eight nay, Delaware.

District of Columbia is not present.

Florida, you have 41 delegates, one at large, 42 votes.

DELEGATE FROM FLORIDA: 42 nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Florida, 42 nay.

France, three votes.

DELEGATE FROM FRANCE: France, one abstain, two nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: France, one abstain, two nay.

Georgia, you have 12 delegates. Your at large isn't present. So, you have a total of 12 delegates.

DELEGATE FROM GEORGIA: Georgia, 12 nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Georgia, 12 nay.

Hawaii is not present.

Idaho, four votes. Idaho. Idaho.

Illinois, 31 votes, zero at large.

DELEGATE FROM ILLINOIS: 31 votes, yes.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: 31 votes, yes. Illinois.

Indiana, you have 80 registered delegates, two at large for a total of 82.

DELEGATE FROM INDIANA: 79 yea, three nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: 79 --

DELEGATE FROM INDIANA: Yes.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: 79 yes and --

DELEGATE FROM INDIANA: Three no.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Three no.

Iowa, 11 delegates, one at large for 12 votes.

DELEGATE FROM IOWA: Three yea, nine nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Iowa, three yea, nine nay.

Kansas, 16 delegates, one at large for a total of 17 delegates.

DELEGATE FROM KANSAS: Kansas, 17 nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Kansas, 17 nay.

Kentucky, nine delegates.

DELEGATE FROM KENTUCKY: All nine nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Kentucky, nine nay.

Louisiana, seven delegates, one at large for a total of eight delegates.

DELEGATE FROM KENTUCKY: Seven no, one yes.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Louisiana, seven no, one yes.

Maine, eight votes.

DELEGATE FROM MAINE: We say nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Maine, eight votes nay.

Maryland, 35 delegates, five at large for a total of 40 delegates.

DELEGATE FROM MARYLAND: 41 nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: You have 40 delegates.

DELEGATE FROM MARYLAND: 40 nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: 40 nay, thank you.

Massachusetts, 14 votes, one delegate at large for a total of 15 votes.

DELEGATE FROM MASSACHUSETTS: Massachusetts, 15 nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Massachusetts, 15 nay.

Michigan, 49 votes, one at large for a total of 50 votes.

DELEGATE FROM MICHIGAN: Michigan, 50 nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Michigan, 50 nay.

Minnesota, 26 votes, two at large for 28 delegates.

DELEGATE FROM MINNESOTA: Minnesota votes nay as in negative.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: 28 nays.

. . . Laughter.

Mississippi, four delegates.

DELEGATE FROM MISSISSIPPI: Four nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Mississippi, four nay.

Missouri, ten delegates, one at large for a total of
11 votes.

DELEGATE FROM MISSOURI: Missouri votes 11 nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Missouri, 11 nay.

Montana, five votes.

DELEGATE FROM MONTANA: Montana votes five nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Montana, five nay.

Nebraska, 16 delegates, one at large for a total of
17 votes.

DELEGATE FROM NEBRASKA: Nebraska, one yea, 14 nay,
two abstain.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Is my math incorrect?
No, that's right. Nebraska, one nay, 14 -- I'm sorry.
Nebraska, one yea, 14 nay, and one abstain -- two abstain.
Two abstain.

Nevada, four votes.

DELEGATE FROM NEVADA: Nevada, four no.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Nevada, four no.

New Hampshire, 15 votes.

DELEGATE FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE: New Hampshire, 15 nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New Hampshire, 15 nay.

New Jersey, 22 votes.

DELEGATE FROM NEW JERSEY: New Jersey, 21 nay, one
abstain.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New Jersey, one abstain.
21 nay?

DELEGATE FROM NEW JERSEY: Yes.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New Mexico, six
delegates, one at large, total of seven votes.

DELEGATE FROM NEW MEXICO: New Mexico, seven nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New Mexico, seven nay.

New York, 61 delegates, one at large for a total of
62 votes.

DELEGATE FROM NEW YORK: New York votes two yea, 60
nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New York, two votes yea;
is that correct?

DELEGATE FROM NEW YORK: Yes, correct.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: And 60 nay.

DELEGATE FROM NEW YORK: Correct.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: North Carolina, eight delegates, one at large for a total of nine delegates.

DELEGATE FROM NORTH CAROLINA: North Carolina votes nine delegates nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: North Carolina, nine nay. North Dakota, five delegates.

DELEGATE FROM NORTH DAKOTA: North Dakota votes five nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: North Dakota, five nay. Ohio, 63 delegates.

DELEGATE FROM OHIO: 63 nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Ohio, 63 nay.

Oklahoma, six delegates, one at large for a total of seven votes.

DELEGATE FROM OKLAHOMA: Oklahoma, seven yea.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Oklahoma, seven yea.

Oregon, six delegates.

DELEGATE FROM OREGON: Oregon, six delegates, nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Oregon, six nay.

Pennsylvania, 124 votes, two at large for 126 votes.

DELEGATE FROM PENNSYLVANIA: 126 no.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Pennsylvania, 126 nay.

Rhode Island, four votes.

DELEGATE FROM RHODE ISLAND: Rhode Island, three
nay, one abstain.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Rhode Island, three nay,
one abstain.

South Carolina, six delegates, one at large for a
total of seven votes.

DELEGATE FROM SOUTH CAROLINA: South Carolina, seven
nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: South Carolina, seven
nay.

South Dakota, four votes.

DELEGATE FROM SOUTH DAKOTA: South Dakota, four nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: South Dakota, four nay.

Tennessee, six delegates -- six votes, excuse me.

DELEGATE FROM TENNESSEE: Tennessee, six yes.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Tennessee, six yes.

Texas, 15 votes.

DELEGATE FROM TEXAS: Texas, 15 votes nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: 15 votes nay for Texas.

Utah, four votes.

DELEGATE FROM UTAH: Utah, four nays.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Utah, four nays.

Vermont, 11 votes.

DELEGATE FROM VERMONT: 11 nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: 11 nay for Vermont.

Virginia, 13 delegates, votes.

DELEGATE FROM VIRGINIA: Virginia, 13 nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Virginia, 13 nay.

Washington, eight votes.

DELEGATE FROM WASHINGTON: Washington, two yes, six
abstain.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Washington, two yes, six
abstain.

West Virginia, eight votes.

DELEGATE FROM WEST VIRGINIA: West Virginia, nay.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: West Virginia, eight
votes nay.

Wisconsin, 10 delegates -- 10 votes, one at large
for a total of 11 votes.

DELEGATE FROM WISCONSIN: Wisconsin, 11 no.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Wisconsin, 11 no.

Wyoming, five votes.

DELEGATE FROM WYOMING: Wyoming, five no.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Wyoming, five no.

Idaho, is Idaho present?

(No response.)

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: We'll compare numbers here shortly and we'll give you the results. Please be patient. It shouldn't take long.

After this, just a heads-up for everyone, after this announcement of the vote concludes, we have a distinguished guest patiently waiting that we'll have come forward. So Sergeant-at-Arms, once we're done, we'll be calling for that guest.

... Pause in proceedings.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Count of the votes, 176 yea, 712 nay. 11 abstain. The resolution is defeated.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I want to thank you all for your conduct during the discussion and the proceedings on that amendment. You know, you guys can impress me at times. And you just did.

I appreciate the fact that you conducted yourselves as gentlemen. This will be probably a widely debated topic in years to come. Just remember, everyone has their own opinion and they are entitled to that.

We are brothers in this organization. And we don't always have to agree, but we can always come back and be brothers and serve the organization.

TOM MARSDEN: Mr. Commander

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Where are you at? Yes, sir.

TOM MARSDEN: Tom Marsden, New Jersey. Through you to California, I would ask that California revamp what has been taken care of and talk with the other detachments and come back with a better Resolution for what we need.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I think that's in the plan, but thank you for your comment.

Okay. It's indeed a pleasure at this time to introduce an individual that really is no stranger to our organization, a great supporter.

He's been here for many, many years visiting our convention. So at this time it is a pleasure to introduce to you, and I ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort forward Past National Commander John P. "Jake" Comer, Past National Commander of The American Legion.

... Applause.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COMER: Thank you very much, Commander Danny, and all the distinguished officers, members of the Sons of The American Legion, my fellow Americans, all ladies and gentlemen.

Once again, it's a great honor for me to come to your convention and say a few words. And why not?

When you think of another almost \$400,000 that you donate to the Child Welfare Foundation, an organization that we do so much for and so do you, but you kept it up.

For those that have not heard me before, you know how proud I am of the Sons of The American Legion and what you do for the Child Welfare Foundation. They told me I was crazy back in 1987 when I addressed the National Convention as Commander and said we were going to raise a million dollars for Child Welfare.

Well, we didn't raise a million. Assigned 27 cents a member to the Legion, the Auxiliary and the eight and 40 -- you helped me raise \$1,168,000, that's what you did.

... Applause.

And rightfully so, we all went on to other things. Other commanders had other charities, but not the Sons. They kept it up.

And to this day you've raised probably close to \$6 million for that great charity. So keep up the good work. You do it with your membership.

Again, I believe you're probably 100 percent, we can't say that -- I think the last one was about 1987

or '88, but you've done it. But to come here this morning at the right time, this beautiful, beautiful crowd that's here and to witness a Resolution that actually took a vote on the floor of your convention, I think you all should be very proud of that democracy in action. Democracy works.

I listened to the debate on that Resolution. Maybe, as the Commander said, in another year or two, if we get more information, maybe we'll think about it.

I'm betwixt and between on -- I think the Resolution should be done in two parts. First of all, if a member -- it's my opinion now, please; it's not the opinion of the national organization or the NEC, it's Jake Comer.

But I just feel that if a member of The American Legion decides that he no longer wants to be active and wants to give up his membership, I don't believe the Sons should give up their membership.

... Applause.

By the same token, on the other side of the coin, if a member of the Sons eventually wants to be a member of the Sons of The American Legion and his father or grandfather, whatever, was never a member, never wanted to be a member, I don't agree to that. I don't agree to that because we have a hard enough time trying to get a DD 214

from all of our members, never mind from someone who passed away, because your emblem on your cap is very clear -- Sons of The American Legion.

... Applause.

So anyway, you did your work, you did your challenge, and it all came up. But it's not dead. We'll just continue working on it, see what best we can do for all of you.

The other thing that I think is very clear, I've talked to many of you, the future -- the future, in my opinion -- again it's the Sons of The American Legion. That's why you should all be so proud.

We're having trouble getting membership on various committees, not only here but back in our departments. So you gotta prevail upon your departments to try to add to the committees a member of the Sons of The American Legion, even if it's a voice without a vote. But he's there to help and work with him.

At my post back home, we couldn't have a parade on the street if we didn't have the Sons of The American Legion as the color guard.

Hell, I'm 86. I'm not going to march in a parade. And that's what you did, the Sons of The American Legion.

We sent, a member of our department -- I prevailed upon the Boys Nation. We sent Billy Murphy from the Massachusetts delegation. He's a long-time member of the Sons and an officer. He now goes to Boys Nation as a worker. And he comes home. They tell us he's done a great job, but he goes as a member of the Sons.

Baseball, I just completed a week in North Carolina with your commander, where Wilmington, Delaware, beat, 1-0, a great game, the final game against Nevada. And Nevada has nothing to be sorry about.

Last year -- they have two teams they sponsor from Post 40 -- last year the winner was Nevada. This year the runner-up was -- the second team. The young man that pitched got the Bob Feller Award. In the Regional and the Final he pitched 25 strikeouts at 93 miles an hour. So Nevada should be very proud of who they put up against Wilmington, Delaware. They both beat Massachusetts.

... Laughter.

So, ladies and gentlemen, members, keep up the very good work for all you do. I don't care what anyone else tells you, but I'm proud of you, 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 SMITH: Commander Comer, on behalf of our entire delegation, I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th Annual National Convention.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COMER: Thank you very much. My member that I pay dues for are very proud -- one son, six grandsons, two great grandsons. And I'm very proud of one of my grandsons. He spent a year in Turkey with the Air Force.

He came home last month. Left on Thursday for Italy. He'll be another two years there. And he's now proud to be a dual member of the Sons of The American Legion. Thank you very much for all you do.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Before we get into the reports and the various committees, I'd like to review some of the procedures that we're going to be following this year to help keep this convention moving forward like a well-oiled machine.

I thought we heard a squeaky wheel there for a minute.

... Laughter.

Chairmen, when we tell you you're on deck, I'd ask you to move to the front row. We'll be entering the stage from my right, to your left, and that goes to all award recipients.

So the chairmen, as you come closer up to the front as you're called to be on deck, sit in that front row.

Award recipients, come to the stage in a timely manner. Enter from my right, to your left. Awards will be presented to my left, your right, over on this side of the stage.

We want to keep this thing flowing. I know in the past sometimes it seems to drag on. And we're not going to wait for your paparazzi to show up to the front.

So if you want a picture, you need to get up here in a timely manner. Our National Historian has a website. He's going to be taking pictures.

There will be all kinds of pictures you can download from that when the time comes.

After we recess, we can stage pictures. If you want pictures staged, we'll come back up here and we'll do that. But we're not going to waste a bunch of time waiting for people clear in the back to get to the front to take a picture.

So, please, help us keep this thing running smoothly. Your cooperation is truly appreciated.

At this time I want to call John Jennings back for the remaining Constitutional Amendments reports, and then we'll get into the other reports.

FINAL REPORT - CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS
John Jennings, Chairman
Constitutional Amendments Convention Committee

Hello again.

... Chorus of hellos.

Yeah. Isn't democracy a great thing? One thing about it is -- I want you all to take this home with you -- thank you for what you did. Thank you for the information that you provided to your detachments. But the main thing I want to do is I want to thank our national staff, starting with Commander Smith, National Adjutant Wright, for supplying this information that got emailed out to the NEC and the alternates for you to be able to discuss this information with your detachments.

So it was very, very beneficial. It helped out. I was glad to be a part of it. So with that, as a delegate to the 47th National Convention, I move for acceptance of the Constitutional Amendments Convention meeting report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: It's been moved to accept the Constitutional Convention Committee meeting report. Is there a second?

STEVE GALLO: Steve Gallo from Virginia seconds.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Virginia seconds. Any discussion?

(No response.)

All in favor say aye. Opposed no. Motion carried.

Thank you, John. I'll now turn the podium over to National Vice Commander Joseph Navarrete from New Mexico.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NAVARRETE: At this time I call on National Commander Danny Smith for his final report.

**FINAL REPORT OF THE NATIONAL COMMANDER
Danny Smith, National Commander**

Good morning.

... Chorus of good morning.

It's been a year of change. And this report's going to change. So if you're ready, okay. Here's my report.

VIDEO: "Well, looks like we're just about out of time. Since this will be my National Commander's report, I guess I'd better look the part.

It has been one exciting, event-filled year, a year feel of awe-inspiring accomplishments by you, the members of the Sons of The American Legion.

Throughout this past year, the Sons of The American Legion have joined forces with The American Legion and The American Legion Auxiliary to provide much-needed service to our nation's veterans, helped develop our youth, and we lobbied our elective representatives. We have proven that there is strength in numbers, while providing a gentle hand to support and aid those in need when necessary.

Serving together as brothers, we have stood side by side on several somber occasions, paying tribute to those that paid the ultimate sacrifice.

We reached out to our country's veterans, providing comfort and support to those that continue to suffer from the ravages and the wounds of war.

We have visited and extended a helping hand to comrades, brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, sons and daughters. We have felt pain when they hurt and laughed when they laughed.

We have helped to drive care and share the smiles. We have welcomed all with open arms and embraced all that we serve.

We serve together as family, placing family first, as stated in National Commander's Rohan's theme, and helped raise millions of dollars for American Legion programs.

Our theme for this past year has been 'Following their footsteps, making history.' And I believe that it has indeed been a historic year. But I'm going to let you be the judge of that.

We set out to do exactly what our theme states, to set some historic marks while following in their footsteps, not only in the footsteps of a parent or a grandparent, but also in the footsteps of The American Legion.

And at times there have been many that refer to it as my year and my theme. I'm here to tell you that it may have been my idea, but the theme and the year belong to all of us.

We started this historic journey together about a year ago in Reno, Nevada. Although this journey for me has been ongoing for quite some time and long before becoming a member of the Sons of The American Legion.

Growing up in a family that placed service to community high on their list of priorities and my father's

participation in The American Legion made it easy for me to become involved.

You see, I grew up being exposed to all of the great things that The American Legion embodies and respecting those that had served this country in the military.

This experience made it an easy choice to become a member of the Sons of The American Legion when Ralston Post 373 chartered their squadron in 1973.

Since that time, my love of the Sons of The American Legion has grown. Lifelong friendships were developed and you became a part of my extended family.

Yes, I truly believe we are family, a kinship born of sacrifice and service of a parent or grandparent. And all of you have helped to inspire me to do more.

You believed in me. But more importantly, I believed in you. Okay. We're starting to ramble a little bit. I think I need to get on track here in the latest chapter of our journey together and our accomplishments this past year.

On August 20th, 2017, you placed your trust in me to lead and represent this organization by electing me as your National Commander, a responsibility that I did not take lightly.

Since that time, we have witnessed many historic events, both good and, unfortunately, some not so good.

Historic natural disasters gave cause for historic donations to the National Emergency Fund and Endowment Fund.

Along with this, we witnessed many heroic feats of service by members from across this great country. When the call went out, you answered. You answered in a way that definitely overwhelmed me and brought a tear to my eye when I stopped to think about your service to our comrades and fellow Americans and around the devastated areas.

Not only did you give financially, you gave of your time and talents to assist those in need. You collected millions of dollars in much-needed, life-sustaining essentials, along with clothing and cleaning supplies.

Then you made sure that these essentials were transported and distributed to those in need. You gave and gave. And when the cleanup was complete and the life returned to normal, you gave some more by providing school supplies to children to assist them in returning to a normal routine.

I want you to know that what you did definitely made a difference in the lives of millions.

This past year you gave me the opportunity to hear stories and witness firsthand our mission of service as members in the Sons of The American Legion. You raised millions of dollars for national programs, local programs and memorials in your community.

You invested in the children of our country and served our veterans and military personnel, making your communities and our nation a better place to live.

You welcomed me into your detachments when I visited your conferences and conventions and into your hearts and homes with our fireside chats.

Yes, we did something different this year. We used videos on social media to get our message out to our members and potential members.

We shared a cup of coffee and a warm fire to convey stories and information about our great American Legion families. Hopefully you enjoyed the change.

Speaking of change, we experienced a multitude of changes this past year. Not only did we change officers, we experienced the change of long-time leadership within the structure that provided the day-to-day business of

keeping us on track, with the retirement of National Liaison John Kerestan and National Adjutant Brian O'Hearne.

They were missed. But we regrouped and came together. We endured a learning curve for the organization steeper than we have experienced for quite some time.

But we persevered. And we moved forward. We also experienced changes throughout our national commissions and committees, changes which will hopefully make our organization better and will continue to help us achieve greatness.

Most of us don't like change. But here's the deal: Change is good. And we must continue to change and evolve if we are to survive in this day and age.

You definitely made this a memorable year, and I will cherish and remember our time spent together.

It has been beyond words, and at times beyond comprehension. You folks, you are awesome. I appreciate your support and the support that you've given to the many programs of The American Legion.

Thank you all for caring enough to give a part of yourself and your life to this organization. You know,

I've said it before and I'll say it again, and I'm not being disrespectful; it's a fact. I can do what I do without being a member of the Sons of The American Legion, but it's great people like you that keeps me coming back and proud to be a member and a part of the brotherhood that is the Sons of The American Legion.

Every one of us is privileged to be a member of the Sons of The American Legion. And we all share a common bond, in that we're all direct male descendants of veterans of the great wars.

We all gained the right to be a member of the Sons of The American Legion through someone's sacrifice and service to this country, be it a parent or grandparent.

And I ask that you remember your heritage as you serve our great organization. So at this time I'd like to say this: To those of you that served this country in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or Coast Guard and never received the dignity and respect that you surely deserved, I want to say thank you. God bless you. And welcome home, a welcome home that's long overdue for many.

Thank you for the courtesies and hospitalities extended this past year. And thank you for your service

to the Sons of The American Legion. But most of all, thank you for being a friend.

God bless all of you for what you have done and what I know you will continue to do for our organization. God bless America and God bless The American Legion family.

And now we're going to finish this year off the way we started it.

... Applause.

. . . At this time, music was played.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you so much. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.

... Applause.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NAVARRETE: I'll entertain a motion to accept the National Commander's report with our gratitude for an outstanding year.

DELEGATE FROM ILLINOIS: Eugene from Illinois. I'll make a motion to accept the Commander's report.

DAVID RIPPE: David Rippe, Detachment of Nebraska, makes a motion to accept the National Commander's report.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NAVARRETE: I have a motion on the floor to accept the National Commander's report by David Rippe from Nebraska. Do I hear a second?

JIMMY HUNTER: Jimmy Hunter, NEC from Illinois, seconds.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NAVARRETE: Jimmy Hunter, NEC from Illinois, seconds. Is there any discussion? What a report, right?

Hearing none, all in favor of accepting the National Commander's report signify by saying aye. Opposed nay.

Motion carried.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NAVARRETE: I now call on Membership Committee Chairman Seth Rippe for the Membership Committee report. National Vice Commander Ken Warner on deck, followed by Child Welfare Foundation Committee report and awards. I'm sorry. Excuse me.

At this time, I would like to call up the remaining Vice Commanders for the purposes of a presentation. Danny, can you join us, please? At this time we'd like to present you with a gift from all of us.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: (Reading plaque) Sons of The American Legion National Commander Danny J. Smith, 2017-2018, pioneering spirit, courage, faith, teamwork, perseverance, following their footsteps, making history.

... Applause.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NAVARRETE: Commander Smith, on behalf of my committee, they have authorized a check in the amount of \$500 to support your endowment fund. Here you go, sir.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NAVARRETE: Now back on script. Chairman Rippe, membership report.

REPORT - MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE and AWARDS
Seth Rippe, Chairman
Membership Committee

Thank you, Vice Commander Navarrete. Mr. Commander, Legionnaires, distinguished guests, fellow Sons, we had a great membership year. And the national convention is our opportunity to celebrate our successes. I would like to start by recognizing your Membership Committee.

These gentlemen worked very hard for you. Whether it was forwarding membership reports, joining conference calls, or creating material, these gentlemen made sure that membership was a focus.

But I would also like to thank each and every one of you because this would not have been possible without you and the blue caps back home. Thank you very much.

... Applause.

Our membership theme for the year: Pioneering spirit, courage, faith, teamwork, perseverance.

The early pioneers faced opposition in many forms, but these four nouns allowed them to overcome adversity. We, too, have had challenges this membership year. But relying on these words -- courage, faith, teamwork and perseverance -- we achieved.

We set some very aggressive goals: Reach 400,000 members; achieve a renewal rate of 95 percent; recruit 50,000 new members. But we didn't just stop there. We as a committee set out to find and create membership tools to help you meet these challenges.

We introduced these tools on your regional conference calls every month and then disseminated them out to you to use. I have been overwhelmingly surprised by the response. It would have been worth it if just one, just one squadron found value in just one tool.

However, I received feedback from several individuals across the country about how they were using or adapting the tools.

We have sent these out to you. So I would encourage you, if you've not seen them, to please reach out to your

Vice Commanders and have them send them out to you and then disseminate them out to your squadron to use.

Now, success can be measured in a number of ways, but numbers are the most obvious ways to do so.

Nationally, we met five out of the 10 target dates and missed another by just a percent. As of August 16th, we were sitting at 99.01 percent nationally and more than 1100 members ahead of where we were the same time last year.

More than 20 detachments achieved 100 percent. Several have all-time highs. Special recognition goes out to Alabama, Florida and Mississippi for meeting every single target date this year.

... Applause.

Congratulations to those detachments.

At this time I'd like to recognize all the detachments that reached 100 percent membership and encourage all of you to go back home and continue to turn in membership for this membership year through December 31st.

Remember, just because we've hit the national convention and the new cards are out doesn't mean this

membership year is over. Go after those renewals, gentlemen.

After I finish the awards portion of my report today, I would encourage a member from each one of these detachments on the screen to meet me in the back and I will hand out your convention ribbon and your all-time high if you achieved one. Thank you, guys.

As in years past, I want to recognize the recruiting efforts of everyone who signs up five new members to this organization with the individual recruitment award.

Now, Commander Smith asked this committee to really promote this award this year. So to do so we made it easier to submit by creating a fillable PDF that you could electronically send in. We also recognized the recipients throughout the year with an IRA honor roll.

I knew from my involvement with this community over the past few years that there was a lot being done in terms of recruiting. However, we were not reporting it. We had fewer and fewer IRAs being submitted every year. I am happy to report, though, that this year we had more than 140 IRAs. Congratulations, gentlemen.

... Applause.

You will be able to recognize these gentlemen by the purple membership recruiter pin that they proudly wear. Thank you for your work.

Now on to the awards. The first award, the Regional 100% Award. These are presented to the first detachment in the region who receives 100 percent membership. From the southern region, Mississippi. Come on up, gentlemen.

From the eastern region, Rhode Island. From the midwest region, Montana. From the central region, Iowa. And from the western region, Arizona. Congratulations to these detachments.

... Applause.

The Hartline Award is presented to the detachment that charters the most new squadrons. Named after Lawrence Hartline, father PNC Hartline, Lawrence was a dual member who was instrumental in chartering a number of new squadrons in his detachment. After his passing, this award was established in his honor. The recipient of this year's award goes to the detachment of Iowa.

... Applause.

The Largest Squadron Award, no surprises here. Newport Harbor out of Newport Beach, California. Congratulations, gentlemen.

... Applause.

Regional awards are presented to the detachment in each region who has achieved the highest renewal percentage as of December 31st with at least 200 members.

From the southern region, Mississippi. From the eastern region, Rhode Island. From the midwest region, North Dakota. From the central region, Iowa. And from the western region, just edging out Hawaii, is Arizona. Congratulations, gentlemen.

... Applause.

90% Renewal Awards, congratulations to Delaware, Iowa, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, Rhode Island and Wisconsin.

... Applause.

A special note here, I would like to commend Mississippi, Rhode Island and North Dakota who all exceeded the 95 percent goal that we set out this membership year. So congratulations to those detachments. Nice work, guys.

... Applause.

Congratulations.

The Arthur D. Houghton Trophy is awarded annually to the detachment who attains the greatest percent of

increase over the previous year's membership. Arthur D. Houghton was one of the founders of The American Legion.

The award was first presented by his wife in 1941. The winners in the five categories are:

Detachments under 1,000 members with a minimum of 200 members, Rhode Island again.

And the second category, 1,001 to 3,000 members, Oklahoma.

3,001 to 6,000 members, Iowa.

6,001 to 12,000 members, Arizona.

And 12,001 or more members, Florida.

Congratulations, gentlemen.

... Applause.

Finally, I'd like to recognize the recruiting efforts of any individual who has signed up 30 or more members to the organization this year. These recipients are the Blue Brigade winners. They receive a jacket shortly after National Convention that they should wear with pride for this remarkable accomplishment. Gentlemen, if you're here, please rise and stand up so we can recognize you.

... Applause.

Thank you, gentlemen, for your commitment to recruiting.

The final award that this committee has to present is the Triple Nickel Award.

Now, for anybody who was watching carefully, we came close to having a recipient again this year, and I would like to recognize the Detachment of Iowa who just narrowly missed the Triple Nickel again this year, by achieving two of the three requirements.

I had the pleasure of joining Iowa at their detachment convention just shortly after the deadline, and they were so close. So congratulations to Iowa. I'm sure that we'll see them up here again. So nice job, guys.

... Applause.

Do we have a representative from Mississippi? We have an award up here that has not been received yet. We still need a member from Arizona and Rhode Island to come up as well.

I'd like to thank all the award recipients again for a successful year. You guys did a great job and you deserve to be recognized for your achievements.

... Applause.

Thank you again, gentlemen. This concludes my Membership report. And as a delegate to this 47th National Convention, I motion that you accept the Membership Convention Committee report. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NAVARRETE: I have a motion to accept the Membership Committee report. Is there a second?

DEWEY LONG: Dewey Long from Indiana, second.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NAVARRETE: Indiana seconds. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye. Nay? Any opposed signify by saying nay. Hearing none, motion carried. Thank you, Chairman Rippe.

At this time I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th National Convention.

... Applause.

Bear with me, we do have a distinguished guest.

Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the Americanism Deputy Director Tyler Mitchell and the Youth Champions to the podium.

... Applause.

TYLER MITCHELL: Good morning, everyone.

... Chorus of good morning.

So I have this saying that I coach these youth champs with. It's "Be bold, be brief, be gone." So I'm going to do that because I know you don't want to hear me; you want to hear about what these people have to talk about.

So I want to thank you all for what you do. Volunteers lead the way. You all really do. Just by chance, any of you know how many people participate in Boys State programs? It's about 19,000 people.

Is it a paid staff that does that? No, it's not. It's volunteers. I'm the program manager for Boys Nation. And I have quite a few staff members that are S.A.L. members. They take time out of their day to do that. They take vacation. They take unpaid leave to participate in that wonderful program.

So I just wanted to say thanks, thanks for making programs happen. As you'll hear from them, your time and your efforts are vital to their existence.

So what I'm going to do is introduce our first Youth Champ and she will introduce the next champs.

The winner of the 2018 National Oratorical Contest, Carlissa Frederich. She hails from Paducah, Kentucky.

She displayed her passion and desire to learn about the U.S. Constitution with her prepared orientation entitled "Limited Government: Our Right and Responsibility." She's an avid runner, a dark chocolate connoisseur and has a deep love for this country. Amen.

She's currently a freshman at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, and plans to major in genetics, genomics and biotechnology, specializing in emergency medicine. Sponsored by Post 73 in Murray, Kentucky, please give a warm welcome to Carlissa Frederich.

... Applause.

YOUTH CHAMPION
Carlissa Frederich, Paduchah, Kentucky
2018 National Oratorical Contest Winner

Thank you. I'm honored to be with you today. The American Legion theme this previous year, "Families First," has been a prevalent motto in my life.

First, I think of my family who have been my greatest cheerleaders. However, as I reflected on my experience in the oratorical competition, I found new meaning in this familiar phrase.

I had incredible support from Mark and Jackie Kennedy, Post 73, and The American Legion as a whole.

Allow me to share an experience from the national level of this competition, which exemplifies the caliber of this great organization.

The final performance required delivery of my speeches in a spacious room without sound amplification. Due to recent illness, I began to doubt the reliability of my voice.

A need was conveyed for throat lozenges, and I soon had donations from multiple Legionnaires representing different posts and branches of service. This experience culminated with a Legionnaire who ran to the hotel store and purchased a package of cough drops. He conveyed the selfless nature of The American Legion when my mother tried to repay him and he shook his head and simply stated "We are a family here."

Ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to be part of this family. The purposes of the oratorical competition have certainly been realized with me. It has been life changing.

While I initially entered for a merit scholarship, I left with much more: Substantially increased knowledge of and love for our Constitution; a deeper desire to preserve our founding principles and be an informed, active member

of my nation; greater respect for those who protect me and this country; and increased love for all whom I call family. Thank you.

... Applause.

YOUTH CHAMPION

Trace Henry, Tupelo, Mississippi

2017 American Legion Baseball All-Academic Team Captain

The next Youth Champion is the 2017 American Legion Baseball All-Academic Team Captain. His name is Trace Henry from Tupelo, Mississippi.

A 2017 graduate of Mooreville High School in Mooreville, Mississippi, he graduated fourth in his class and maintained a place on the superintendent's honor roll throughout his high school career. He plans to attend Jones County Junior College and eventually transfer to obtain a civil engineering degree.

Sponsored by Lee County Post 49 in Tupelo, Mississippi, Trace Henry is unable to attend because of prior obligations. However, let's still recognize his accomplishment with a round of applause.

... Applause.

The next youth champion is the 2018 Boys Nation President, Joshua Cheadle. He was elected as the president of Boys Nation last month.

He hails from Newport Coast, California, and exhibits an incredible passion for politics, debate and business.

In his downtime he enjoys spending time with friends, reading, watching Formula 1 and cheering on his New Orleans Saints and Los Angeles Lakers. He plans to pursue a career in business, finance or politics.

Sponsored by Newport Harbor Post 291, let's welcome Joshua Cheadle.

... Applause.

YOUTH CHAMPION
Joshua Cheadle, Newport Coast, California
2018 Boys Nation President

It's always a tremendous honor to be up here, especially when I get to see my home post, 291, recognized for all the great work that they do.

I sit in my dorm room, surrounded by some of my closest new friends, as we get caught up in passionate policy discussions, and I realize the power of Boys Nation.

Sitting there, I was surrounded by some of the brightest, kindest high school seniors from Alaska to Arkansas, Delaware to California, and Alabama to Arizona, from all over this great nation.

The Boys Nation program gave me perspective, an understanding of our sacred political process and an even greater appreciation for engaging with and learning from others.

Because of this week that has shaped and I'm sure will continue to shape my lifetime, I'd like to thank Sandy Schneeberger and everyone at Post 291 who nominated me and supported me throughout this process: My teachers at Sage Hill School; my loving and supportive parents and brothers; counselors, like Ryan Silver and Tim Aboudara, Jr. and Sr., who have dedicated their lives to selfless service in giving back to people like me so that we may carry on the traditions of The American Legion; and most importantly The American Legion.

The Americanism Commission and the Sons of The American Legion have helped create countless, invaluable programs to teach about the power of democracy and to spread patriotism into the minds and hearts of young people across this great nation.

Lastly, and most importantly, I want to thank all of the veterans who have put their lives on the line and stood to fight when the fate of our country hung in the balance. For because of their sacrifices, I have the privilege of proudly calling myself an American. Thank you.

... Applause.

CARLISSA FREDERICH: Our next Youth Champion is the 2018 Eagle Scout of the Year, Michael Ankner. He's from Denver, Colorado. For his Eagle Scout project he partnered with more than 35 businesses and his troop to redevelop the grounds at the Denver Indian Center. He raised more than \$20,000 for the project and provided more than 356 volunteer hours.

A senior at Denver East High School, he aspires to attend a university with a program in military history and international relations or foreign service. Please welcome Michael.

... Applause.

YOUTH CHAMPION
Michael Ankner, Denver, Colorado
2018 Eagle Scout of the Year

Good evening. A defining value of the Cherokee

people means coming together for the betterment of the entire community. This value has great power. By working together, we improve our society, making life better for everyone in ways we could not alone.

Scouting has instilled the power of coming together, of GaDuGi, in me. I've witnessed the impact of scouting's vast network of volunteers and supporters, of its merit badges that emphasize civic responsibility, and of Eagle Scout Service Projects that bring communities together to achieve what could not be done alone.

I've also experienced the power of GaDuGi while working on my own Eagle Scout project that brought together over 70 in-kind and financial donors, nearly 1400 hours of volunteer hours to benefit the Denver Indian Center.

The American people also value GaDuGi. Coming together has been central to the heritage of our great nation since its earliest days. Thirteen states united to fight for independence and adopted as a motto, E pluribus unum, out of many one.

The nation they brought forth is vast with diverse beliefs and backgrounds. They were dedicated to the noble

cause of liberty and democracy, and that noble cause continues to bring us together to this day.

I'm deeply honored to have been selected as The American Legion 2018 Eagle Scout of the Year. American Legion itself is also a living embodiment of citizens coming together for the common good.

Thank you for your parents' service to our great nation as well as your own service to our great nation and the example you set -- sorry, the support of scouting and education and the example you set in our community.

I'd also like to thank all of those who helped me along my path to Eagle, including Troop 199, St. John's Lutheran Church of Denver, the Denver area council, The American Legion Department of Colorado and Denver Post 1. I'd also like to thank all the donors and volunteers who supported my Eagle Project and all of my teachers, coaches, friends and of course my family who taught and supported me along the way.

... Applause.

CARLISSA FREDERICH: In competition in Colorado Springs a few weeks ago, two Youth Champions took top prize in the 28th Junior Air Rifle Championships. Jared Eddy, from Midland, Georgia, claimed Precision champion

with an overall score of 2,475 out of a possible 2,509. He shoots for Ole Mill Rangers and is heading to West Virginia University. Please welcome Jared.

... Applause.

YOUTH CHAMPION
Jared Eddy, Midland, Georgia
2018 Junior Shooting Sports Precision Champion

Good day to all. First, thank you for having me and allowing me to speak before you this morning. It truly is an honor.

I would like to begin with a huge thank you to my family. I can't stress that enough. Thank you for supporting me through everything, pushing me past my limits, loving me unconditionally, spending a lot of money on this expensive sport --

... Laughter.

-- and having patience to watch me grow. Because where would any of us be today without family? Whether that be blood related, a close bond with a group of people, a community or all of the above.

Thank you to all the coaches that aided me along the way, including Sgt. Maj. Tuggle, Lisa Kelly, George Norton

and Jon Hammond. It truly has been an amazing journey so far, and I cannot wait to see what the future holds.

Thank you to the Americanism Division for all of its volunteers and staff to make this experience possible for young men like me. Thank you to Barnett-Harris Post 15 back home in Georgia. Thank you to all the officials here and around the country that give the youth of America a chance as golden as this one.

Thank you for making this convention and all the youth groups and championships happen. I will proudly use the scholarship given to me to further my education as I study biomedical engineering at West Virginia University these next four years. After college I plan to go on to med school and become a surgeon.

Thank you to The American Legion for all the opportunities you have given me. God bless America.

... Applause.

CARLISSA FREDERICH: In the Sporter category, the championship was captured by a young shooter representing Zion-Benton High School and the NJROTC in Zion, Illinois. She won the title with a final score of 93.7, with an aggregate score of 2,314 out of a possible 2,400. Please

welcome our final 2018 National Youth Champion, Sporter Shooting Champion, Bailey Hoenig.

... Applause.

YOUTH CHAMPION
Bailey Hoenig, Zion, Illinois
2018 Junior Shooting Sports Sporter Champion

Good morning.

... Chorus of good morning.

For me, becoming The American Legion National Champion was more than a personal goal or outstanding achievement.

On July 21st, three days before my journey to Colorado Springs, one of my closest friends, Dwayne, was involved in a motorcycle accident that left him in a coma.

His family and I were all overcome with grief. So I told myself that I had to win to give myself and his family a glimpse of hope for our future with Dwayne.

And so I won.

... Applause.

Thank you.

And I would like to thank the entire American Legion family, especially the Americanism Commission and its volunteers and the Sons of The American Legion, not only

for your countless hours of hard work and undying support, but for also giving my mother and Dwayne's family a very big reason to smile about.

You have turned our tears of pain into tears of joy, and that for me means more than just a medal. Dwayne has since been opening his eyes and squeezing our hands, and I cannot wait to tell him this story.

So thank you from the bottom of my heart, and we will remember this forever. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NAVARRETE: Join me again in congratulating our Youth Champions.

... Applause.

At this time we'd like to make you distinguished guests of our 47th National Convention.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: The future of our country right here, ladies and gentlemen.

... Applause.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NAVARRETE: I now call upon National Vice Commander Ken Warner for his final report. On deck, Child Welfare Foundation committee report and awards.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER REPORT
Kenneth Warner, National Vice Commander - East

National Adjutant Wright, please roll it.

VIDEO: "Gentlemen, here you will see the totals for the Eastern Region from the detachments that reported in, achieved over 97 percent membership with over 139,000 total members and an 88 percent renewal rate. Rhode Island and Washington, D.C., both achieved the National Commander's goal of 105 percent membership. The department of District of Columbia has chartered two of the six new squadrons in the region.

We as a region contributed over \$81,000 to Child Welfare Fund and over \$725,000 to other programs. We put the work into our communities with over 175,000 volunteer hours. Great work, gentlemen.

I had the pleasure of visiting five detachments during my year as Vice Commander.

One of my highlights for the year was attending the Detachment of New York's Mid-Winter Conference where they presented \$3,500 to the first Fisher House in New York. Due to the efforts of this great detachment, a second Fisher House is currently under construction.

The Detachment of Maryland hosted their 22nd annual Polar Bear Plunge in the Chesapeake Bay where they raised

over \$60,000 for Maryland Special Olympics. Some of their members make six separate plunges to honor all six branches of the U.S. Armed Forces to include the Coast Guard and the Merchant Marines. The Detachment of Delaware supports Frets4Vets, a nonprofit dedication to helping veterans defeat PTSD through music.

Another highlight of my year as Vice Commander was attending the largest Washington conference to date. It was an honor and a privilege to escort a World War II veteran to lay the National Wreath at the World War II Memorial.

The Detachment of Maine honored me by granting me the privilege of laying their wreath at the Vietnam Memorial Wall. Thank you, Maine.

The Detachment of New Jersey embraced their children and youth by having four-year-old grandson of Detachment Commander Dave Page, Mr. Dominic, present their detachment's wreath. New Jersey has embraced the Children's Organ Transplant Association, known as COTA, as a detachment project and has contributed over \$650,000.

A third highlight of my year was the Detachment of Massachusetts arranging for me to raise and lower an American flag on the oldest commissioned U.S. Naval ship,

the USS Constitution. I wish I could have had my World War II Navy veteran father with me for this moment.

Massachusetts dedicated their year to promoting all four pillars of The American Legion in their diverse support of veterans and communities.

The Detachment of Vermont sponsors Veterans' Place in White River Junction as well as Dodge House in Rutland. These transitional programs provide much needed assistance to Vermont's homeless veterans. I was honored to attend their DEC Mid-Winter Conference where their guest speaker, Senator Bernie Sanders, championed The American Legion and its programs.

I was also impressed to witness the director and residents of the Dodge House drive over two hours to bring greetings and say thank you to the Detachment of Vermont for their support and continuing contributions.

The Detachment of New Hampshire went above and beyond in their community service to our veterans this year. They dedicated a \$30,000 memorial stone to the veterans cemetery. I would also like to thank them for their continued support to the Liberty House.

The American Legion family of Pennsylvania donated over \$100,000 to Pennsylvania's Housing for Homeless

Veterans corporation. The Sons of The American Legion 22nd district also held their seventh annual Veterans Appreciation Picnic in Chambersburg where 133 veterans from neighboring VA hospitals were able to spend the day enjoying food, fun and fellowship.

Finally, I'd like to thank the Eastern Region for a successful unofficial gathering and homecoming event held in the Detachment of Pennsylvania, where 34 S.A.L. members and two Auxiliary members attended and passed The American Legion basic training course.

The weekend was well-attended and a great time was had by all. The best moment was the ability to present my 90-year-young father with his dual membership into the Sons of The American Legion after my daughter happened on the records of his father's service in World War I which we previously thought were lost in a fire. Gentlemen, never give up on membership.

In conclusion, my entire year was one for the memory books. Thank you, gentlemen, for the honor and privilege to serve you."

... Applause.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WARNER: Thank you. I do have some closing comments. I'd really like to thank the

Detachment of Rhode Island. Gentlemen, fantastic job with membership.

And also the District of Columbia. I do have a little bit of news out of the District of Columbia. They did start two new squadrons. Also, their department is currently working on a resolution to make them an official detachment. Hopefully they have that resolution prepared and will be bringing it for approval by our parent organization, The American Legion, next week.

In closing, I'd like to give everybody a big pat on the back from the Eastern Region. You guys really stepped up to the plate. One thing that really impressed me was our renewal rate.

I know that number is off because I had to have this report in a lot earlier, but our last report had us at 88.9 percent renewal. We just missed 89 percent, gentlemen.

Fantastic job. I salute each and every one of you and continue on carrying on the legacy. Mr. Commander, that ends my report.

... Applause.

As a delegate to this 47th National Convention, I would move that this report be accepted.

DELEGATE FROM PENNSYLVANIA: Pennsylvania seconds that motion.

DELEGATE FROM NEW YORK: New York seconds the motion.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NAVARRETE: I have a motion to accept the Vice Commander's report and a second by New York. Is there any discussion?

(No response.)

All those in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed, nay. Motion carries.

... Applause.

At this time, Commander Warner, we'd like to make you a distinguished guest of this 47th National Convention.

... Applause.

I will now turn the podium over to National Commander Ken Warner -- Vice Commander, excuse me, excuse me -- National Vice Commander Ken Warner.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WARNER: Well, okay. Good morning. Okay. That startled me there a little bit. At this time I would like to call upon Mr. Chris Carlton, Chris Carlton for the Child Welfare Foundation Committee report and awards.

... Applause.

REPORT - CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION COMMITTEE and AWARDS
Chris Carlton, Chairman
Child Welfare Committee

What can I say? You can find a donation anywhere.

Before I start my report, I'm going to give you a few little-known facts or not the whole truth, you know, that we've always been told.

One of them is we've always heard, you know, or asked the question: Why did the chicken cross the road? They always say it was to get to the other side. But the whole truth, the rest of the story, is the reason why he wanted to get to the other side was to raise money for CWF.

And you know the space race? We wanted to get to the moon first. It wasn't just to beat Russia; we wanted to get to the moon first so we could raise money for CWF.

And the last thing is Elvis is alive. I saw him in Vegas last year, and he was raising money for CWF.

... Laughter.

A little history. In 1952 Department Commander Dr. Garland D. Murphy, Jr., of Arkansas came to The American Legion with an offer to provide a valuable

contribution if we could only figure out some way his gift could be used solely for children.

After much study and discussion, the idea of a youth foundation was adopted. And later that year, the National Executive Committee appointed a special committee to determine the feasibility of establishing such a proposed foundation.

Eventually, on October 15th, 1953, the National Executive Committee approved the establishment of the foundation and entered into a trust agreement with Dr. Murphy.

Legal work was completed. And on July 9, 1954, the foundation was duly incorporated under the laws of the state of Indiana. At that time, Dr. Murphy assigned to the foundation deeds to fractional mineral rights on nearly 10,000 acres of land in oil-rich Williston Basin in Montana and North Dakota.

In 1955, it gave its first three grants totaling \$22,500 to three organizations. The Delinquency Control Institute, the National Association for Retarded Children, and the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness were the first three beneficiaries.

And to date, over \$15 million has been awarded to organizations to assist the children of this country from The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

Some of our past achievements in recent past, in 1988, since 1988, we have raised almost \$8 million. In a single year we raised \$590,413.91. We had two detachments that tied for the Garland D. Murphy, Jr. Award, and we lead the way in donations among the Legion family.

And this year, 2017-2018, we had a grant total of \$327,594.07, with the top three detachments being, in third place, Pennsylvania with \$30,672.06; second place, Florida, \$30,700; and Ohio being number one with \$31,389.48.

Regional standings. In first place was the Eastern Region with \$85,596.34, Pennsylvania leading the way. Second place was the Central Region with \$76,190.08. Ohio was on top there. Third place was the Southern Region with \$72,499.25. Florida settled in first place. Fourth place was the midwest region with \$55,884.34. And Colorado, with \$28,893.81, led the way. And fifth place was the Western Region with \$36,376.41, and California was on top with \$11,499.

... Applause.

This year we've had 23 detachments donate \$1 or more per member. And out of 55 detachments, 45 donated something.

Out of the 28 grants that were awarded by the Child Welfare Foundation, eight were suggested by Sons of The American Legion: CJ First Candle; Hope Flight Foundation; Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund; Kansas Braille Transcription Institute; PAB'S PACKS; Saint Francis Community Services; 2018 American Legion National Youth Programs Scholarships; and The American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance Program of 2018.

Going forward there's no debate. We will reach eight and then on to \$9 million. Getting 100% participation from all detachments. Going out and finding applicants for CWF grants. Recognizing our Blue Cap members for their hard work for CWF. And to continue to remind The American Legion that we support all their programs, especially this program, by always leading the way in donations.

How can we do this? Promote the 100 Percent Per Capita banner, release the PIGS, raffles, dinners, pledges, pie-eating contests, cow plop bingos. Ask me about that later.

... Laughter.

The possibilities are endless.

Remember, remember why we do this. Remember to make it fun. And remember, raise lots of money.

In conclusion, I would like to say thank you. Our committee would like to give thanks. First we'd like to thank all the brave men and women serving this great country, our nation, protecting our freedoms. We'd like to thank The American Legion and all of their members. If it wasn't for them, we would not be possible.

They support us as we support them. We'd like to thank all the detachments and their members for their hard work and dedication to the Child Welfare Foundation.

And on a personal note, I would like to thank my fellow committee members. If it wasn't for you, this committee could not be successful -- George Fleming, Lyle Chapman, Larry Ford and Jon Coakley, thank you.

... Applause.

We are Sons for Kids. With that, we will start with some awards. We will start with the dollar per capita donation. And please, gentlemen, make your way hastily in, we'll say in alphabetical order:

Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Massachusetts, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Tennessee and West Virginia all gave \$1 per capita.

... Applause.

Our next is \$2 per capita donation. Alabama, Colorado, Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, Oregon, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia and Wyoming all gave more, at least \$2 per member.

... Applause.

I'll take a moment just as a promotional spot. If you've not been down through the exhibit hall, stop by and see the CWF booth. They have a lot of new things. As a matter of fact, they have a new hoodie. That is a Sons for Kids hoodie. It's a great looking sweatshirt. They also have a new Dri-FIT green polo. It looks awesome. They have golf balls, coffee mugs. See your local CWF booth.

Our next award is the highest per capita donation by region. Fifth place, Ohio, with \$1.01. Fourth place was Vermont, East, with \$2.17. And third place was the Southern Region, Mississippi, \$7.54.

Second place was Midwest Region, Colorado, with \$9.12. And number one, for highest per capita donation by region, was the Western Region, Nevada, \$13.86.

... Applause.

Have you ever thought what you could do for someone, a loved one that you might have lost? An idea is give a donation to the Child Welfare Foundation in their name.

And our last award, the highest monetary donation by region. In fifth place was the Western Region, California, \$11,499. Fourth place, Midwest Region, Colorado, \$28,893.81. And the Eastern Region was third, which was Pennsylvania, with \$30,672.06. Second place was the Southern Region, Florida, with \$30,700. And in first place, the Central Region, Ohio, with \$31,389.48.

Did you know that if you contact the CWF National Headquarters, you are able to purchase certain things and take them back to your detachment and then sell them? And the neat thing is if you buy a shirt that is \$30 from National Headquarters, you can take it back and you can raffle it off, tip it off on a \$50 tip board. Think about that. \$30 shirt and you can make \$20 profit.

The PIGS are back. They do have cases of PIGS down at the exhibit, CWF. They are nice and pink and they do

have the Child Welfare logo. Go buy and pick up your PIGs. They will not cost you anything but they will not feed you. But they could feed a child.

And, Commander, that concludes my report. As a delegate to this 47th National Convention, I make a motion to accept the CWF, Child Welfare Foundation, report.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WARNER: We have a motion for the Child Welfare report. Can we have a second, please? We need a second.

DELEGATE FROM VIRGINIA: Virginia seconds.

DELEGATE FROM ILLINOIS: Illinois seconds.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WARNER: Illinois seconds it. All in favor say aye. All opposed? Any discussion? On behalf of the national organization, Chairman, we'd like to make you a distinguished guest.

Will the Sergeant-at-Arms please escort Past National Commander Mr. Detweiler to the podium, please.

... Applause.

PRESENTATION

**Past National Commander Bill Detweiler, President
The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation**

Thank you very much. And good morning or good afternoon depending on which side of the meridian you're

on here.

I'm Bill Detweiler. I'm the president of The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation, and I'm pleased to be here along with Meagen Sweet, who is our assistant from the Americanism division, handles all the details of the fund for us.

In 1925, World War I veterans, widows and children continued to struggle to return to active regular life.

Members of The American Legion, aware of the responsibilities entrusted to them by those who had served, knew the time had come to take action. More than 900,000 Legionnaires, American Legion Auxiliary members and other American citizens joined the campaign, raising nearly \$5 million and establishing The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation. Since those days, over \$30 million has been distributed to disabled veterans and children of those who served our great nation.

Your gifts and donations are added to a trust that is administered by The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation.

The corporation, whose members are chosen by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, take great care to ensure that the gifts are wisely invested.

Income from the fund investments is then passed on to The American Legion, the national organization, to administer programs of children and youth, and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation that include the funding of Temporary Financial Assistance and Department Service Officer School and the Board of Veterans' Appeals training.

During the calendar year of 2017, The American Legion Endowment Fund transferred earnings of \$53,640 to The American Legion to support TFA.

Donations to The American Legion Endowment Fund during this time were \$190,498. It's important to note that due to the structure of the fund as an endowment, only the earnings of the fund are ever spent, ensuring that the donations will continue to support veterans and children of generations.

And that's an important point. We never touch the corpus of the fund. So if you give a donation, that donation is added to the corpus in order to try to increase interest, which is tough today.

When I became a member of the endowment fund some years ago, we were probably making 8 or 10 percent off of the endowment. Today we're very fortunate to make only a

few percentage points off the endowment, because we have a very restrictive endowment fund policy to protect that endowment.

We don't take chances on wild investments. You see the stock market rise and fall. We're not involved in that. We have a very conservative investment policy. But it has produced, from that 5 million in 1925, over \$30 million to date.

We thank you very much and thank the Sons very much for your support of the endowment fund. It's one of the key five charities of The American Legion. And it is the oldest charity of The American Legion.

So without further ado, we are here today to present a couple of awards in thanks to you, the members of the Sons, for the work that you have done this year in helping to raise money and donations to The American Legion Endowment Fund.

And we talk about the endowment fund, sort of an internal thing, but you know it as Temporary Financial Assistance. And that's the most important aspect of this fund, taking care of the children of the veterans who have served this great nation.

So, please, Meagen, let's start the presentations. The first -- and these presentations are named after some of the founders of The American Legion -- the James A. Drain Founder's Award, presented by The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation to the Sons of The American Legion Department of Oregon for the program year 2017-2018 in recognition of its outstanding support to The American Legion Endowment Fund as the number one detachment in per capita contributions received in support of The American Legion's Children and Youth and Veterans Affairs Rehabilitation programs. Signed by myself as president.

And would someone from the Department of Oregon please come forward to accept this award?

You can clap.

... Applause.

I'm sorry, I don't have a pitch man like Chris to sell whatever he wants to sell. We don't have any shirts to sell. We don't have any little piggies. They've been trying to give those PIGs away for years. Please help them give away those PIGs.

... Laughter.

The next award is a special award in a sense because of the memory -- it's in memory of Harry Colmery. Those

of you who know anything about the history of this organization, Harry Colmery is a guy that sat in the Mayflower Hotel and wrote the G.I. Bill in 1944, which changed a nation of -- made us an educated America, gave us the opportunity for an educated America, and gave our veterans an opportunity for a GI loan so they could buy a home, which was a big step in building this nation after World War II. And we're proud to have that legacy.

The Harry W. Colmery Legacy Award, presented by The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation, to the Sons of The American Legion Department of Florida for the program year 2017-18 --

... Applause.

-- in recognition of its outstanding support to The American Legion Endowment Fund and designation as a number one detachment in total contributions received in support of The American Legion's Children and Youth and Veterans Affairs Rehabilitation programs. They're going to have to get a new wall in Florida, I think. Maybe they'll just give us the award back and we'll just add another number to it.

As a special award this year, we present a Certificate of Appreciation presented by The American

Legion Endowment Fund Corporation to the Sons of The American Legion 2017-18, in recognition of its outstanding support of The American Legion Endowment Fund and designation as the largest historical contribution received in support of The American Legion's Children and Youth and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation programs. Commander, would you please come forward and accept this award.

... Applause.

Thank you very much for all you do, and I hope that you have a successful convention and enjoy Minneapolis. 25 years ago I enjoyed the hell out of this place. I was elected National Commander here. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WARNER: Mr. Commander, we'd like to make you a distinguished guest of the 47th National Convention.

... Applause.

At this time I would like to call on National Historian Mr. Jay Cole for his final report and history scrapbook awards. And on deck is Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee, Mr. Harl Ray. Would you please

take a seat up in the front row, please. But at this time will Mr. Jay Cole come forward.

**FINAL REPORT and PRESENTATION OF
NATIONAL HISTORY BOOK AWARDS
Jay Cole, National Historian**

For those that are interested, don't keep collecting money to pay the rent, I escaped.

Before I give out the two numbers I need to give out, I'd like to say something I want you all to think about. I happened to go to a memorial, and I took a young man about 10 years old with me. And after the memorial service, we all went out to eat. And at that memorial service, a commander gave a little recitation.

And after we started eating, I asked this young man, I said, "What were you going to be when you grow up?" He looked at the Commander and he said, "I'm going to be like him." An eight-year-old kid, and a commander of the Sons of The American Legion made an impression on him. So we need to make impressions on our youth.

Before I go on here, I guess, in our history contest, we had four submissions -- one from Kansas, Maryland, New Hampshire, and Ohio. And the winner this

year of the Detachment Historian Contest is the Detachment of Kansas.

... Applause.

Up on the screen, if you look at the picture up on the screen, these two young men were the historians for the Detachment of Kansas.

... Applause.

Their grandfather is a Past Detachment Commander. We all, most of us, probably know Mark Seaton. And I happened to be privileged to go to Kansas for their convention. And when they elected new officers, I was up there taking my pictures.

And these two young men were sitting over there. I said, "You know, I might need some help." They grabbed their cell phones. They were taking pictures. I normally take six or eight pictures. But it took them about ten minutes to go through each one. This was their grandfather right here.

... Applause.

And our next winner, if I can find it, happens to come from the East Coast. This year's squadron winner is the Harry White Wilmer Squadron 82 out of La Plata, Maryland. Is somebody here to pick that up?

... Applause.

It has been an honor for me to serve as your historian this year. I have hundreds of thousands of pictures.

I went to Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, even made it to Alaska. I taught the Commander how to catch a polar bear. Yeah, right.

... Laughter.

So, Commander, as a delegate to this 47th Annual National Convention, I move for the acceptance of this report.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WARNER: We have a motion. Do we have a second?

PAUL HAYSE: Paul Hayse, Detachment of Illinois, seconds.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WARNER: Detachment of Illinois seconds. Is there any discussion? All in favor by saying aye. All opposed. Ayes have it.

Mr. Chairman, we'd like to make you a distinguished guest of this 47th National Convention.

... Applause.

I now call upon Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation committee for reports and awards, Mr. Harl D. "Butch" Ray from Illinois, chairman. Welcome aboard.

**REPORT - VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION COMMITTEE
and AWARDS**

**Harl D. "Butch" Ray, Chairman
Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee**

Good afternoon, everyone.

... Chorus of good afternoon.

My name is Butch Ray, and it has been an honor to serve as the VA&R commission chairman this past year. During this past membership year, we Sons have accomplished much in our work for our veterans and their care.

As of July 1st, we currently have 31 registered representatives and/or deputy representatives, and we have served over 76 VA facilities, with totals of 10,503 regular hours and 1,889 occasional hours with a combined total of 12,392 hours.

At the figured rate that the VA uses of \$24 an hour, this calculates to a total of \$297,408 in value to the service of our nation's heroes.

As reported on the Squadron Consolidated Report Forms received to date, our year-end totals for 2017-2018 accomplishments are as follows: Family Support Network, \$42,842 in donations; National Veterans Assistance Day, 6,808 hours, \$31,089 in donations and over 8,614 veterans assisted; the Fisher House, \$87,308 in donations; Support for Our Troops, 39,733 hours and \$123,421 in donations; for other VA projects, a total of 81,609 hours and \$401,975 in donations; Operation Comfort Warrior, a total of \$47,459 in donations.

Altogether, our VA&R totals are 256,352 hours and \$1,115,376 in donations to our veterans. Congratulations on a job well done.

... Applause.

I wish to take the time to acknowledge the assistance and very hard work of my fellow commission members for a very outstanding job -- Mr. Steve Gower from the Detachment of Virginia, Gabe Cinquegrana from New York, Brandon Curry from Kentucky, and Steve Tansel from Indiana.

I wish to also recognize and to commit to the minutes of this convention a lifetime of work from past

Charles Rigsby National Volunteer of the Year Award winner
Doug Murphy from the Detachment of Georgia.

... Applause.

He was my vice chairman. And he was a mentor to me in learning more than I ever thought I could learn, and I have much more to learn about this particular commission. He passed away this past December. Let's remember him fondly, and may he rest in peace.

Now on to the awards. Yesterday morning we met at 8:30 a.m., the convention committee did. We had 29 detachments in attendance, and this is where the judging took place for the Rigsby winner. We'll save that one for last.

But for right now, 41 years ago, in 1977, at the 6th Annual Convention of the Sons of The American Legion, so 41 years ago, was the first time the Kepler, O'Brian and Webster awards were presented to the squadron, district, and detachment VA&R report winners.

The Kirby Kepler Memorial Award and the Allen I. O'Brian Memorial Awards are in memory of the sons of Past National Commander Richard J. Kepler, as they had passed away prior to his being elected National Commander at the 7th National Convention in 1978.

The Earl Webster Memorial Award was established in honor of the father of Past National Vice Commander and Past National Chaplain John Webster. So here we go:

This year the Kirby Kepler Memorial Award for best squadron VA&R report goes to the Squadron 447 of North Sacramento, California.

... Applause.

Please come forward and accept your award.

Also this year, the Allen I. O'Brian Memorial Award for the best district VA&R report, and this will make the Commander very happy, goes to the 6th District, Detachment of Nebraska.

And the Earl Webster Memorial Award for the best detachment VA&R report goes to the Detachment of California.

... Applause.

Now for the granddaddy of the VA&R awards. It's difficult to see from the podium, but I'm currently going to ask all in attendance who are past Charles B. Rigsby Volunteer of the Year Award winners to please stand and be recognized.

... Applause.

Thank you, gentlemen, for your service to our veterans. In 1991, Charles B. Rigsby was elected National Commander at the 22nd National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion.

Sadly, in the following membership year, the organization was saddened by the passing of Immediate Past National Commander Rigsby. Commander Rigsby was the first Past National Commander to be transferred to Squadron Everlasting.

At the next spring the National Executive Committee meeting, a resolution was presented and approved to name the National Volunteer of the Year Award to the Charles B. Rigsby Memorial National Volunteer of the Year Award, in honor as -- for years volunteer programs at the VA medical centers was Charles Rigsby's passion.

This year over four applications for the Rigsby award were received. We'd love to see many, many more. But all of them came in on time and in good form.

Judging took place yesterday, and it is my sincere honor to announce that this year's winner of the Charles B. Rigsby Volunteer of the Year Award is Fred Vaccarella from the Detachment of Virginia.

... Applause.

I don't know for certain he was in the room when the judging took place and we hope we kept this from him long enough that it is a surprise.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WARNER: Fred, it's an honor and privilege to make you a distinguished guest of this 47th National Convention. Thank you for all your work, sir.

FRED VACCARELLA: Thank you.

... Applause.

HARL "BUTCH" RAY: Comrade Commander, this concludes the report of the VA&R Convention Committee, and as a duly registered delegate of this convention, I move to approve this report as given.

DENNIS HENKEMEYER: Mr. Commander, Dennis Henkemeyer, Detachment of Minnesota. I second that motion.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WARNER: Thank you. We have a motion and a second. All in favor say aye. All opposed? Any questions? A little out of order there, but that's okay. The ayes have it.

Harl, thank you for your year of service. And I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of this 47th National Convention.

... Applause.

I would like to call on Mr. Larry "Bear" Weinzirl for Veterans Employment and Education for his report.

REPORT - VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION
Larry "Bear" Weinzirl, Chairman
Veterans Employment and Education

LARRY 'BEAR" WEINZIRL: Good afternoon.

... Chorus of good afternoon.

Bear Weinzirl, chairman of the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission from the Detachment of Maryland. First, I'd like to express my thanks to the members of our commission for 2017-2018. My vice chairman, Past National Vice Commander Jeff Evans from Virginia, and our commission members Blair Miles from Alabama, Scott Garrett from Colorado, Marvin Nay from Massachusetts and Past National Vice Commander Dave Swafford from Utah. Thank you, guys.

When this commission came into existence for the first time in 2015 at the close of the National Convention in Baltimore, we started with a blank sheet of paper.

We have worked very hard over these past three years towards the goal of building the National VE&E Commission into a valuable and relevant commission of the Sons of The

American Legion. And I feel that we've come a long ways towards that end.

I've created a PowerPoint program that details some of the goings-on of our commission, and I'd like to share it with you now. So bear with me here.

... Laughter.

The mission statement of the VE&E Commission is to assist The American Legion in ensuring that America's veterans have the opportunity to provide with honor and dignity the economic necessities of life for themselves and their families.

Many veterans sacrifice comfortable, lucrative lives to protect the liberties of our country, only to find little left of those former lives when they return.

The S.A.L. VE&E Commission is assisting The American Legion and these veterans by getting information out on Hiring Our Heroes job fairs being held across the nation.

Our commission has already distributed out information on over 250 of these job fairs and are continuing to do so. The S.A.L. also provides volunteers at these events as needed.

Some of these job fairs are probably being held in your Detachment, and possibly even in your neighborhood.

Why not see how you can be of assistance at one of these events?

The G.I. Bill as well as the 9/11 G.I. Bill offer educational benefits to our veterans. Many states, however, offer veterans education benefits and programs of their own in addition to, or as an alternative to, these G.I. Bill benefits.

The S.A.L. VE&E Commission is concentrating on identifying these benefits and getting this information out to our veterans also.

Our commission also assists The American Legion however and whenever we can with their initiatives on military to civilian credentialing.

What exactly are credentials? Credentials are basically a certification that you possess a specific skill set or are considered qualified to do a certain job. There it is.

For example, a welder can show his welding certification to an employer to document that he has specific skills or knowledge such as high-pressure or under-water skills. Or a mechanic may be certified as an expert with diesel engines.

The military invests -- wait a minute here -- I'm sorry. The military invests extensively in formal training for its enlisted personnel, complemented by extensive on-the-job training and hands-on experience.

Every year skilled servicemembers leaving the Armed Forces miss out on the chance to quickly move into good, high-paying jobs because they must undergo lengthy and expensive retraining in order to meet civilian licensure and certification requirements often for the same type of job they held in the military.

This potential lack of recognition of the extensive training and experience received in the military can have a number of adverse effects, one of which is unemployment or underemployment for servicemembers transitioning to the civilian workforce.

The American Legion's evolution of military credentialing -- 1995, identify barriers; 2005, develop and test solutions; 2015, institutionalize military credentialing; and 2018, embrace opportunities.

When The American Legion began its efforts to address the challenges faced by servicemembers and veterans in attaining civilian occupational certification

and licenses in the mid-1990s, little was known about the extent of the problem.

To shed some light on the issue, The American Legion commissioned the first systematic study to examine barriers to credentialing for servicemembers and veterans.

Over the past decade, the legion has continued to keep a spotlight on these issues through its work on a variety of efforts coordinated with multiple stakeholders.

This includes numerous credentialing roundtables held over the past 10 years, as well as two highly successful National Credentialing Summits held in 2012 and 2015.

Just last week, The American Legion's VE&E division attended the unveiling of the new Army Credentialing Assistance Program at Fort Hood.

This program will provide soldiers up to \$4,000 each year to pay for credentials that will prepare them for life after the military.

When fully implemented, the program will allow soldiers to choose from more than 1600 credentials, many of which are recognized by civilian industry.

The American Legion has a brochure available on their website entitled "The State of Credentialing of

Servicemembers and Veterans" that contains much more information on the subject. Why not go online and see how you can possibly assist The American Legion with their credentialing initiatives?

Another focus of our S.A.L. VE&E Commission is assisting The American Legion in ending veterans' homelessness. The American Legion family supports the efforts of both public and private sector agencies and organizations that aid homeless veterans and their families.

Additionally, the Legion family supports legislative proposals to provide medical, rehabilitative and employment assistance.

The American Legion family recognizes that aiding homeless veterans requires a sustained coordinated effort, which should provide secure housing and nutritious meals, essential physical healthcare, substance abuse aftercare and mental health counseling, as well as personal development and empowerment.

What can you do to assist? First and foremost, write this number down and keep it with you at all times: 877-4AID-VET. That's 877, the number 4, AIDVET. When you come in contact with a homeless veteran, advise them that

they can contact the VA National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at this number and speak to a trained VA responder for assistance.

This hotline is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Homeless veterans and those at risk for homelessness can request assistance at any hour of the day or night, including weekends.

One group that is often in contact with homeless veterans on a daily basis is first responders. Why not go to our VE&E page on the S.A.L. national website and print out the Homeless Veterans brochure specifically designed for first responders? Then simply distribute copies of this brochure to your local police, EMT and fire departments. You'll find that most will agree to put copies in their emergency vehicles.

You may even get some free publicity like we did after initiating this program in my hometown.

You can also search for organizations in your state that assist homeless veterans and give them your support.

One such organization in my home state is MCVET, the Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training. In 2016, the Detachment of Maryland purchased and donated not one but two vans to MCVET.

Is there a similar organization in your state that you can assist? Why not go online and find out? I'm sure there are and that they would appreciate your support.

These are just a few ideas on how your detachment, districts and squadrons can assist our VE&E commission.

Question, by a show of hands, if I can see you, how much detachments present today have already formed your own VE&E commission or committee? Back in detachments? Some of you out there.

That's pretty good. To those of you detachments that have, we thank you. To those of you that have not, please consider doing so and assist us as we assist The American Legion to ensure that no veteran is ever unemployed or homeless.

Well, it got in here again. I don't know how he keeps doing it. That's my Quarter Horse.

... Laughter.

Thank you for your time today and for your continued support of the Sons of The American Legion National VE&E Commission. And enjoy the rest of your convention.

Mr. Vice Commander, as a duly registered delegate to this 47th National Convention, I move to accept my report. Thank you.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WARNER: We have a motion.
Do we have a second?

DELEGATE FROM NEW JERSEY: New Jersey seconds it.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WARNER: New Jersey seconds it. Any questions? All in favor say aye. All opposed. The ayes have it.

Chairman Weinzirl, it's an honor and privilege to make you a distinguished guest of this 47th National Convention. And thank you for everything you've done with this commission.

... Applause.

At this time I would like to call on National Vice Commander Mr. Jay Marsden from the Central for his final report.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER REPORT
Jay Marsden, National Vice Commander - Central

I'd first like to introduce my wife, Kris, because they told me if I didn't do that when I spoke, it would cost me. So far I haven't forgot too many times.

But I wouldn't be able to do it without her help and support. She's been beside me the entire way, and I would like to just thank her.

I would also like to thank Commander Smith for his leadership and friendship throughout the year, along with

his wife, Donna. I'd like to thank the Vice Commanders -- Joe, Mark, Don, Kenny -- and all the national officers, the chairman and committeemen for making this a team effort.

The Detachments of Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota, Missouri and Illinois, I can't thank you enough for your hospitality. It was outstanding. I can't say enough about it.

To all the other detachments in the Central Region, I thank you for your support and hard work throughout the year. It's been outstanding.

And to the Sons of The American Legion, I thank you for the opportunity and privilege of being one of your national Vice Commanders. It's been one of the most outstanding experiences of my life.

It's been a learning experience. I've learned a lot. And I look forward to passing that knowledge on to others as they've passed it on to me.

It's also been an opportunity to see how squadrons and detachments each do something just a little bit different. Everybody does something a little bit different. What works for one might not work for others. But the thing that remains a constant with the Sons of The

American Legion is the passion for what we believe in and what we stand for and the things that we share with each other and what we work for for our veterans and their families, our nation's children, community, state and nation.

I've seen history being made wherever I've gone -- some small steps, some large steps. I've seen two detachments elect commanders who followed in their father's footsteps, who were commanders, Detachment Commanders before them. I've seen a Detachment Commander for the first time who his eligibility came through his mother's service in World War II.

But still we're making history as we follow the footsteps of the ones who went ahead of us.

We are proud possessors of a priceless heritage. In March of 1919, 20 American veterans from World War I met in Paris to discuss the problems of what would be happening with the World War I veterans now that they were home.

In May of 1919, 1200 delegates met in St. Louis and adopted the name The American Legion.

And in November, in 1919, in Minneapolis, the first convention was held. Why November in Minnesota, I'll never know.

... Laughter.

But within less than one year, the membership went to over a million members. The Constitution of the Preamble were adopted. Delegates voted to move the national headquarters to Indiana instead of Washington, D.C.

In 1921, the Legion's efforts resulted in the U.S. Veterans Bureau, the forerunner of the Veterans Administration of today. The American Legion family today still continues to lobby for adequate funding for medical, disability and educational benefits of our veterans.

The first flag code was written by The American Legion and drafted in 1923. It took until 1942 for Congress to adopt it. Who said we're not diligent?

In 1925, American baseball. American Legion baseball. You know over 50 percent of all Major League ballplayers today graduated from that program?

In 1932, guess who came along? The Sons of The American Legion. We were approved and recognized in 1932

at the National Convention in Portland, Oregon. And that's where our history started.

And in 1942, the Preamble to The American Legion Constitution was changed for the first and only time since it was written in 1919. Do you know what word was changed? It was only one word. The word was changed from "war" to "wars."

In 1954, The American Legion formed the Child Welfare Foundation. Over \$11 million to date has been donated to different youth organizations.

And the Sons of The American Legion, being the largest contributor, that's something to be proud of. Go get 'em, Ohio.

... Applause.

We're now leaving our footsteps for the ones that come behind us. To keep this a visible organization, I quote one of this year's commanders, the Sons' will.

Commander Smith's fireside chats will go down as an inspiration. And it will go down in history, something that's never been done before.

The effort that everyone has put into membership this year has been outstanding. We made 100 percent goal and that's just outstanding. We continue to grow. Iowa

seemed to be cleaning up in the Central Region, though. I think he made like four trips up here.

Changes are coming to the Sons of The American Legion, and I look forward to that, moving us into the future, making us a stronger organization, a place that we can grow and something we can be proud of being members of.

I had one personal goal this year, and that was to end the year with more friends than I started with. And I have accomplished that goal. I now have more lifetime friends than I started the year out with.

Of course, some of the other things I've learned as the year went on, snowstorms can shut down national monuments. A lake bog will cause you to move your state convention. I've learned that a lake effect is a real thing. And it's also possible to have the convention without a tornado.

And when you're on a bus trip visiting other posts, I think I'll leave the singing to the experts.

I would like to thank everyone for their support throughout the year, for the programs, the Endowment Fund, the National Emergency Fund, and of course the one near and dear to our heart, the Child Welfare program.

To all you who took time to join us in the Central Region conference calls, I thank you for taking time out of your day to join us and thank you for tooting your own horn.

I will now go back home and I will shut down my Central Region command center so my wife can have the kitchen table back.

... Laughter.

And once more, thank you very much for what you do. It's been an honor and a pleasure.

That's my report. As a delegate to the 47th National Convention, I make a motion to accept my report.

JIMMY HUNTER: Jimmy Hunter, NEC, Illinois, second.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WARNER: Thank you. Any questions on the Vice Commander's report? All in favor say aye. All opposed? The ayes have it.

Vice Commander Marsden, at this time we'd like to make you a distinguished guest of this 47th National Convention.

Thank you for your hard work this year.

... Applause.

And at this time I turn the podium over to National Vice Commander Marsden.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MARSDEN: I now call on Internal Affairs Commission committeeman Don Culver for the committee report. Americanism on deck.

REPORT - INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Donald Culver, Vice Chairman
Internal Affairs Commission

Holy smokes. Good afternoon.

... Chorus of good afternoon.

First of all, before I go too far, on behalf of Internal Affairs Commission chairman Mark Tansel, I'd like to acknowledge the members of the Commission for this past year and thank them for all their efforts and support: Father Gary Gummersheimer; Jay Cook; Mike Kirschner; J.R. Hall; and then myself. It's been an interesting year.

But on to the convention committee. The IA convention committee meeting convened at 10:00 a.m., Friday, on 8/24 of '18. Eighteen detachments answered the roll call. There was a total of 41 S.A.L. members and guests present.

The delegates were briefed on the four preconvention Resolutions that the IA Commission received and reported out on at the NEC, Pre-Convention NEC Meeting that same morning.

The delegates and convention committee were also briefed on S.A.L. Resolution 1 National Convention 2018, which you vigorously discussed earlier.

Copies were passed out, and it was a spirited conversation for about 45 minutes. But it was healthy. And it's the type of conversations that we always need to have prior to getting down to the nitty-gritty of voting on a resolution.

Had to shut them down after about 45 minutes, as I said, because we had John Jennings and his Constitutional Amendments Convention Committee coming in the same room behind us.

So, I encouraged the delegates, if they wanted to continue their discussion, to join John in his meeting. And many of them did.

With no further business being brought forward, the Internal Affairs Convention Committee adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Commander, that completes my report. And as a delegate to this 47th National Convention, I make a motion that the Internal Affairs Convention Committee report be accepted.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MARSDEN: I have a motion.
Do I have a second?

DELEGATE FROM MINNESOTA: Second from Minnesota.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MARSDEN: Minnesota seconds.
Any discussion? All in favor say aye. Opposed?
Approved.

I'd like to make you a distinguished guest to our
47th National Convention.

I now call upon Americanism. Gerald Hammerschmidt.

REPORT - AMERICANISM COMMITTEE and AWARDS
Gerald Hammerschmidt, Chairman
Americanism Committee

Good afternoon.

... Chorus of good afternoon.

I do want to start off by thanking my commission, my
Americanism Commission members also, and thanking Danny.
It was an honor and a privilege to serve under Danny this
year. Thank you.

And my members, my vice chairman Jim Borgman, Ernie
Laberge, Don Allisot, Scott Merrill and Don Hall, Jr.,
Thank you. If it hadn't been for you, we wouldn't have
had as successful a year as we had. So I want to thank
you.

Our meeting started at 8:30 yesterday morning. We had 47 members and one Past Commander to get the winners from the consolidated report forms.

The winners of -- the squadron winner of the Atwood-Beyea-York Memorial Award is the Tommy Cook 122 Louisiana squadron.

... Applause.

As they're making their way up here, the district winner is district Southeast Shore Maryland.

... Applause.

And detachment winner is the Detachment of California.

... Applause.

The winners of the National Emergency Fund Award, highest per capita donation per region, are as follows: The south, Arkansas; the west, Hawaii; midwest, Nebraska; the east, Massachusetts; and the central, Missouri.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Accepting for Arkansas, National Vice Commander Cannito.

Accepting for Hawaii, National Vice Commander Ramirez.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER RAMIREZ: Aloha.

... Laughter.

At this time now, we'll have the presentation of the Community Service Scrapbook awards. We judged them at 11:00 yesterday -- or 10:30 yesterday morning. We had a good group. About 26 individuals helped. I want to thank all of them that helped with the judging.

If it wouldn't be for them, we'd still be there judging. The winners of the Scrapbook awards with detachment is Detachment of Kansas.

... Applause.

And as Kansas is making their way up, the district winner is Minnesota, District 3.

... Applause.

And the Squadron winner is Harry White Wilmer, squadron 82, La Plata, Maryland.

Again, at this time, I want to thank Danny for having me as a chairman this year for Americanism. Thank you.

At this time, as a delegate to this 47th National Convention, I make a motion that the Americanism Convention Committee Report be accepted.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MARSDEN: I have a motion to accept. Do I have a second?

MIKE SAINDON: Mike Saindon from Kansas makes that motion --

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MARSDEN: Any discussion?

DEWEY LONG: Dewey from Indiana seconds that motion.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MARSDEN: Indiana seconds.

Okay, I have a motion and a second. Any discussion? All in favor say aye. Opposed? Motion carries.

We'll make you an honored guest of the 47th National Convention.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MARSDEN: Okay, I missed one set of awards, sorry. The Legacy Scholarship Fund awards by region. Highest monetary donation is central, is Illinois, \$3,542. The east, Delaware, at a thousand dollars. The south is Florida at \$600. The midwest is Nebraska, at \$500. And the west is Alaska at \$25.

... Applause.

Thank you and congratulations to all the winners.

... Applause.

I now call on Children and Youth, Joseph Korba.

REPORT - CHILDREN AND YOUTH COMMITTEE and AWARDS
Jospeh Korba, Chairman
Children and Youth Committee

Good afternoon, Commander, members, guests. My name

is Joe Korba, and I'm the chairman of the Children and Youth Committee this year.

We met yesterday, 8:30 in the morning. The main objective of our meeting was to go over consolidated reports.

First and foremost, I'd like to thank our committee members for their hard work this year. Everyone chipped in. Everyone had a region they were assigned, and everyone got the messages out that we needed to for our programs. And I want to thank everyone for that.

The consolidated reports, this is just a highlight of what we've done. Special Olympics, \$190,909, 27,918 hours; Children's Miracle Network, \$50,110, 4,402 hours; Josh Dogs, we gave out 1,313 dogs at a cost of \$59,561; Operation: Military Kids, \$12,307, 3,891 hours; and other Children and Youth projects, \$681,451, 90,708 hours. This is a total of \$982,021, 126,000 hours. So I want to thank everyone for their donations. If it wasn't for you guys and the squadron members, we would never have been able to make that. So thank you.

And again, keep in mind that this is only 20 percent of the squadrons reported. So it's pretty amazing the

amount of money that's out there. And thank you everyone for your support.

Couple of projects that the committee has been working on is the E-newsletter, which goes out quarterly. We'll continue to do that because I think that gets the message out of the programs we have.

Facebook page. We could use your help to get messages of the programs that you do to raise your money, so we can get that out to everybody.

And Children and Youth conference, which is once a year, and getting the word out. That's what we're here to do. So please help with that as much as you can.

Right now I'd like to go into the awards that we have. The overall winner, Squadron 51, Atlanta, Georgia.

... Applause.

Winner from the East, Squadron 36, Chestertown, Maryland.

... Applause.

From the West, we have Squadron 155, Colton, California.

... Applause.

Midwest, Squadron 66, Lemmon, South Dakota.

... Applause.

From the Central Region, Squadron 90, Ashland,
Wisconsin.

... Applause.

From the South, Squadron 111, Tampa, Florida.

... Applause.

Our detachment winner, the Detachment of California.

... Applause.

And our district winner, District 11 out of Georgia.

... Applause.

Thank you, everyone, for your hard work. South
Dakota, any representatives from South Dakota? Here comes
someone.

As a delegate to the 47th National Convention, I
make a motion that the Children and Youth Convention
Committee report be accepted.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MARSDEN: I have a motion to
accept. Do I have a second?

PAUL HAYSE: Second, Paul Hayse, Detachment of
Illinois.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MARSDEN: Any discussion?

(No response.)

Hearing none, all in favor say aye. Opposed?
Motion carries.

... Applause.

I now call on Vice Commander Mark Cannito for his final report.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER REPORT
Mark Cannito, National Vice Commander - South

Commander Smith; National Vice Commanders; national officers, past and current; distinguished guests; and fellow Sons, I present to you my final report as National Vice Commander.

Because I knew it was going to be so late in the day, I'm not going to bore you with a lot of numbers that you already know.

... Applause.

And hopefully you'll find a little bit of fun in the video. So let me start with a brief overview of my visits.

First was Virginia. The hospitality provided by Steve Gower, Clint Bolt, Willie Morgan and Linwood Moore was second to none. But more importantly was the camaraderie that was shared.

Next stop was Florida, where I had the honor of spending time with a mentor and the man who nominated myself for National Vice Commander, Past National

Commander Jim Roberts, as well as a courtesy of Past National Vice Commander William Kelly.

Florida demonstrated a great amount of knowledge, experience and dedication to our process and programs, as you can tell. They're wearing out my hand with all these handshakes.

The following visit, after Florida, was to Kentucky, where Carrie and I were welcomed by Past National Vice Commander Steve Curry. Once again -- and you're seeing the slides up here -- I just lost my spot -- once again we were treated like royalty as with all visits. I was able to address the Legion family and deliver the Commander's theme and message.

Finally, it was a trip to the great state of Louisiana, where I was greeted and spent time with another mentor, Past National Vice Commander Camille LeJeune, as well as John Lawrence, who you've seen up on stage.

The time spent there with the members of the detachments was enlightening and a true southern pleasure.

My only disappointment in this whole period was not being able to make my visit to Alabama. Due to airline problems being canceled two days in a row, I did not make

it there. And I was very much looking forward to seeing my friends in the great state of Alabama.

Through my travels, there was one member of the Legion family who I ran into on more than one occasion and got to enjoy her company and friendship. I wish she was here. That would be Southern Divisional National Vice President Diane Spencer. It was always a pleasure for Carrie and I to be around her.

Other visits, travels included my trip with my Detachment adjutant, Bob Thompson, for hurricane relief in Florida, where Commander Bernie Wildrick in Jacksonville welcomed us with open arms.

Next was a Washington wreath ceremony, a once-in-a-lifetime experience, viewing soldiers at the top of their game. Now, this wasn't my first visit to the tomb. But it was my first visit on duty, let's say, and presenting a wreath. And it was truly an experience. I would recommend anybody who has an opportunity to take advantage of that.

And of course there was all national and Detachment of South Carolina conventions. I can't count the number of appearances I've attended, but it's truly inspiring to see new faces that attend.

The position of National Vice Commander requires commitment, dedication and a willingness to learn, but the rewards will make you a better Son while growing relations and better understanding of our programs and process.

As you probably don't know, I don't have a great amount of experience at the national level in South Carolina, so I relied a lot on past commanders that I knew, and they got me through this last year with the help of my partners behind me.

During my year as National Vice Commander, I've undergone many health issues which caused me to miss some conference calls. I had to have it a VA Hospital in Charleston on several occasions.

But as with most things, there are usually positives to be had. I've shared a lot of conversations with many veterans and VA employees.

And if I could say one thing about the VA system, is the kindness can't be measured. Every time I go there, they treat me like a World War II vet. Let's put it that way.

They know I want a blanket, they give me my socks, and they always do everything with a smile. I strongly encourage you to get involved with your local VA&R.

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the Southern Region for their outstanding work on membership and donations, as you can tell. I can't, nor can other Gold Caps, take credit for all the work that the Blue Caps do.

Just a couple of quick numbers. The Southern Region finished over 103 percent, meeting all target dates but one.

... Applause.

That is outstanding, South.

We ended up with almost 86 percent in renewals, a little short of our goal. And half of our detachments, half, finished over 105 percent on membership. Again, outstanding job.

Before I turn the podium back over, I must thank a few people, because that's probably one of the most important things you do: Commander Smith and my fellow NVCs for their support; the man responsible for me being here before you, unfortunately he couldn't be here, Past NEC Jim Moore; the two good friends who nominated and seconded my election, Past National Commander Jim Roberts and Past National Commander Bob McBride; my department liaison, Bill Pederson, who has been a true pillar in my

candidate year; and here's a more important one; a Son by the name of Andy Hornbuckle, the gentleman who should be standing here before you, but due to a life-changing experience had to return home to New York to raise his son as a single parent; my mother and my in-laws, who have always supported my efforts; the person that I gained my eligibility through, my father, who is no longer with us but never forgotten; but most importantly, my wife, Carrie, sitting here in the front row --

... Applause.

-- who traveled with myself to keep me out of trouble, but more importantly get me home safely. Without her support back home, I could have not managed this position.

And, of course, there is all of you. Thank you for your camaraderie and support and thank you for the privilege to be able to represent you at a national level.

Short and sweet: As delegate to this 47th National Convention, I make a motion that my National Vice Commander report be accepted.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MARSDEN: I have a motion. Do I have a second?

DELEGATE FROM VIRGINIA: Virginia seconds.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MARSDEN: Any discussion?

Hearing none, all in favor say aye. Opposed?

Motion passes.

... Applause.

I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of the 47th National Convention.

... Applause.

I'll now turn the podium over to National Vice Commander Cannito.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER CANNITO: Let me find my spot here. At this time, I'm going to call up Mr. William Kelly from the Legislative Committee.

**FINAL REPORT - LEGISLATIVE AND RULES COMMITTEE and
GEORGE B. EVANS GRASSROOTS VETERANS' ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR
William Kelly, Chairman
Legislative and Rules Committee**

Good afternoon.

... Chorus of good afternoon.

Commander Smith, National officers, fellow delegates to the Sons of The American Legion 47th Annual National Convention, we had our National Convention Legislative Rules and Committee meeting Friday, August 24th at 1130 hours.

I'd like to take a moment to recognize our commissionmen for the year, and they are our Vice Commander Tom Deal from Maryland, commissionman David Lee from New York, Richard Pfeiffer from Indiana, Bernie Kessler from Ohio and Zeste Debro from Georgia. Thank you very much, gentlemen, for an outstanding year.

... Applause.

As you heard yesterday in my first report, we accepted the rules of the convention, a very important thing to start our convention off.

But we started our legislative year this fall at the Fall Executive Committee of The American Legion with our four-point agenda. The first point was to increase active Legislative Commissions at the detachment level. Detachment commanders, how many new detachment commanders do we have in the room right here? Please stand up. I'd like you to go home --

... Applause.

We'd like you to go home and make sure that you have appointed a detachment committee or commission in your detachment legislative group. Please do. It's important. We need to start at the detachment level and make them active.

The second point was our take action, which is on The American Legion website: MobileLegion.org/takeaction. If you have that in your hand-held computer, your telephone, you can receive updates from the National. So when national American Legion legislative group has something to get out, they can get it right out to you and you can make sure that your voice is heard as a member of The American Legion family.

One of the things that we worked on this year was an important thing for our House Joint Resolution 61 and House Joint Resolution 46, which is the Flag Protection Amendment.

Every American Legion family member and especially the Sons of The American Legion should find this very important to support the Flag Protection Amendment. We have co-sponsors in the House and the Senate right now. Please encourage your Senators and your House of Representative member to support the Flag Protection Amendment.

This year the Sons of The American Legion Washington conference and our successful Legion Storms the Hill shared on social media The American Legion family as we went through Washington, D.C.

Our National Commander, Danny Smith, and 95 other Legion family members -- not just Sons of The American Legion, Legion family members -- memorialized our veterans by placing wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Korean War Memorial and the World War II Memorial.

I'd like to thank all of this year's participants for taking the time out of their schedule to come into Washington and help us out.

The 2019 Washington conference will be February 24th through 27th, 2019. Please make arrangements for it now. By getting as many people as you can into your detachment, it's important that we take advantage of one thing right now, the George B. Evans Grassroots Advocate of the Year.

The guidelines are in your National Administrative Manual. Please find someone -- with 95 people coming to Washington conference this year, we should have had at least 95 nominations. So next year please consider nominating someone for the George B. Evans award.

At this time, I would like to recognize the George B. Evans Grassroots Veteran Advocate of the Year for 2017-2018, David Perry from Squadron 173 in the Detachment

of New York. Would someone from New York please come up and accept this certificate.

... Applause.

BILL CLANCY: My name is Bill Clancy. I'm the Commander of New York. David was not able to be here this weekend, but I'm accepting it on his behalf. He's very honored to receive it. He's a terrific guy. And his commitment to our veterans is exemplary.

So we'll be presenting this to him, I believe, at our fall meeting, which will be in Lima, New York, with our new Commander, Mr. Jim Coates. And he'll be very honored. I thank you on his behalf, and I thank you guys.

... Applause.

WILLIAM KELLY: One of the suggestions that we made at the committee meeting yesterday was to put the narrative up on the website. So hopefully everyone can read the narrative and take a look at it.

I'd also like to commend the New York Detachment adjutant, Bob Avery, who submitted the application, and Greg "Doc" Gibbs for writing David's narrative. It's important to read, and you'll enjoy it.

One of the things that we'll be presenting, we hope that David will be able to attend the Fall NEC where we

can present him with his cover of the George B. Evans Veterans' Grassroot Advocate of the Year award in person.

We'd also like to request every detachment Legislative Commission first business to seek out and get more George B. Evans Veterans' Advocate of the Year award.

Finally, the Department Legislative Commission, it's important to partner up at the detachment level with your department.

The department has a lot of resources available for the legislative. Please take the time to do so. And also one of the things that's important is the legislative website, www.legion.org/legislative.

You can print out a pamphlet. This pamphlet is the one you can print out. This is the one that the Legion hands out. You don't need the color version. You can do it in black and white.

It gives you all the information for talking to your legislators, which is an important thing to have is talking points when you're talking to the legislators.

One of the things that was discussed at the meeting yesterday also was the importance of streamlining the process.

What we would like is to institute in the next few years, instead of using USPS, United States Postal Service, implementing an electronic or email application process. This is the 21st century, and hopefully we can move into it by using electronic transmission instead of the old snail mail, as you would call it.

With that, Mr. Commander, as a delegate of this, the Sons of The American Legion 47th National Convention, I'd like to make a motion that my Legislative Rules and Committee report be accepted.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER CANNITO: I have a motion to accept the Legislative and Rules Convention Committee report. Is there a second?

DEWEY LONG: Dewey Long from Indiana seconds.

CANNITO: Is there any discussion? Hearing none. All in favor say aye. Any opposed?

So be.

At this time, Mr. Kelly, I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of the 47th National Convention.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I'd like to thank my comrades back here for narc'ing me out and catching me

eating with my hat on. So here's \$50 for the Child Welfare Fund.

... Applause.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER CANNITO: Since I kept my report so short, I saved some time to exercise my privilege to recognize one of our own. Commander doesn't know about this yet. Mr. Brandon Curry, could you please rise, from Kentucky.

Sergeant-at-Arms, can you escort Mr. Curry up to the podium, please.

... Applause.

Obviously you can tell he's one of our own. His father is a Past National Vice Commander. But what you don't know, being a good friend of mine, he just recently returned from deployment.

And I want to thank him for his service, and I want to thank him for returning home safely.

... Applause.

BRANDON CURRY: Afternoon. Sit, fellas. There we go. Take charge for a moment.

I just want to say thanks to the staff. Commander Smith, thank you for your leadership this year.

As appreciation of your leadership this year, I've got something for you. I'll read it off for you, if you would approach the podium, sir.

As I was deployed to the Middle East, I was at an undisclosed location, was assigned to the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing and the 494 Fighter Wing.

So I had a flag flown for the Commander. This flag was proudly flown on an F-15E Strike Eagle on a combat sortie mission over Syria and Iraq to support Operation Inherent Resolve. I'm presenting this to you, Commander Smith.

... Applause.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER CANNITO: Commander, I appreciate your indulgence for that. At this time I need to call Mr. Hill up for his report. Sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Hill.

REPORT - FINANCE COMMITTEE
William Hill, Chairman
Finance Commission

Good afternoon. Brandon, outstanding job, sir. I'm sure your father is proud. I think I saw a tear in his eye when he walked away. Don't blame him.

Well, gentlemen, the Finance Commission, in order to save on funds and such, we don't do PowerPoints and all that stuff. And I've already submitted my report to the adjutant, so I'll make this short.

... Applause.

I first want to thank your Finance Commission members -- Dennis Blue from Minnesota, vice chair; Bob Rosenboom from Iowa, Steve Honigfort from Ohio -- I knew I'd get a good one out of that; Keith Murdough from New Hampshire; and Steve Thompson from South Carolina.

Just real quick, our meeting was held on August 24th in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order at 11:30 a.m. Central Time.

All National Finance Commission members were in attendance, as well as nine members from the National Convention finance roster, along with PNC Cook from Oklahoma and five other guests.

Topics were an update on providing regarding the National S.A.L. convention budget, which as to date is pending final reconciliation by The American Legion, pending post events from this event.

Second update was on the fiscal year 2019 budget for the S.A.L. At this time we're reconciled through May 31st

of 2018. We're on track and we have expenditures and funds in line to complete the fiscal year, which is completed December 31st, 2018.

With no further business to come before this body, we had a motion by Paul Hayse of Illinois and seconded by Robert Neal of Nebraska to adjourn. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

As a delegate to the 47th National Convention, I make a motion to accept the convention report from the Finance Commission, sir.

Sorry I took so long.

... Laughter.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER CANNITO: We have a motion to accept the Finance Committee report. Is there a second?

DOUG HEISER: Doug Heiser, Detachment of Indiana, seconds the motion.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER CANNITO: Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye. Any opposed? Passed.

At this time I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of the 47th National Convention.

... Applause.

At this time I'd like to call up National Vice Commander Joseph Navarrete.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER REPORT
Joseph Navarrete, National Vice Commander - Midwest

I had the honor and privilege of visiting four different states for their mid-winter conferences and conventions, including one state that was outside the Midwest Region.

These visits were a highlight of my year, spreading the Commander's message. "Following their footsteps, making history" was well received by all.

While traveling, each and every state provided the best hospitality and made me feel right at home.

While in Texas, it was easy to see how much the Detachment of Texas supported not only the Legion family, but the entire community. Hurricane Harvey hit the region hard. And if it wasn't for their efforts, several communities would have been left without support.

They even created the Texas Emergency Fund to help those who suffered losses during the hurricane.

I was told of a small squadron near the veterans home -- or hospital that volunteered so many hours that it

was hard to believe that such a small group helped out so much.

Their motto: Work hard; play hard.

I also had the privilege of learning what noodling was.

... Laughter.

Thank you, Texas.

Colorado, what can I say about my neighboring state to the north? Their work for the Child Welfare Foundation is unsurpassed, leading the region in donations with over \$28,000 and fourth in the nation overall. What an amazing job. Congratulations.

Squadron 38 out of Security, Colorado, created an amazing burn pit for the retirement of flags. This project was started by the Sons and the entire Legion family who pitched in to help make it such a huge success, following their motto, Fund for the Sons.

I also had the honor and the privilege of installing their officers with a little bit of help from Past National Commander Mike Moss. Thank you very much.

Wyoming held their Christmas in July. This was by far one of the most memorable visits so far. You see,

this took me back to what it means to be a Son, supporting our veterans and their families.

Our day was spent at the Veterans' Home of Wyoming where in the morning we spent time clearing brush from the nature paths, cutting and stacking firewood, and holding a fishing derby for the veterans there at the home.

After the derby was completed, we fed all the veterans outside under their huge gazebo. Spending time with these veterans, sharing a meal was a highlight to many who rarely venture outside the home.

Jim Slanker, a dual member out of Squadron 7, provided a history of all his work for veterans and their families, including his own struggle as a veteran. He's one of the many advocates the Legion family has in Wyoming and a true asset.

Iowa was a true pleasure and honor to visit. Being the home of the first Triple Nickel Award winner, it really shows their true dedication to membership.

This trip was also very special to me, being the first visitation outside of my region, I had the opportunity to learn from the Central Region's leader in membership.

Their detail to process review, communication and group participation showed how they stay on top of their programs and membership. Past National Commander Michael Deacon provided guidance throughout all meetings and provided mentorship, not just to the members in attendance, but also to myself.

Seth Rippe, our national membership chairman, was also in attendance and addressed the convention. Along with highlighting our membership year, Seth commented on how important it is to honor those who provided our eligibility in this great organization.

You see, Seth is a member of the Detachment of Nebraska, all while living in Iowa. And he does this to honor his grandfather's service who lived in Nebraska and what so many of us do as well.

This year has been a year of change. And in closing, I leave you with one last thought: Change is difficult. And while some of the little changes may not seem to make a difference, you need to remember small ripples in water can turn into a tsunami if we all get behind it.

As a delegate of this 47th National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion, I move to accept my report.

DELEGATE FROM WYOMING: Wyoming seconds.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER CANNITO: Okay. We have a motion and we have a second. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor say aye. Any opposed? Passed.

At this time, National Vice Commander, I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of the 47th convention.

At this time, I'm done. I'll turn the podium over to National Vice Commander Ramirez.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER REPORT

Donald Ramirez, National Vice Commander - West

Good morning. I should say good afternoon. Bear with me while I put on my other eyes because these other two eyes don't work.

I want to begin by first thanking all the regions -- the Western Region, all the detachments in that region, especially Arizona, Idaho and Washington, which did a fine job. They're still working on it, and I really appreciate that.

The success of The American Legion programs depends largely upon us, and we do a good job. Thank you all for that.

I want to personally thank four Past National Commanders: Kevin Collier from Alaska; Gene Sacco from California; Michael Seaton and Robert Faust from California, who were there when I made some mistakes on my emails and taught me how to redo them and make them look right. Thank you.

This year I've had my ups and downs with my major surgeries and back surgeries, but if it wasn't for Mr. Joe Roberts and Michael Fox and Matt Parsons, I would not have been able to perform as well as I have. Thank you.

To our National Commander, who made a commitment and a promise in the beginning -- he said he would back us in anything that happens so long as we emailed him and cc'd him on all of our emails. Thank you again for that promise.

My visit to the Washington conference, I was able to bring my father, Albert J. Ramirez, Sergeant First Class, a World War II veteran. And he's in the room today. Dad, please stand up.

... Applause.

He's my reason for being here. He got me involved here 20 years ago -- I've been a member 44 years ago. We really started in Okinawa. I would have had 55 years if we kept going. But when we went back into the States, he didn't get involved until about 1960--something in California.

I want to thank Jack Youngs from Idaho my very first visit. He was there to take care of me and made sure all this camaraderie was there. I learned a lot at the detachment convention, and I want to thank him for everything. He became a good friend. And the knife that I couldn't bring back home on the plane, so they mailed it to me.

I want to thank a young man coming up in a minute, Mr. Jack Parsons -- but he's not coming up yet -- who will be going places in the future.

He's going to become one of our new leaders in California, I guarantee you that. He's a great speaker. And he's very informal, and I think he's going to be a good commander one day for the detachment.

I want to thank Phillip Cook from New Hampshire and his lovely mom who was there to make sure I had three square meals a day, and I was well taken care of while I

was there. Their camaraderie at the end of their meeting was great.

I got to meet the women juniors, who impressed me how much they do. They also donated a check for \$10,000 to CWF while I was there. And I think that was one of the greatest things I've ever saw in my whole time on my visits. But thank you, Phillip Cook, Scott Merrill and Mr. Murdough.

And then I went over to -- we had a western rendezvous in Las Vegas, Nevada. If you have a chance to be there, come out. It's a great program with a lot of leadership. We had Paul Brown there helping us out, teaching us what we need to get back to, which is our mission statement as the Sons of The American Legion.

And then after there I went to the Washington conference, and there I really had a good time. It was not a normal convention that you would think of.

We were in a campground area, and it was outside with a big barnlike, and it was very outstanding because I saw all the women, the Auxiliary, the men -- even though they don't like to be called the Auxiliary; they wanted to be called the Women of the Sons -- and the Legionnaires

all working together for one ambition, and that was the programs of The American Legion to raise money.

I then left there, coming home back to California, and I was able to experience something I hadn't experienced in a long time. It was the camaraderie of my own post. They wanted to put on a program for me at the end of the year as a homecoming, which I wasn't expecting. But we plan on doing a Hawaiian luau. If anyone can make it, I'll let you know.

At this time, I'd like the members of the commission to the 47th National Convention -- I'd like you to accept my report as made. I make a motion. Thank you.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER CANNITO: We have a motion. Do I have a second to accept National Vice Commander Ramirez's report?

DELEGATE FROM ALASKA: Alaska seconds.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER CANNITO: Any discussion? All those in favor say aye. Any opposed? Passed.

I now turn the podium over to you. I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th National Convention. Now the podium is yours.

... Applause.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER RAMIREZ: Two more things. One more thing I really should have done, to my lovely wife, Adele Vargas. I can't see this far, so I don't know if she's in the front row or with my dad. I don't know. Anyway, we've been together 31 years, and she's been my major supporter of everything I've done and all of my time. But thank you, Adele. I love you.

... Applause.

As we say in Hawaii [speaking Hawaiian]. And now Jack Parsons. I'd like to introduce you to Jack Parsons, our new future leader. He's going to be my spirit.

JACK PARSONS: Okay. So I'm not the National Vice Commander Don Ramirez. I'm much younger and better looking.

... Laughter.

But Don's a better dancer. My name is Jack Parsons, and I'm 16 years old. I'm standing here embodying the spirit of Don Ramirez, the spirit of why he and a lot of people in this room joined the Sons of The American Legion.

I joined this organization almost 100 years ago.

Okay. Not really. Love you, Don.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER RAMIREZ: I joined to honor my father, World War II veteran Albert Ramirez, who is in the audience and whom you met at the last convention.

My dad is my hero, my inspiration, and the reason why I am proud to have been your National Vice Commander for the Western Region.

I had the privilege of visiting many detachments and places as your National Vice Commander. Probably the most special to me and my family was during Legislative Day in Washington, D.C., when my dad, for the first time ever, got to visit the World War II Memorial.

I sincerely thank you for that opportunity and I love you, Dad. Each one of us joins this organization to honor the legacy that our family earned by serving in the Armed Forces of this great nation.

This is that inner drive to honor, thank and enrich the lives of your heroes that binds us together as Sons of The American Legion.

We all strive to make the lives of veterans, first responders and their families better. It is our common bond in this endeavor that makes us brothers.

The Sons brotherhood should be fueled by the passion and experiences of each and every one of us. Share your

story, your vision and your passion for the Sons of The American Legion.

Lead by example and never expect people to do things for you. Do what is right even when people aren't watching or it isn't the popular thing to do.

Be the positive change and direction you want to see and this organization deserves.

Respect our veterans, our first responders, their families and your brothers and sisters in the Legion family.

Serve with honor and gratitude for those who came before you, and pave the way for the freedoms you enjoy.

When given the opportunity to lead, leave no doubt that you're the right person for the task. We are all proud possessors of a priceless heritage. Don't ever take that for granted.

People say war doesn't solve anything. I always respond with: Except for ending slavery, fascism, Naziism and communism. You're right, war has never solved anything. But those are some very good things, good examples of what war has ended.

The American warrior does not fight because he hates who is in front of him; he fights because he loves who is behind him.

Thank you, Legionnaires, for your personal sacrifices and faithful military service. I hold my freedom dear because of all of you. May God bless all of you and The American Legion family. Thank you for a great year.

... Applause.

Delegates to the 47th National Convention, I would like -- I'm sorry, I'm starting all over again. Thank you.

I'd like to have Public & Media Communications Chairman Michael Fox please come up and give his report. And on deck would be Credentials final report.

FINAL REPORT - CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE
Michael Fox, Chairman
Public & Media Communications

Good afternoon, everybody.

... Chorus of good afternoon.

How is everybody doing this afternoon? A long day? I hear that one, right?

Well, greetings, members and guests. The Public &

Media Communication Commission has been busier than ever this past year working on several projects with many different committees and commissions.

It always seemed that the assistance was requested on a new project before we could complete the last one, but we worked together hard and never missed a deadline.

I'm thankful for the assistance on the Commission of some of the most dedicated members in this organization -- vice chairman Damon Bradtmueller from Indiana, Doug Evans from Kansas, Casey Lenort from Minnesota, Mark McCue from Massachusetts, Brandon Roberts from Georgia, Michael Pfeiffer from Indiana; and the late, great Wes Wills. May he rest in peace.

We believe that to bring this wonderful organization forward we need to brand ourselves. We need a way to start to become a household name. Take the good deeds that we do and let the general public know outside of our four walls who we are, what we stand for and all that we accomplish.

After my report, I will be in the back of the room and I have a thumb drive for every detachment. So if your detachment adjutant is here, please come see in the back because we've branded every video that's been created so

far for you to utilize in your detachment for whatever you think can move this organization forward in a positive light outside of our four walls.

One of the great tools in utilizing social media is Facebook. Social media is a free way to share what we do and why we do it. Let's all use it, and every time we use it, let's start something new with a #salstrong, because together we are strong.

Another thing that I'd like to announce is on January 1st there's an historic event that's happening. The American Legion family will once again have a float in the nationally recognized Rose Bowl Parade. The National Commander from The American Legion, the S.A.L., and the National Auxiliary president will be in attendance along with family members from all over the country.

This will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for all of us to be there. Some of the events that will be taking place that you will be able to attend is a black-tie cocktail dinner with celebrities in attendance, access to the Rose Bowl Hall of Fame ceremony, the ability to attend Hollywood's New Year's Eve party, also the opportunity to attend the 105th annual Rose Bowl game.

These are just a few of the things. So please check out the table outside of Emblem Sales and gather the information.

Now, getting to everyone's favorite part, we have some awards. If I can have a representative from Florida, Squadron 137; Colorado, Squadron 70; Michigan, Squadron 63; and California, Squadron 155 please come up.

Snapshots of Service. One of the four pillars that we promote very strong in our organization is Americanism.

The second-place winner for Americanism, the Detachment of Florida, Squadron 137.

... Applause.

The first-place winner for Americanism, Detachment of Colorado, Squadron 70.

... Applause.

Second place, Children and Youth, from the Detachment of California, Squadron 155.

First-place winner for Children and Youth, Detachment of Michigan, Squadron 63.

... Applause.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, second-place winner, the Detachment of Florida, Squadron 137.

... Applause.

And our first-place winner, from the Detachment of Florida, Squadron 137.

... Applause.

The Public & Media Communications would like to thank everybody that submitted. Please continue to submit. And remember, the easiest way to submit, use the website -- social media is the key to our future -- snapshotsofservice.org. Thank you.

As a duly elected delegate to the 47th National Convention, I make a motion that the Public & Media Communications Commission report be accepted.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER RAMIREZ: We have a motion. Do we have a second?

DEWEY LONG: Dewey Long from Indiana seconds.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER RAMIREZ: From Indiana, second. Any discussion? Seeing no, a vote aye for yes and nay for no. All for ayes? Any nays?

Motion carried.

Public & Media Affairs Communications Michael Fox, I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of the 47th National Convention. Thank you, sir, for a job well done.

... Applause.

Okay, Credentials Committee, Mr. Howard Thompson.

HOWARD THOMPSON: One correction. On a Friday, the delegate count should have been 920.

At the close of registration, Saturday, we had 49 detachments, 920 delegates, 48 alternates and 96 guests at the 47th National Convention. And I will not go back through and read all the detachments since there is no change.

... Applause.

As a duly elected delegate to the 47th National Convention, Sons of The American Legion, I move for the acceptance of my report.

JIMMY HUNTER: Jimmy Hunter, Illinois, seconds, for the last report.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER RAMIREZ: Motion and second. Any discussion? All those in favor say aye. All those no, nay.

Motion carried.

On behalf of the 47th National Convention, we'd like to make you a distinguished guest. Thank you very much, sir.

... Applause.

Okay, at this time I want to know if there are any donations. If you have donations, come to your right and come up this way.

DONATIONS

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I'll start the donations off. I did receive another check that was actually made out to me for the Endowment Fund. So I went ahead and deposited that and made out a personal check for \$100 for the Endowment Fund.

And I also received a \$1,000 check from the Detachment of New York for the Commander's Project while I was on visitation there. Thank you, New York. This will go to the Endowment Fund.

... Applause.

DELEGATE FROM PENNSYLVANIA: On behalf of the Detachment of Pennsylvania, I have a check here for The American Legion National Emergency Fund in the amount of \$5,403.

... Applause.

DELEGATE FROM MICHIGAN: The Detachment of Michigan proudly wishes to donate to the national Legacy Scholarship Fund a check for \$500.

... Applause.

DAVID BLAIR: From Texas, I am giving -- this is from me, David Blair -- \$100 to Child Welfare. And see how many of you alternates or you NECs can match that.

From the state of Texas, we're giving \$460 to Child Welfare. For Emergency Fund, \$428.50 from Killeen. I can't read this one. To National Emergency Fund, from Post 388, \$460. From Robert Sonyea [phonetic] from 388, \$45 to the American NEF. Thank you.

... Applause.

DELEGATE FROM NEW YORK: From the Detachment of New York, for The American Legion Legacy Fund, a check for \$3,285.

... Applause.

DELEGATE FROM KENTUCKY: From the Detachment of Kentucky, we have \$300 for Children and Youth, and \$400 for CWF.

... Applause.

DELEGATE FROM ILLINOIS: From the Detachment of Illinois, Child Welfare Foundation, \$2,200; National Emergency Fund, \$4,640; National Endowment Fund, \$150; Operation Comfort Warrior, \$750; the Legacy Scholarship Fund, \$211; and I have a \$1,000 donation from Squadron 979, Bartonville, Illinois, for \$1,000, Legacy Fund.

... Applause.

DELEGATE FROM VIRGINIA: Good afternoon. From the Detachment of Virginia, Squadron 284, we have \$200 for NEF. For CWF, Squadron 180, \$3,500. Squadron 284, \$200; Squadron 49, \$150; and Squadron 67, \$100.

... Applause.

DAVE MINELL: Good afternoon. Dave Minell from the Detachment of Michigan, also proud participant of the Legion Legacy Run this year. I have three checks from the detachment. One's from Chapter 14, Birmingham-Troy, in the amount of \$300.

I have another check from our 18th district, in the amount of \$500 for the Legacy. And finally is from the Sons of The American Legion Squadron 233 in the amount of \$500 for the Legacy Fund.

... Applause.

DELEGATE FROM VERMONT: Detachment of Vermont is proud to contribute another \$1,931 to CWF.

... Applause.

DELEGATE FROM IOWA: From the Detachment of Iowa, we have \$500 for the National Emergency Fund and \$1,000 to the Legacy Scholarship Fund.

DELEGATE FROM IDAHO: From the Detachment of Idaho, \$841 to CWF.

DELEGATE FROM NEBRASKA: From Papillion Squadron No. 32, Nebraska, \$250, National Emergency Fund.

DELEGATE FROM NEBRASKA: Detachment of Nebraska, American Legion Endowment Fund, \$2,000.

DELEGATE FROM FLORIDA: Good afternoon, everybody. You guys can do better than that. I know it's after lunch. Good afternoon, everybody.

... Chorus of good afternoon.

The Detachment of Florida has had a banner year under our detachment commander's leadership. Immediate Past Commander Bernie Wildrick and the over 19,000 members of the Sons of The American Legion in our detachment this year have made several donations.

So far the Legacy Scholarship Fund, \$500. To the National Emergency Fund, \$5,740. And to start off our year for the Child Welfare Foundation, \$10,135.

... Applause.

DELEGATE FROM ILLINOIS: From Rantoul, Illinois, Squadron 287, we have a check for \$100 for CWF, \$100 for the National Endowment Fund. Illinois supports two Fisher houses, one at the Hines VA in the Chicago metro area and

one at Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis, Missouri. We have a check of \$100 for each house, \$100 for the National Emergency Fund and \$500 for the Legacy Fund.

DELEGATE FROM LOUISIANA: The Detachment of Louisiana, we have \$1,550 for Child Welfare, \$150 to the NEF and \$150 to the Endowment Fund.

DELEGATE FROM CALIFORNIA: Squadron 365, Vista, California, got \$200 for Child Welfare Foundation.

... Applause.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER RAMIREZ: Thank you all. I now turn the podium back over to National Commander Danny Smith. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you all for all those donations. We're going to have a final total later. Tomorrow I will give you the final totals of actual dollars donated or invested -- I really like to say invested -- but dollars invested in the programs, the hours and the value of those service hours. We'll give you that report tomorrow.

You know what? It's only 2:05. I think we're doing good, but I've got a little business I need to clean up. J.J., I think we forgot to make you a distinguished guest.

On behalf of our delegation, I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of the 47th National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion.

... Applause.

Chaplain Noble, please come forward. Donna, are you out there?

She's probably out smoking.

... Laughter.

I love those smokers. They pay a lot of tax.

Chaplain Noble, I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of this 47th National Convention.

... Applause.

She's going to have to wait, I guess. She showed up? Come on forward. You know, you hear about the person behind the scenes. This is definitely it.

... Applause.

Absolutely. Give her a round of applause, a warm welcome.

... Applause.

Donna, I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of this 47th annual National Convention.

... Applause.

I was going to wait until tomorrow, but that's not really fair. Thank you for -- I was going to wait until tomorrow, but that's not fair. I appreciate everything you've done in support of me and getting me to where I need to be. Everybody knows I'm not a very good driver. I'm a better sleeper. I spend more time sleeping in the car when we go by car.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

But at this time are there any other announcements? Vice Commanders, do you have any announcements? Sure, come on forward.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER MARSDEN: The Central Region will meet over here in this corner, my left, your right.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER NAVARRETE: The Midwest will be meeting on the left.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER WARNER: Eastern Region, right here in the center.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER CANNITO: Southern Region, over by the exit signs, to your left.

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER RAMIREZ: Okay, we'll meet at the bar, the Western Region.

... Laughter and applause.

And it's on the Commander.

... Laughter.

Anyway, let's just meet straight in the middle. Oh, all right. Take this corner. Okay, we'll go to the back corner. How's that? That's closer to the bar. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Oh, boy. Sounded like you all was from the West there for a little bit.

... Laughter.

This convention will now stand in recess. Remember, tomorrow morning we'll convene at 8:00 a.m., early start. Please be here on time.

Please rise. Join me in saluting our colors by the numbers.

. . . At this time, the delegation rose and rendered a right-hand salute to the Colors.

Hand salute. One. Two.

We'll now stand in recess until tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m.

... At 2:12 p.m., the Convention was recessed to reconvene the following day, August 26, 2018, at 8:00 a.m.

Third Day

Sunday, August 26, 2018

... On Sunday, August 26, 2018, at 8:03 a.m., the delegates assembled for the 47th Annual National Convention, and the following proceedings were had:

CALL TO ORDER and SALUTE TO THE COLORS
Danny Smith, National Commander

The colors of our country being in place, join me in a hand salute by the numbers.

. . . At this time, the delegation rose and rendered a right-hand salute to the Colors.

One. Two.

I call on National Chaplain James Noble for the invocation. Please uncover.

INVOCATION
James Noble, National Chaplain

Heavenly Father, how quick we have come to this time, our final day of convention. We have shared many hours of camaraderie. We have celebrated our accomplishments and learned from our mistakes, all under Your guiding hand.

As we complete this year of service and begin our new programs, we give thanks for everything that You do for us and for our leaders that You have given us.

We pray that You continue to stand beside us as we complete this year's journey. In Your holy name we pray, amen.

... Chorus of amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: National Vice Commander Don Ramirez, please come forward and lead us in the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Donald Ramirez, National Vice Commander

... At this time, the delegation recited the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: You may recover. Be seated.

FATHER GARY GUMMERSHEIMER: Mr. Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Sir.

FATHER GARY GUMMERSHEIMER: Point of privilege, sir. Father Gary.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Absolutely.

FATHER GARY GUMMERSHEIMER: I'm sure by now all of us have heard of the passing of Senator McCain of Arizona.

In my name, and I hope in the name of all of us gathered here, I wish to express my condolences to the delegation from Arizona on the loss of a true friend to the people of Arizona.

Senator McCain was a hero, he was a public servant, but most importantly he was a statesman. He tried his very best to walk across the aisles and do what was best for the people, a lesson we could all learn -- and I think especially Congress in these days.

So I ask through the Chair, if we could please rise for a moment of silence in remembrance of Senator McCain.

... At this time, the delegation observed a moment of silence.

Eternal rest grant unto him, oh Lord, let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul rest in peace.

Thank you, Mr. Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: You may cover.

At this time I would like to appoint Ed Sheubrooks as Acting Judge Advocate for the remainder of the meeting.

Roll call. National Adjutant Wright will now call the roll.

ROLL CALL

... The National Adjutant, Anthony W. Wright, called the Roll, and the following members were present:

NATIONAL OFFICERS

National Commander
Danny J. Smith (NE)

National Vice Commanders

Kenneth P. Warner (PA)
Mark A. Cannito (SC)
Jay E. Marsden (MO)
Joseph R. Navarette (NM)
Donald S. Ramirez (CA)

National Adjutant
Anthony W. Wright (PA)

National Assistant Adjutant Emeritus
Harold E. Thompson, Jr. (NE) - EXCUSED

National Assistant Adjutants

James "Ed" Sheubrooks (FL)
Robert J. Avery (NY)
David M. Ridenhour (IN)
Scott A. Williams (VA)
Scott J. Thornton (OH)
Jeffrey E. Hicks (NJ)

National Chaplain
James Noble (NJ)

National Historian
Jerry J. Cole (NE)

National Judge Advocate

Joseph Paviglianti (NY) - EXCUSED

National Sergeant-At-Arms

George B. Sevick, Jr. (NE)

National Assistant Sergeant-At-Arms

Brian K. Waters (PA)

Lyle G. Larson (KS)

Raymond P. Giehll, III (IN)

Matthew Chebro (GA) - ABSENT

Gregory A. Falco (NY)

David L. Rippe (NE)

Past National Commanders

Jeffrey C. Frain (AZ) - EXCUSED

Michael K. Seaton (CA)

Robert A. McBride (OH) - EXCUSED

J.R. Stillwell (IL)

John J. Smolinsky (MA) - ABSENT

Robert H. Faust (CA)

James R. Hartman (MD)

Gregory D. Reis (IL) - ABSENT

Grant M. Jamieson (MI) - ABSENT

Charles E. Gannon (MD)

John M. Sherrard (CA) - ABSENT

David P. Stephens (IN)

Christopher R. Cerullo (NY)

Frederick L. Hartline (OH) - EXCUSED

Douglas P. Bible (MN)

Richard L. League (MD) - ABSENT

David R. Faust (WI)

Robert A. Worrel (IN) - ABSENT

Eugene L. Sacco (CA)

Roland D. Matteson (AZ) - ABSENT

Joseph M. Mayne (MN)

John T. Dietz (KY) - ABSENT

Jack E. Jordan (TX) - ABSENT

William E. Matoska (MD)

Byron J. Robichaux (LA)

Richard L. Cook (OK)

Kevin N. Winkelmann (TX) - ABSENT

Clifford A. Smith (MA)

Steven C. Laws (NC)

Neal C. Warnken (KS)
 Michael J. Deacon (IA)
 William L. Sparwasser (MD) - ABSENT
 Earl R. Ruttkofsky (MI)
 Raymond P. Giehll, Jr. (IN) - ABSENT
 Thomas E. Cisna (IL) - EXCUSED
 Mark E. Arneson (GA) - ABSENT
 David L. Dew (TX) - ABSENT
 James K. Roberts, III (FL)
 Christopher J. Huntzinger (PA)
 Joseph W. Gladden (MD)
 Michael W. Moss (CO)
 Kevin L. Collier (AK)
 Brian J. O'Hearne (MA) - ABSENT

Roll Call of Detachments

Alabama
 Alaska
 Arizona
 Arkansas - ABSENT
 California
 Colorado
 Connecticut
 Delaware
 Florida
 France
 Georgia
 Hawaii - ABSENT
 Idaho - ABSENT
 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
 Philippines - ABSENT
 Puerto Rico - ABSENT
 Rhode Island
 South Carolina
 South Dakota - ABSENT
 Tennessee - ABSENT
 Texas
 Utah
 Vermont
 Virginia
 Washington
 West Virginia
 Wisconsin
 Wyoming

Commander, that completes roll call; you have a quorum.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I know it's a little early. Nebraska, keep working on it. You'll get there.

... Laughter.

Practice a few more times before you come next year.

If you can't have fun with your own detachment, what can you do?

**INTRODUCTION OF 2018 NATIONAL SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
COLOR GUARD CHAMPIONS
and CLYDE STILLWELL MEMORIAL AWARD AND GUIDEON**

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Every year we have the distinct honor of introducing the Sons of The American Legion National Color Guard Champions.

This year it's doubly an honor: Not only did they win the Sons of The American Legion competition, it's my understanding that they also won the overall competition that includes The American Legion Color Guard.

So congratulations to the District 12 California Color Guard.

... Applause.

Please join me in welcoming District 12 of California National Color Guard Champions.

... Applause.

What an awesome job. Not only National Color Guard Champions for the Sons of The American Legion but the overall winners.

You guys -- you're fantastic. And I know you put in hours and hours and hours of training to look as sharp as you do. And I appreciate that, and I know California appreciates it. So keep up the great work.

We're going to present you with the Clyde Stillwell Memorial Award.

2018 Clyde Stillwell Memorial Trophy, National Color Guard Champions, Sons of The American Legion.

Congratulations --

... Applause.

-- Certificate of Participation. Detachment of California, District 12, Sons of The American Legion of Merced, California, is awarded this Certificate of Appreciation in recognition for active participation in the 100th National Convention in Minnesota. Presented by The American Legion this 24th day of August 2018 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Signed: Daniel Wheeler, National Adjutant, and Denise H. Rowan, Commander of The American Legion.

... Applause.

More hardware. The American Legion National Champions Advancing and Retiring of the Colors, awarded to District 12, California, 100th National Convention of The American Legion, August 24th, 2018. Congratulations.

... Applause.

Your National Champions 2018 Advancing and Retiring of the Colors American Legion banner.

... Applause.

National Champions 2018 Color Guard Sons of The American Legion.

... Applause.

I think this is probably a little bit of a bittersweet competition for this group. I've been informed by Dave Smith that he will be retiring. I'm sure -- I hope that they're able to find somebody that can at least try to fill your shoes and keep this Color Guard going.

I appreciate all your work and dedication to the organization and your friendship. And at this time I'd like to make you all distinguished guests of our 47th National Convention.

... Applause.

Ladies and gentlemen, your National Champions!

... Applause.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL SERVICE

Sergeant-at-Arms, please secure the doors. I will now turn the podium over to National Chaplain James Noble for the Memorial Service.

. . . At this time, National Chaplain James Noble conducted the Sons of The American Legion National

Memorial Service.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you, Chaplain.

You may recover.

**SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS
ELECTION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS**

We have come now to a very special order of business, the election of national officers.

At this time, I want to call upon National Judge Advocate -- Acting Judge Advocate Ed Sheubrooks of Florida who will read the Rules of the Convention governing the nomination and election of officers.

ACTING JUDGE ADVOCATE SHEUBROOKS: Rules of the National nomination, election of national officers.

Voting shall be by acclamation except when a roll call is determined by the chairman of three detachments.

The National Commander shall appoint, subject to approval of the convention, a Judge of Election and such number of tellers as he deems necessary, provided that the total number of tellers is an odd number.

In a contested election, each candidate going to the ballot shall be entitled to one teller of his choice.

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 unless otherwise specified.

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.

All nomination speeches are limited to only official delegates of the Sons of The American Legion National Convention with appropriate Sons of The American Legion cap and National Convention Delegate badge.

If there's only one candidate nominated for an office, elections shall be by acclamation, except when the roll call is requested by the chairman of at least three detachments.

When two or more candidates are nominated for any office, balloting shall continue until one candidate receives a majority of the votes of the convention, except in the election of National Vice Commander.

The elections for National Vice Commanders, the Adjutant shall poll all detachments in alphabetical order by areas, at which time each detachment may nominate, second or pass.

All Vice Commanders shall be nominated in the single roll call. The Adjutant shall determine if there's any area that has more than one candidate nominated whose elections shall be voted upon separately.

The Commander shall then call for the election of all nominated candidates, being no two candidates from any one area.

Candidates from each area shall run only against other candidates from that area.

The convention will nominate and elect a National Commander and five National Vice Commanders in this sequence and as required in the Article VI of the National Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion.

Mr. Commander, this completes the reading of the rules pertaining to the nomination and election of national officers.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: As chairman of this convention, I will now appoint as Judge of the Elections J.R. Stillwell -- are you here? -- from Illinois; as tellers of the elections Robert Avery of New York, Jeffrey Hicks and Scott Thornton. If you gentlemen would all please join us on the stage.

I will now entertain a motion to accept these appointments.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: NEC Blair.

JIMMY HUNTER: Jimmy Hunter, Illinois, so moves.

DELEGATE FROM NEW JERSEY: New Jersey seconds.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you. We have a motion to accept these appointments and duly seconded.

Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed, no. Motion carried.

I believe these gentlemen are working their way forward. At this time I will excuse the National Vice Commanders. You may join your detachments.

... Applause.

Absolutely, give them a hand. Outstanding job.

Call on National Adjutant who will proceed with the roll call for nominations of the office of National Commander.

ELECTION OF NATIONAL COMMANDER

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 a nomination or pass.

And at this time I'm going to request that everyone use the microphone.

Alabama.

DELEGATE FROM ALABAMA: Alabama yields to New York.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Alabama yields to New York.

DELEGATE FROM NEW YORK: Mr. Adjutant, New York would like to request permission for our own Past National Commander, Mr. Christopher Cerullo, approach the podium for purposes of a nomination.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Permission granted.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER CERULLO: I'll tell you, in my day the homing pigeons worked great. Everything got delivered on time.

(Referring to malfunctioning video.)

Good morning. Good morning. Whenever I have the chance to come before this body, I always say what a beautiful picture from where I came from in this organization. I thank each and every one of you for being in this room.

Over the course of the 100 years' history of The American Legion family, we've had a lot of great leaders

from the state of New York. And I've been blessed to know many of them, all the way back to Maurice Stember.

As you saw the music, we had a video set, but it didn't work out, that I was working on.

So today I come before you -- I come before you to add a new name, a new name to that list of great leaders from the great state of New York to join with their dreams to keep the purpose and focus on the care of -- for our veterans, our community, and our youth.

A great leader is a person who aspires to be the best he can be, create a path for us to achieve more than we thought we could. This person gives a sense of courage, the symbol of a result of both in-born personal skills and drawn from hard work and earned, so to speak. I'm honored to know such a person, and even more honored to call him a friend and a fellow New Yorker.

National Commander Danny, National Adjutant, Past National Commanders, American Legion family and delegates and alternates to this convention, I'm talking about Mr. Greg "Doc" Gibbs.

Doc Gibbs hails from the western portion of New York, the state where he holds a life membership in Squadron 527, Hamburg, New York.

... Applause.

Where he has been an active member for 20 years, and it's worth noting that Post Union Squadron is one of the largest posts in our Department of New York.

He was born in the city of Buffalo, New York. Earned his membership through his father who served in the Marines in World War II in the Pacific. Mr. Gibbs' profession can be summed up in two words: Giving back.

Doc chose to become an educator and returned to his community which he receives -- he's currently a professor in the State of New York system and holds a doctorate and Ph.D. in Buffalo State University. This is one of the reasons why he's called "Doc."

While helping to educate our youth, he also became actively involved ensuring veterans had a better opportunity for admissions in the school and involvement in a veterans group-friendly campus community.

Doc's Legion family career has been just as stellar and years again focused on giving back. He has served on Squadron County District Detachment, Detachment Commander 2011-2012.

He furthered his input in The American Legion family by serving the national organization by serving as

National Children and Youth Committee chairman, chairman of Americanism. He's served as National Vice Commander 2014-2015.

He has served as judge for the National Oratorical Contest and was a member of the committee which organized The American Legion Samsung Scholarship Association in 2016. He was further recognized by National Commander Paul Morin with the national award for improvement and impacting education.

I'd like to thank The American Legion, because I've never seen a two-year candidate be asked to be part of so many programs in The American Legion. The National organization saw what the Department of New York saw in Doc. Thank you, American Legion.

Doc also is a very committed husband and father. He's been blessed to be married to his wife for 45 years, Pam. He has a son and daughter, and with Pam they're all members of The American Legion family. And I say to Pam: I hope you get to travel with Doc because we would like to share you with the rest of the country.

Doc's campaign slogan: "Respect for the past; leadership for the future." This is a great statement for

our organization. We have an incredible past but continue to build the future.

But my fellow Past National Commanders, he knows what it took to get to the stage today, and everything you guys have done will go to the future of this organization.

The American Legion is celebrating its 100th anniversary. There's no better timely theme with experience, knowledge, dedication and commitment of Greg Doc Gibbs. We will do just that: Give respect to the past and true leadership for the future.

I'd personally like to thank Doc and Pam for letting me be part of their special day. In 1973 I marched with the Past Department Commanders of The American Legion in Hawaii, never thinking in 2018-'19 I'd be on the stage nominating a National Commander of this organization.

At this time, I would ask the State Commander of The American Legion and State Adjutant to please stand of the Department of New York.

... Applause.

Please remain standing. When I say I waited 35 years to do this, the whole department waited 35 years for another candidate. I did it once before for some guy named Cliff Smith, and he worked out for Massachusetts.

We'll see what happens. But I'd like to see the whole department please stand up.

... Applause.

And please remain standing. You know, I'm delivering these words. Doc's the man that opened so many doors and made this possible. But without our Legion family back in New York, this never would have happened. Thank each and every one of you.

And join with me as I repeat these words: Delegates and alternates of this 47th National Convention, as a duly elected delegate of the great state of New York and on behalf of the detachment, as we enter into the 100th year of The American Legion, it is my pleasure and honor to place into nomination for National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion 2018-2019 a man who will lead us into the future: Mr. "Doc" Gregory Gibbs. What's up, Doc!

... Applause.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New York nominates Greg "Doc" Gibbs for National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Come to order. The assembly will come to order. Please come to order. We don't have a second yet.

DELEGATE FROM MARYLAND: Mr. Commander, Maryland proudly seconds the nomination.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Out of order. We're going through alphabetical order.

Alaska.

DELEGATE FROM ALASKA: Alaska, Land of the Midnight Sun, yields to Minnesota.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Minnesota.

DELEGATE FROM MINNESOTA: Department of Minnesota respectfully asks to recognize Past National Commander Doug Bible to approach the podium for purposes of a second.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: So moved.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER BIBLE: Good morning.

... Chorus of good morning.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER BIBLE: This seconding speech is a little bit unusual this morning. Mr. Tommy Cisna, Past National Commander from Illinois, was scheduled to do the seconding speech. Tommy was

hospitalized yesterday. He's doing well, but I was asked to give his seconding speech for Greg.

So we'll do that. Then I'll have a couple of comments afterwards.

"Good morning, delegates and guests. I'm glad you're here for convention. It is an exciting time to be at National Convention, to be here on this day, to elect our national leaders for the upcoming year. What an important and honorable task.

You have heard many things that Doc has accomplished during his career and his Sons career. Many of those accomplishments are as an educator/instructor, which is what he is very good at. It is a gift he's been blessed with.

My wish would be for you to hear some of those experiences personally from Doc. As Doc travels this great country, if elected, inquire about some of his experiences.

You will see his face will smile with pure joy as he tells his stories. His eyes will light up as if in that moment right then. Now he turns those talents and all those life-changing experiences towards the national Sons organization.

Another thing about Doc is where he comes from, the Detachment of New York.

Many years of coming to National Convention, I've long admired the level of commitment to excellence the Sons have for their actions and appearance. I've worked with many committee and commission members and chairmen from New York and have found out that there's a reason for that pride in the detachment: They all come dedicated.

Over the many years I've known Doc, I have witnessed the same pride and dedication in him. You know, in New York, you're not even considered to run for a detachment office, because when you do, you go all the way to Commander. They don't let just anybody serve as state commander; you earn it.

I've just had the honor to work with Doc on the Strategic Planning Committee, and I've seen his level of commitment to finishing that task. I have witnessed Doc bringing his skills to bear on the task at hand and drawing on his years of experience.

In my opinion, Doc has what it takes to lead this great organization. He's the educator we need to help us follow our plan through.

One other thing: If any man has the polish to enter Attica State Prison one year after the riots for a job interview, he has my vote anytime."

That was Tommy's seconding speech.

I have a few comments of my own. We all have impressions of people when we meet them. When I first met Doc, I was truly impressed. You could see and feel his enthusiasm about the Sons. His passion is extremely evident.

Doc's leadership skills will bring the Sons to new heights that have yet to be seen. We are all a team, and I really look forward to Doc as the leader of our team.

As a delegate to the 47th National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion, I am honored to second the nomination of Greg "Doc" Gibbs as National Commander 2018-2019.

... Applause.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Minnesota seconds the nomination of Greg Gibbs for National Commander.

Arizona.

DELEGATE FROM ARIZONA: Arizona seconds, sir.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Arizona seconds.

Arkansas.

(No response.)

California.

DELEGATE FROM CALIFORNIA: California seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: California seconds.

Colorado.

DELEGATE FROM COLORADO: Colorado seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Colorado seconds.

Connecticut.

DELEGATE FROM CONNECTICUT: Connecticut seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Connecticut seconds.

Delaware.

DELEGATE FROM DELAWARE: Delaware seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Delaware seconds.

Florida.

DELEGATE FROM FLORIDA: Florida seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Florida seconds.

France.

DELEGATE FROM FRANCE: France seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: France seconds.

Georgia.

DELEGATE FROM GEORGIA: Georgia seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Georgia seconds.

Hawaii.

(No response.)

Idaho.

(No response.)

Illinois.

DELEGATE FROM ILLINOIS: Illinois proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Illinois seconds.

Indiana.

DELEGATE FROM INDIANA: Indiana seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Kentucky.

DELEGATE FROM KENTUCKY: Kentucky seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Louisiana.

DELEGATE FROM LOUISIANA: Louisiana seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Louisiana seconds.

Maine.

DELEGATE FROM MAINE: Maine seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Maryland.

DELEGATE FROM MARYLAND: Maryland seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Maryland seconds.

Massachusetts.

DELEGATE FROM MASSACHUSETTS: Massachusetts seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Massachusetts seconds.

Michigan.

DELEGATE FROM MICHIGAN: Michigan seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Michigan seconds.
Mississippi.

DELEGATE FROM MISSISSIPPI: Mississippi seconds.
NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Mississippi seconds.
Missouri.

DELEGATE FROM MISSOURI: Missouri seconds.
NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Missouri seconds.
Montana.

DELEGATE FROM MONTANA: Montana seconds.
NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Montana seconds.
Nebraska.

DELEGATE FROM NEBRASKA: Nebraska seconds.
NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Nebraska seconds.
Nevada.

DELEGATE FROM NEVADA: Nevada seconds.
NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Nevada seconds.
New Hampshire.

DELEGATE FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE: New Hampshire seconds.
NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New Hampshire seconds.
New Jersey.

DELEGATE FROM NEW JERSEY: New Jersey proudly
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New Jersey seconds.

New Mexico.

DELEGATE FROM NEW MEXICO: New Mexico seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New Mexico seconds.

North Carolina.

DELEGATE FROM NORTH CAROLINA: North Carolina
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: North Carolina seconds.

North Dakota.

(No response.)

Ohio.

DELEGATE FROM OHIO: Ohio seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Ohio seconds.

Oklahoma.

DELEGATE FROM OKLAHOMA: Oklahoma seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Oklahoma seconds.

Oregon.

DELEGATE FROM OREGON: From the great state of
Oregon, we second.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Oregon seconds.

Pennsylvania.

DELEGATE FROM PENNSYLVANIA: Pennsylvania proudly
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Pennsylvania seconds.

Rhode Island.

DELEGATE FROM RHODE ISLAND: Rhode Island seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Rhode Island seconds.

South Carolina.

DELEGATE FROM SOUTH CAROLINA: South Carolina
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: South Carolina seconds.

South Dakota.

(No response.)

Tennessee.

(No response.)

Texas.

DELEGATE FROM TEXAS: Texas seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Utah.

DELEGATE FROM UTAH: Utah proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Utah seconds.

Vermont.

DELEGATE FROM VERMONT: Vermont proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Vermont seconds.

Virginia.

DELEGATE FROM VIRGINIA: Virginia seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Virginia seconds.

Washington.

DELEGATE FROM WASHINGTON: Washington seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Washington seconds.

West Virginia.

DELEGATE FROM WEST VIRGINIA: West Virginia proudly
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: West Virginia seconds.

Wisconsin.

DELEGATE FROM WISCONSIN: Wisconsin seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Wisconsin seconds.

Wyoming.

DELEGATE FROM WYOMING: Wyoming seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Alabama.

DELEGATE FROM ALABAMA: Alabama seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Alaska.

DELEGATE FROM ALASKA: Proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Alaska seconds.

Mr. Commander, we only have one nominee for National
Commander of the Sons of The American Legion, Greg "Doc"
Gibbs.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SEATON: Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Yes, sir.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SEATON: Mike Seaton, Past National Commander and delegate to this 47th National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion.

It is my pleasure to move that we elect Greg "Doc" Gibbs of New York our next National Commander by acclamation and ask that you recognize Bob Faust of California for a second.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Yes, sir, I certainly will. It has been moved to elect Greg "Doc" Gibbs by acclamation.

Sir.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER FAUST: Commander, Robert Faust, Past National Commander, delegate to this convention: I second the motion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: And duly seconded. Thank you.

It's been moved to nominate -- or to elect Greg "Doc" Gibbs as your next National Commander by acclamation and duly seconded.

Any discussion? I didn't think so.

All in favor signify by saying aye. No? Motion carried. Congratulations.

... Applause.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: I, Anthony Wright, National Adjutant of the Sons of The American Legion, cast one unanimous ballot by acclamation for Greg "Doc" Gibbs for National Commander for the Sons of The American Legion.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Now you can have all the time you want. Please escort your next National Commander to the podium.

. . . At this time, a musical interlude was played.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Past National Commanders, please join the parade and bring Doc forward.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SEATON: Delegates to this 47th National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion, it's first my honor to thank Danny for a year of service and welcome him to this distinguished group of Past National Commanders. And we thank him for his year of service to us.

... Applause.

All of the Past National Commanders here on front of the stage continue a 47-year tradition of escorting our new National Commander and introducing him to this convention.

We are here to demonstrate our unity and support for him over the next year, and we'd like to congratulate him on receiving this high honor.

It's a pleasure to present to you the 2018-19 National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion, Greg "Doc" Gibbs of New York.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER-ELECT GIBBS: Great chance to use that gavel for the first time.

I really sincerely appreciate the trust that's been reposed in me through you at this convention. And I promise to do my best and fulfill the mission of the Sons.

No great speech right at the moment, but I would like to thank some people while I'm up here.

I'd like to thank my beautiful wife of 46 years for her understanding of what the Sons really involves and the commitment that we all give to our organization. For without that understanding and without her in the home front taking care of the family, things would certainly be different.

So she's with me today. So is my favorite daughter, Christine (phonetic), and I appreciate her being with me as well.

... Applause.

I want to thank my little squadron back home of Hamburg, New York, 527. When I started there, I had no clue what this organization was about.

And many of you probably had that same exact situation. But they helped nurture me. They helped nurture the leadership in me regarding the Sons of The American Legion, helped show me what it's all about.

And I appreciate that very much. I appreciate our whole Detachment of New York, our Department of New York and the Auxiliary Department of New York as well for the support they've shown me over the years on my journey to this office, which I never really contemplated many years ago.

Again, thank you for your trust. I hope I do you proud. We have the hundredth year of the Legion coming up, and I'm not going to get into too many of the goals right at the moment, but the main goal is going to be to help them celebrate their hundredth year and to give them the best hundredth anniversary present we could ever give them, the highest Sons membership and the highest Sons donations.

So we're going to work on that this year. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Commander-Elect, it is indeed an honor on behalf of the entire delegation to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th Annual National Convention.

... Applause.

And I invite you to stick around on stage with me. Past National Commanders, you are excused. And I'll turn the podium back over to National Adjutant Wright, and we'll proceed with the election of National Vice Commanders.

ELECTION OF NATIONAL VICE COMMANDERS

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: We're going to proceed with the nominations for National Vice Commander by region. Eastern Region, Connecticut.

DELEGATE FROM CONNECTICUT: Connecticut yields to Maryland.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Connecticut yields to Maryland.

DELEGATE FROM MARYLAND: Mr. Adjutant, permission for Past National Commander Joe Gladden to approach the podium for the purpose of a nomination.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Permission granted.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER GLADDEN: I feel like I was just here. This weekend we have gathered to commemorate the end of another year.

We've gathered to look back on what has been accomplished, and with that I want to congratulate National Commander Danny Smith and all of his National Vice Commanders for a job well done.

And I want to personally congratulate one of my dear friends, National Vice Commander Ken Warner, for his year in office. I know that Ken poured his heart and soul into doing the very best job he could do.

While gathering to congratulate the outgoing officers, we also gather to share the joy that comes from knowing that we have made a difference in the lives of members of our communities that we live in and the lives of the children that need special help and, most importantly, in the lives of the veterans that have made a difference in the lives through their service.

And while we gather to remember, we also gather to look to the future. The interesting aspect of life is that while the past has laid a foundation for the future, it is only through continuing to build what was done in the past that our future will be all that it can be.

It can be said that to be National Vice Commander in the East is an incredible experience. The East has a long tradition of greatness and leadership.

The greatness of the East is seen in all of our detachment commanders and our membership that continues to grow, and it's over 140,000. But today while remembering the past, it's really about the future of the East.

This is why today is so important. This is why today we must choose wisely the person that will be our next National Vice Commander.

Today is about selecting a leader who will not only continue the great traditions of the East, but will make new traditions and take the East to new heights.

As we've gone through this year, I've enjoyed watching the development of our future leaders. This development has been completed for our next National Vice Commander.

I've had the great honor of sharing conversations about this organization that we all love, and I know in my heart that our next National Vice Commander will do everything in his power to make the programs of The American Legion successful, to make them sure that no worthy comrade is left behind.

I know in my heart our next National Vice Commander will make the East proud now that he's our next National Vice Commander.

If you agree with me, Mike Cotten from Seaford, Delaware, will be the next Commander. Mike gets his eligibility through his father, Sol Cotton (phonetic), a World War II and Korean veteran, and his grandfather, Lou Semansky (phonetic), a World War I veteran.

Mike has been a member of Squadron 28 in Delaware for over 22 years. Mike is a dedicated family man, has been married to his wife Jean for 25-plus years, and his daughter Samantha is a member of Unit 28. Mike is a registered civil engineer and owns his own company, Cotten Engineering, a engineering and surveying company.

Mike believes so much in our veterans that on his program, he wrote this famous quote: "It is our veterans, not the preacher, who has given us freedom of religion.

It's the veteran, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of press. It's the veteran, not the poet, that gives us freedom of speech. It's the veteran, not the campus organizer, who gives us freedom to assemble. And it's the veteran, not the lawyer, who gives us the right to a fair trial. And it is the veteran, not the politician, who gives us the right to vote."

It's also exciting to say that Mike will be the very first elected national officer from Delaware, but he hopes there will be more to follow.

Just a little thought. You know when you go out and you buy a new S.A.L. shirt and you look at that shirt, what are the two things you look at? The first thing you look at is to see where it was made. And it has to be made in the U.S.A. And one of the second things you look at --

... Applause.

-- and one of the second things you look at is to see what it's made of. And cotton is always one of the most comfortable things to have it made of.

... Laughter.

So when we elect Mike our next National Vice Commander, he has both of these qualities. He was

definitely made in the U.S.A., and he was definitely made from the best Cotten we could find.

With that, I, Joe Gladden, take the great honor of placing in nomination Mike Cotten from Delaware for the high office of National Vice Commander East, the proud grandson and son of veterans, a proud father and husband, a proud member of the Sons of The American Legion, that's held offices at all positions on the local and national level.

Mike Cotten will do the job to the best of his ability. Mike Cotten will make a difference in the East region and our national organization.

With that I say God bless you, God bless America, and God bless The American Legion family. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Maryland nominates Michael Cotten of Delaware for National Vice Commander for the Eastern region.

Delaware.

DELEGATE FROM DELAWARE: Delaware yields to New Jersey.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Delaware yields to New Jersey.

New Jersey.

DELEGATE FROM NEW JERSEY: Mr. Adjutant, New Jersey requests permission to have the National Chaplain approach the podium for the purposes of a second.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Permission granted.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN NOBLE: Delegates, officers, comrades, guests, friends and family: We are an organization once again coming to the end of a great year.

National Vice Commander Ken Warner, we'd like to congratulate you on a fine job you've done this past year.

However, we're about to start a new year, a new year with a new National Vice Commander. But that year cannot be done or be started until we elect a new National Vice Commander.

When looking for a candidate, we looked for someone who was dedicated to his family, and that person was Mike Cotten.

We looked for someone that was dedicated to the Sons of The American Legion, and that, once again, was Mike Cotten.

And we looked for someone that was dedicated to our veterans and children of not only his own state but our nation, and, yes, once again, it was Mike Cotten.

Having known Mike for many years, I personally know that he's ready to fulfill the duties of the office he's about to assume. And he will work his best to fulfill those duties in the spirit and devotion that characterize his father and grandfather's service to this nation.

With that, I, Past National Vice Commander Jim Noble, second the nomination for Mike Cotten for National Vice Commander 2018-2019. God bless our veterans, God bless The American Legion and God bless America.

... Applause.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New Jersey seconds the nomination of Mike Cotten for National Vice Commander Eastern Region.

Eastern Region members start lining up at the microphones to help expedite this process.

France.

DELEGATE FROM FRANCE: France, second.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: France seconds the nomination.

Maine.

DELEGATE FROM MAINE: Maine seconds it.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Maine seconds.

Massachusetts.

DELEGATE FROM MASSACHUSETTS: Massachusetts seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Massachusetts seconds.

New Hampshire.

DELEGATE FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE: New Hampshire proudly
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New Hampshire seconds.

New York.

DELEGATE FROM NEW YORK: New York proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New York seconds.

Pennsylvania.

DELEGATE FROM PENNSYLVANIA: Pennsylvania proudly
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Pennsylvania seconds.

Rhode Island.

DELEGATE FROM RHODE ISLAND: Rhode Island seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Rhode Island seconds.

Vermont.

DELEGATE FROM VERMONT: Vermont proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Vermont seconds.

West Virginia.

DELEGATE FROM WEST VIRGINIA: West Virginia proudly
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: West Virginia seconds.

Connecticut.

DELEGATE FROM CONNECTICUT: Connecticut proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Delaware.

DELEGATE FROM DELAWARE: Delaware really proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Central Region, Illinois.

DELEGATE FROM ILLINOIS: Illinois proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Illinois, do you have a nomination for Central Region Commander?

DELEGATE FROM ILLINOIS: Illinois would ask the Chair to recognize Past National Commander Mike Duncan [sic] for the purpose of nomination.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Permission granted.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DEACON: And I got a name change. Good morning.

... Chorus of good morning.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DEACON: I also am up here because Tommy Cisna is not here to do this. But I am very, very thankful for the opportunity.

As a point of personal privilege, Mr. Commander, I would also like to thank everyone here for all the kind

words, the condolences and the hugs in the loss of my brother recently.

So thank all so very much from the bottom of my heart. I left my family back east and I came to this family that's always been there for me. So thank you.

As a National Vice Commander, you need to possess many leadership qualities. You need to have a vast information base for all the programs of the Sons of The American Legion because you never know when you're going to be called upon to speak on that certain subject.

In Illinois, they have that prepared Son. His name is Matt Christie from Palatine Squadron 690. Matt is eligible through his grandfather and his father.

I have seen Matt's growth in this organization from his years of involvement at his squadron, something he still is heavily involved in. I have heard of his involvement in the Ninth District, the many offices he has held, and he's still active in that district.

Now, this all leads to his career at the detachment level. Matt has been a dedicated member for over 25 years.

I have not watched Matt come through the offices and the appointments for that detachment, but I have heard

only good things about his commitment and dedication to all the programs of our organization.

Matt was a Commander that was up for the rewarding challenge of leading the Detachment of Illinois in 2003-2004. He brought many fresh ideas with him from chairmen and members, having served in many of those same positions himself.

When Matt served, it was a banner year for the detachment, not only for himself, but for Illinois. Matt still serves at the state level to this day to show his loyalty to that detachment.

Matt has also turned his attention towards the national organization, bringing his knowledge and freshness with him. He has served in many capacities and has excelled in each appointment.

He has served proudly as the Illinois alternate and NEC. Now with his experience and knowledge he sets his sights on the office of National Vice Commander. It's my opinion that he will excel in this position also.

So with a proud heart, it's my distinct honor and privilege as a duly elected delegate to this 47th Annual National Convention, I, Michael Deacon, Past National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion, proudly

nominate Matt Christie from the Detachment of Illinois for the office of National Vice Commander Central for the year 2018-2019. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Iowa nominates Matt Christie of Illinois for Central Region Central Vice Commander.

Indiana.

DELEGATE FROM INDIANA: Mr. Adjutant, sir, Detachment of Indiana requests permission for NEC Mike Pipher for the purpose of seconding the nomination, sir.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Permission granted.

MIKE PIPHER: Commander Smith, Adjutant Wright, national officers here on stage, fellow Sons, fellow Legion family members, honored guests, all:

I have the enjoyable privilege today to second the nomination for a good friend. This is a happy occasion, because we're on the threshold of a very good year in the Central Region.

The gentleman we are about to elect into high office represents everything that's good about the S.A.L. He's a man who leads by example.

You've heard about the nuts and bolts, the black and white of his resumé in the Sons. Past Commander Deacon did a fine job of that. What I'd like to do is paint a little color on to that resumé.

Here's a guy who works not just for veterans but with veterans. He's a hands-on guy. He enjoys helping veterans in and around his hometown of Palatine. He helps them get information that will help them navigate the VA system.

He sits with them. He talks with them. He helps them fill out forms. You should see his face light up when he visits VA hospitals. He sits and talks with patients. He listens to them. They show him their plaques, their awards, their pins, their ribbons. Here's a guy who cares about people.

Out in the real world, he's a union electrician who has worked construction for over 30 years. He and his wife, Liz, are Legion family. His entire real-world family is Legion family.

Inside Squadron 690, he runs membership. He helps take care of the buildings and grounds. He runs the bingo. He runs the charity gaming. Hey, remember, he's

an electrician. Who do you think fixes the wiring in the building?

We're going to be working hard in the Central Region this year, and he's going to be pushing us to do just that. But when the work is done, we're going to have fun. Let's face it, this year is going to be fun.

This guy has a pool in his backyard that holds 128 people. That same backyard has four barbecue pits. I'm thinking we're going to hold some meetings in Palatine this year.

He's been a very good friend to those of us on my side of the Indiana/Illinois state line. And therein lies perhaps the best reason of all to get him elected: His love for the Sons knows no boundaries.

Wherever he is in the coming year, in the Central Region, he will be at home.

So Mr. Adjutant, as a duly elected delegate to this 47th National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion, I wish to enthusiastically second the nomination of Matthew Christie for the high office of National Vice Commander Central Region for the year 2018-19. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Indiana seconds the nomination of Matt Christie from Indiana for the office of National Vice Commander Central Region. Michigan.

DELEGATE FROM MICHIGAN: Michigan also enthusiastically supports and seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Minnesota.

DELEGATE FROM MINNESOTA: Minnesota proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Minnesota seconds.

Missouri.

DELEGATE FROM MISSOURI: Missouri proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Missouri seconds.

Ohio.

DELEGATE FROM OHIO: Ohio seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Ohio seconds.

Wisconsin.

DELEGATE FROM WISCONSIN: Wisconsin seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Wisconsin seconds.

Illinois.

DELEGATE FROM ILLINOIS: Now Illinois proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Illinois seconds.

Midwest Region, Colorado.

DELEGATE FROM COLORADO: Colorado would request the permission for Past National Commander Mike Moss to approach the podium for the purposes of a nomination.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Permission granted.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MOSS: Good morning.

... Chorus of good morning.

It's my pleasure this morning to nominate -- and I have the opportunity, a great opportunity to nominate fellow member and friend for the office of National Vice Commander.

Pete Sierminski has been a member of John Harold Buckley Squadron 32 of Longmont, Colorado, for 24 years.

His eligibility comes from his father, Peter J. Sierminski, who served on the *USS Duluth* in the U.S. Navy during World War II in the Pacific Theater.

Pete spent 21 years in New York, quite the connection there, and 42 years in Colorado. Pete alongside his wife, Candy, of 18 years are consistent volunteers of The American Legion in Longmont.

Pete has chaired numerous committee chairmanships for the detachment and the squadron level.

Along with the detachment and squadron offices that Peter has held, he always remains focused for the job at hand.

On a national level, Pete represented the Detachment of Colorado as the National Executive Committeeman. And for six years he was chairman of the Child Welfare Foundation Committee, where he saw this program soar to many, many heights.

So it is my pleasure and honor as a delegate to our 47th National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion that I place in nomination my friend and fellow member Pete Sierminski for the office of National Vice Commander for the Midwest Region.

... Applause.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Colorado nominates Pete Sierminski for National Vice Commander Midwest region.

Kansas.

DELEGATE FROM KANSAS: Kansas proudly seconds that nomination.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Kansas seconds the nomination of Pete Sierminski for Midwest Region Commander.

Montana.

DELEGATE FROM MONTANA: Montana seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Montana seconds.

Nebraska.

DELEGATE FROM NEBRASKA: Nebraska proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Nebraska seconds.

North Dakota.

(No response.)

Oklahoma.

DELEGATE FROM OKLAHOMA: Oklahoma proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Oklahoma seconds.

South Dakota.

(No response.)

Texas.

DELEGATE FROM TEXAS: Texas seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Texas seconds.

Wyoming.

DELEGATE FROM WYOMING: Wyoming seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Wyoming seconds. We're going to run back up here to North Dakota.

(No response.)

South Dakota.

(No response.)

Moving on. Western Region. Alaska.

DELEGATE FROM ALASKA: Alaska would like to yield to Arizona.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Alaska yields to Arizona.

DELEGATE FROM ARIZONA: Mr. Commander, point of order. Mr. Adjutant, point of order.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Yes.

KEN YANKE: In the Midwest, Ken Yanke from Colorado. In the Midwest, you forgot New Mexico.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: So noted. Thank you very much, Mr. Yanke.

New Mexico.

DELEGATE FROM NEW MEXICO: New Mexico proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: New Mexico seconds the nomination of Pete Sierminski for Midwest Region Commander.

Arizona.

DELEGATE FROM ARIZONA: Arizona seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Arizona, you were yielded to by the Detachment of Alaska for Western Region Vice Commander.

DELEGATE FROM ARIZONA: My bad.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: That's okay.

DELEGATE FROM ARIZONA: Sir --

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Yes.

DELEGATE FROM ARIZONA: I'd like to have Mr. John Alcoa approach the podium for purposes of nomination.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Permission granted.

JOHN ALCOA: Good morning. Mr. Commander, national officers, delegates and guests, my name is John Alcoa, Legionnaire and Sons of The American Legion. It is my personal privilege to introduce to you Edward M. Cleary, a 25-year member of William Bloys Squadron 2 in Tempe, Arizona.

Ed's eligibility for the Sons of The American Legion is through his father, Vietnam veteran John E. Cleary, who served in the United States Navy on the supercarrier *USS Ranger* CVA-61.

Ed's experience with community service and activism began in high school where he served four years in the Marcus de Niza High School JROTC. His service for The American Legion began in 1994.

He has held every office at the squadron level, including two years as squadron commander. At the detachment level, Ed worked his way through the chairs, including serving as adjutant and finance officer,

Membership chairman, chairman of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee as well as Detachment Vice Commander for Area B.

Ed was ultimately elected to the Detachment Commander in 2001. Since 2001, Ed has been working for our veterans at the national level for the Detachment of Arizona.

He dedicated two years as Alternate National Executive Committeeman, two years as National Executive Committeeman. Ed was also on the Child Welfare Committee and served on the Americanism Commission for two years.

Ed is employed as the general manager at a fast casual restaurant and enjoys spending spare time promoting American Legion charities.

William Bloys Squadron 2, the Detachment of Arizona, the Department of Arizona proudly endorses my friend, and it's my distinct honor to place in nomination Edward M. Cleary for the high office of National Vice Commander Western Region.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Arizona nominates Edward Cleary for Western Region Vice Commander. California.

DELEGATE FROM CALIFORNIA: California yields to Alaska.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: California yields to Alaska.

Alaska.

DELEGATE FROM ALASKA: Mr. Adjutant, Alaska would like permission for Past National Commander Kevin Collier to approach the podium for purposes of nomination.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Permission granted.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COLLIER: Good morning, fellow delegates. Commander, Adjutant. Today we will elect the next gentleman to lead the West through the ensuing year. We are looking for a person who believes leadership is not practiced so much in words as in attitude and actions.

The person we're considering today has shown that he has the proper attitude and knowledge to lead the West. He's received the Five Star Ten Ideas Medal, The American Legion Auxiliary Field Service Pin. And you may ask: How did a Sons get an Auxiliary Field Service Pin?

Well, it was when he was first starting, his dad was going to all these funerals, memorial services, and it was after high school. And his dad said, "Come on; come with me." So he did and he started participating. He started activating. And one of the Auxiliary members said, "Ed,

be sure to record all your service and report it out." And he did.

So after 209 memorial services that he did, their department auxiliary, or his unit, put him up for the medal. And he got it. Along with a rocker. So that means he's been doing it for a long time. If you know anything about the Auxiliary and their pins, they don't usually give them to someone that's not in the Auxiliary.

Along with that, he's also a graduate of the Detachment Commander Adjutant training in the Detachment of Arizona, along with being a graduate of the National Management Institute.

Ed believes that leadership is not about a title or a designation. It's about impact, influence and inspiration.

Impact involves getting results. Influence is about spreading the passion for what your work is. And you have to inspire others with your integrity to step up and make the team successful in the goals set before them.

Ed believes that we need to get back to the basics, with clear, consistent communications, setting goals that are clear, precise, measurable and just out of reach to

make you stretch but not so far that they're not attainable.

Ed knows the fundamental thing about leadership is you have to have the humility to continually get feedback and to try to get better because as a leader, your job is to try to help everyone else improve and get better.

Ed is willing, ready to set the West, to show what we all know: If you want something done, you ask the Sons. And the West is the best.

It is a pleasure and honor to second the nomination of Edward M. Cleary for the high and honorable position of National Vice Commander for the 2018-2019 year. Ed, my friend.

... Applause.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Alaska seconds the nomination for Vice Commander.

Hawaii.

Idaho.

DELEGATE FROM IDAHO: Idaho seconds the nomination for Ed Cleary.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Idaho seconds.

Nevada.

DELEGATE FROM NEVADA: Nevada seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Nevada seconds.
Oregon.

DELEGATE FROM OREGON: Oregon seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Oregon seconds.
Utah.

DELEGATE FROM UTAH: Utah seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Utah seconds.
Washington.

DELEGATE FROM WASHINGTON: Washington seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Washington seconds.
California.

DELEGATE FROM CALIFORNIA: California proudly
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: California seconds.
Southern Region. Alabama.

DELEGATE FROM ALABAMA: Alabama yields to Virginia.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Alabama yields to
Virginia.

Virginia.

DELEGATE FROM VIRGINIA: Sir, request permission
that Past National American Legion Commander Dan Dellinger
approach the podium for a nomination.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Permission granted.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DELLINGER: First, I must get in character here, because looking at my card this year, I'm a 32-year member of the S.A.L. and very proud of it.

... Applause.

National Commander Smith, officers, delegates to the 47th National Convention, guests, friends, one and all, good morning.

All due respect to Past National Commander Gladden, but he's maybe going to have a good year but nothing like the South's going to have.

... Cheers and applause.

All right. I stand in front of you today to place in nomination a dedicated and knowledgeable individual who has demonstrated through his leadership at every position he has held in our great organization that he's more than qualified to serve as National Vice Commander.

And as someone who has held the office of National Commander of The American Legion, I know what it takes to be successful. And Steve Gower possesses all the qualities necessary to fulfill the duties of the office he will assume if elected. I have no doubt he will make us

proud as we navigate the issues facing our nation and our veterans this upcoming year.

You may ask how can I make that statement. I have known and I have worked with Steve for the last 15-plus years in the Detachment and Department of Virginia.

He's well-organized and knowledgeable of the programs and a very dedicated person. Steve earned his eligibility for the Sons of The American Legion through his father's honorable service in the United States Coast Guard, who was a member of Post 327 until his death in 1993.

Steve has been a 28-year member of the Tidewater Squadron 327 in Norfolk, Virginia. He started his career in the Sons of The American Legion with the first meeting he attended at the squadron, walking away from that meeting, being elected as a squadron historian, and he hasn't looked back since.

He has served this squadron with distinction in many capacities to include numerous terms as squadron commander and has been a major fund raiser for their charities through the years. He was rewarded with his hard work when the squadron presented him with an honorary life membership in 2007.

He has served the detachment well over the years to include Past Detachment Membership Chairman, Nominating Committee Chairman, serving as the Detachment Vice Commander and a Detachment Commander in 2006-2007. And this also should be noted: He was an all-time high Commander.

He currently serves as our Judge Advocate and is a Sons of The American Legion Virginia Leadership College director.

At the national level, Steve has served on the Child Welfare and Homeland Security committees, served as Southern Region Membership chairman, a graduate of the S.A.L. National Management Institute and served four years as our Alternate National Executive Committeeman, as well as four years as our National Executive Committeeman.

I mentioned earlier of his fundraising activities and abilities, and I've seen him and his fellow members of Squadron 327 raise money each year for The American Legion's Operation Comfort Warrior with our hard work and organizational skills as a sponsor of a fishing tournament each fall to benefit the Operation Comfort Warrior. Last year they raised over \$6,000 for this most worthwhile cause.

Steve, throughout his Sons of The American Legion career, has shown through his knowledge, leadership and dedication that he is well-deserving of serving as your National Vice Commander of the Sons of The American Legion. He's a deacon in his church. And his wife, Jenny, and his family stand by him.

That is why it gives me great pleasure to place the name of Steve Gower in nomination for the high office of National Vice Commander of the Sons of The American Legion for the 2018-2019 year.

... Applause.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Virginia nominates Steve Gower for National Vice Commander of the Southern Region. Arkansas.

(No response.)

Florida.

DELEGATE FROM FLORIDA: Florida requests permission for Past National Commander James K. Roberts, III, approach for the purposes of a second.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Permission granted.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER ROBERTS: Good morning, everybody. I know everybody's worn out from the parade that Doc had a few minutes ago, but we like to have a

little fun in the south, and I don't know that there's much more than I can say about a good friend of mine, Steve Gower, from the Detachment of Virginia. So I think I'm done.

... Applause.

No, ladies and gentlemen, delegates to this convention, national officers, I stand here today to proudly second the nomination of Steve Gower for National Vice Commander for the Southern Region.

I'm proud to call Steve a friend. I've had the opportunity to watch Steve since he started attending national meetings. And Steve has always provided his knowledge, his experience, his leadership, not just to the members within the Southern Region, but to anybody that he's come in contact with.

You've heard Commander Dellinger say he's been a member of the Sons of The American Legion Squadron 327 in Norfolk, Virginia, for the last 28 years. And he continues to prove his dedication and provide great leadership to this wonderful organization.

You know, we like to have a little fun in the south. When we travel around, you know, I don't know how Steve got his nickname, but it might be a topic of conversation

when he does come and visit you, but "Triple G" is what we call him. Virginia can tell you about that later.

But Steve, as a good friend, I appreciate what you've done over the years, and I'm looking forward to having you serve as our next National Vice Commander.

So as a delegate to this convention and from the Detachment of Florida, we proudly second you as the next National Vice Commander for the Southern Region.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Florida seconds the nomination of Steven Gower for National Vice Commander for the Southern Region.

Georgia.

DELEGATE FROM GEORGIA: Georgia proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Georgia seconds.

Kentucky.

DELEGATE FROM KENTUCKY: Kentucky seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Kentucky seconds.

Louisiana.

DELEGATE FROM LOUISIANA: Louisiana proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Louisiana seconds.

Mississippi.

DELEGATE FROM MISSISSIPPI: Mississippi seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Mississippi seconds.

North Carolina.

DELEGATE FROM NORTH CAROLINA: North Carolina
proudly seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: North Carolina seconds.
South Carolina.

DELEGATE FROM SOUTH CAROLINA: South Carolina
seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: South Carolina seconds.
Tennessee.

(No response.)

Alabama?

DELEGATE FROM ALABAMA: Alabama seconds.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: Alabama seconds.
Arkansas.

(No response.)

Mr. Commander, that completes the roll for National
Vice Commanders. We have one candidate for each region.

For the Eastern Region, Michael Cotten, Delaware;
Southern Region, Steven Gower, Virginia; Central Region,
Matthew Christie of Illinois; Midwest Region, Pete
Sierminski, Colorado; Western Region, Edward Cleary of
Arizona.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I'll entertain a motion at this time.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER ROBERTS: James K. Roberts, Past National Commander. Since we have one candidate for each of these positions, I would ask that you instruct the National Adjutant to cast one unanimous ballot for each of the five National Vice Commanders.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you, sir. It's been moved that the National Adjutant cast one unanimous ballot.

Is there a second?

DELEGATE FROM WEST VIRGINIA: West Virginia seconds.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Duly seconded. Any discussion? All in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed no.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT WRIGHT: I, Anthony Wright, the National Adjutant for the Sons of The American Legion, cast one unanimous ballot for National Vice Commander candidates.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Congratulations.

... Applause.

This convention will now stand in recess until 12:30. Please join me in saluting the colors of our country.

. . . At this time, the delegation rose and rendered a right-hand salute to the Colors.

Hand salute. Two.

. . . At this time, the convention was in recess until 12:20 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER and SALUTE TO THE COLORS
Danny Smith, National Commander

President Trump has ordered flags to half staff honoring Senator McCain. We've placed the black memorial ribbon on our standard, and at this time I would ask you to join me in rendering a hand salute by the numbers.

. . . At this time, the delegation rose and rendered a right-hand salute to the Colors.

One. Two.

We have one quick announcement that's very important. I recognize Shawn Davis, Convention Chairman, from Minnesota.

SHAWN DAVIS: Thank you, Commander. For those that may have heard the rumors or heard from your department or may have heard it on the app, just to let you know that

the parade today has been moved to be an indoor parade. It is no longer outdoor.

You'll be staging in Hall E, which is at the far end of the building, and we'll be marching up to and through Exhibit Hall B.

Contact your department parade chairman for more information, but the parade is not canceled; it is an indoor parade now. Thank you.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you, Chairman. There will be more announcements at our Post-Convention NEC regarding our national group. So please make sure you attend that meeting if you're interested.

So at this time Sergeant-at-Arms will bring forward the installing officer, Past National Commander of The American Legion Fang Wong, from the Department of New York.

... Applause.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER WONG: Please be seated. This is not part of the program, but I would like to welcome everybody to the Department of New York South convention.

... Laughter and applause.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please bring forward the newly elected national officers of the Sons of The American Legion, with the exception of the new National Commander.

... Applause.

Gentlemen, you have been chosen to fill the various offices of the national organizations of the Sons of The American Legion. You will, I know that, vindicate the trust that has been reposed in you and fulfill in every way the obligation that trust entails.

You will at once familiarize yourself with the duties of your particular office, 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 integrities 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 purpose and its policy. Forever 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 royalty.

Forever remember that the cardinal purposes 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; rightful education of the children of our country, and devoted service to the community, state and nation.

Are you now willing to assume the responsibility of your office?

ALL: Yes.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER FANG: You will raise your right hand and repeat after me, giving your name where I give mine.

I, Fang A. Wong, do solemnly pledge myself
[repeating] -- to perform faithfully and impartially
[repeating] -- the duties of the office in the Sons of The American Legion I'm about to assume [repeating]. And I

further pledge I'm not a member of and do not subscribe to [repeating] the principles of any group [repeating] opposed to our form of government [repeating].

You may lower your hand. Please be seated.

Vice Commanders, into your helpful hands are placed the important responsibilities of assisting the Commander in all of his duties.

You will stress to the membership and nation the programs and goodwill of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the newly elected National Commander to the podium.

... Applause.

Please be seated. Let's give them a big hand.

... Applause.

Commander Gibbs, 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 all year.

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 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, to its membership, to The American Legion, are requirements which you now assume.

You are more than a presiding officer for meetings. You are guided by the constitution and decision of the national organization, yet the responsibility for the success of this year's programs is largely on your shoulders.

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 congratulations of The American Legion, and I wish you well. Are you ready to assume the responsibility of your office?

NATIONAL COMMANDER-ELECT GIBBS: I am, sir.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER FANG: Raise your right hand and repeat after me giving your name when I give mine.

I, Fang A. Wong, pledge myself [repeating] to perform faithfully and impartially [repeating] the duties of the National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion [repeating] I'm about to assume [repeating]. And I further pledge [repeating] I'm not a member of and do not subscribe to the principle of any group [repeating] opposed to our form of government [repeating].

You may lower your right hand.

... Applause.

Commander Smith, your duty as Commander of this organization has 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 observed your faithful and untiring efforts and extend to you their sincere appreciation of the services which you have rendered.

Congratulations. Thank you.

... Applause.

Powerful tool. I present to you, Commander Gibbs, the officers -- where are the officers?

... Laughter.

One, two, three, four, five. We got it right.

... Laughter.

Ladies and gentlemen, 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 destiny of this organization, it's your duty to aid them in every possible way. Help them keep the Sons of The American Legion a free organization of free men, faithful to its principles and ideals.

... Applause.

Now the important stuff.

Commander Gibbs, all yours.

NATIONAL COMMANDER-ELECT GIBBS: Wow.

FROM THE FLOOR: What's up, "Doc"?!

NATIONAL COMMANDER-ELECT GIBBS: You'll begin to find out.

... Laughter.

PRESENTATION OF COMMANDERS CAP

I'd like to do the presentation of the Commander's cap. I'd like to call both my wife, Pam, and my daughter, Christine, up to the podium. And I'd like to call up Immediate Past National Commander's wife, Donna Smith.

And we'll call Danny up as well. Commander Smith, please. We're going to change caps, go ahead.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: We'd like to give Pam Gibbs her first official First Lady's badge.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER-ELECT GIBBS: And Donna will be helping Dan get back to blue.

... Applause.

You've heard it before, but this was truly an excellent year. I wish I didn't have to follow Danny Smith, but hopefully we'll keep up the pace that Danny has set and do a great thing for the hundredth year for the Legion.

... Applause.

REMARKS

**Greg "Doc" Gibbs, New York
Newly Elected National Commander**

Now is the time you actually do get to hear from me a little bit. And we do have an amazing opportunity this coming year with the Legion's hundredth anniversary. And although it's not ours as the Sons, it certainly is ours as part of the Legion family.

Proud possessors of a priceless heritage. That is what we're all about. That's what it states in our Preamble to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion.

We need to be ever diligent to continue that tradition and that honor that is our assigned responsibility as Sons.

As you may have heard earlier, my eligibility comes through my father who served in the United States Marine Corps during World War II.

He served along with his two brothers. By the way, he is with me at all Legion meetings, even though he is no longer with us.

... Applause.

He served along with his two brothers, joining the military on the Monday after the attack on Pearl Harbor, as his enlistment papers verified after he passed away and we found them.

What has impressed me the most over the years with my father is that he rarely spoke of his experiences. When prompted, he would often change the subject.

He fought in Iwo Jima, Tinian, Saipan, Guadalcanal and a lot of places that you now read books about.

It was obvious that the memories of those painful incidents remained fresh even years later. And it appears that his efforts were to shield my brother and I from the horrors of war, as we grew up in relative peace.

But we as the Sons, as an organization, strive to keep that sacrifice known and honored. It is our legacy as Sons of The American Legion, of those who served, to keep and continue to make people aware of that level of sacrifice, the hardships that all families face when their loved ones are in harm's way, so far away from home.

That is why I have chosen the phrase of "Honoring the past, continuing the legacy" as my motto for the coming year. Keeping memories alive as well as attending to the needs of the current active military and their families is a large part of our mission.

Embrace your heritage, Sons members. You are the legacy, the legacy of service to our country in their time of need.

Whether it be World War I, II, Korea, Vietnam or all the conflicts that have followed, we have all shared in that sacrifice and that commitment to not only protect the United States but to help keep the world free from tyranny and oppression everywhere.

World War I, the last war, the war to end all wars, it wasn't. War seems to be an inevitable element of human interaction. Here we are, commemorating 100 years from that war, and we still have global strife. Our organization can continue to strengthen, to help and aid those that are willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice for all of us.

We have a continuing purpose as Sons of The American Legion. Let us be vigilant in maintaining our organizational strength so we can fulfill that mission.

In an effort to carry on that mission, I'm going to outline a few goals for the 2018-2019 Sons of The American Legion year.

First of all, we are planning to give The American Legion the best 100th anniversary present ever. And you've heard me say this before: That's the highest membership figures and the highest charitable donations that we can attain.

... Applause.

But the important point is National Commanders come and go. A new one is standing before you now. There will be another new one in another year.

I trust that you are not waiting for orders from this Commander to begin the year. And you have kept vigilant and hopefully are maintaining all the momentum that Commander Danny Smith's year set and keep that going and get into high step as early as possible.

Our 100th year of the Legion gives us an unprecedented opportunity to recruit members. We'll get a lot of PR this year, just because of the 100th year. Use that PR and enlist some new members.

Let us push our membership into the 400,000-member range this year. We could do that. We hope to continue and keep those renewal rates as high as 90 percent as well.

I do not need to tell you all that renewal is the easiest part and the easiest way to strengthen membership.

Those that have been members but are not up to date with their dues are like low-hanging fruit ready to be picked. Get your membership mechanisms rolling early and start with renewals.

The Legion Commander candidate Brett Reistad is going to call his membership team Team 100. The membership shirts you may have already seen in emblem

sales say Team 100 on them, including our shirts, the Sons of The American Legion.

But we are a part of that Team 100, and we need to help the Legion toward their goals in stopping their membership decline. We, too, need to seek out veterans for potential Legion membership, and I encourage all of you to do so in this critical year and in this year of amazing opportunity.

If our parent organizations grows and stays strong, guess what, that's tremendously helpful to us all. And so do we.

So we, too, are Team 100. When you hear that, go for that Team 100. You're going to hear the new Legion commander no doubt say that often. I encourage you to join in. Who are we? We're Team 100.

The project this coming year from the Sons will be the Child Welfare Foundation. We've always been strong in that.

We'd like to continue it. We'd like to be able to reach the \$8 million mark this year. Wouldn't it be great if we hit eight? And it certainly would be fine if we hit nine.

... Laughter.

So we've got all kinds of ways to go.

... Applause.

Again, what a potential gift to our organization that would be to hit that \$8 million mark, which is in sight this year.

The other main charity that I hope to have everyone involved with this year is the National Emergency Fund. Again not new to us, but Mother Nature has continued to wreak havoc on our country this year. Between floods, fires, storms, volcanic activity and other devastating forces of nature, the national NEF funds have certainly been depleted this year, and we need to replenish them.

Let us step up and fill those coffers so our own posts and squadrons and units will have the funds they need if disaster strikes.

I'm going to go off speech here for just a second and say I visited Texas earlier this year. And Texas is a little bit smaller squadron than New York is, and I watched them hand out two checks on stage to two individuals, \$20,000 apiece, from the Sons of The American Legion in Texas, 20,000 to one gentleman, 20,000 to another gentleman, because their posts were destroyed in Hurricane Harvey.

I couldn't believe that a small squadron could hand out \$40,000 in the blink of an eye. That is what we do as Sons.

And we need to continue that, and we need to step up and keep those funds available when we need them.

An additional goal that does not appear in our statistics or numbers that we need to address this year is what are we doing with our members under 30 years old.

Could I ask any Sons members in the audience who are under 30 to please stand.

... Applause.

Thank you. You noticed how many stood. We have them. They're there. They're in the books. They're in the numbers.

They are our next leaders. What does our organization offer to those that are under 30? How are we relevant in their lives? How can we engage those members to become part of our active future?

We'll be looking for those answers throughout this year, and you can expect that it will be a topic on each of the committees, commissions, and be present in some of their reports.

And again, this year brings us another great opportunity, but along with that opportunity suggests great responsibility. We have an excellent crew of commission and committeemen selected this year, an excellent group of National Vice Commanders. All those people are empowered to move us forward from the great strides of Commander Danny Smith's year on to this coming 100th year anniversary for The American Legion.

Let us move forward with immediate action to step up the pace of our membership and our fundraising abilities so we can provide The American Legion with the best 100 anniversary present ever. Thank you.

... Applause.

Thank you. I have a number of folks up on the stage. But mostly half of New York, I think.

... Laughter.

But they're up here for a reason. You only get to be a commander one time in your life for sure, and New York has been 30 years between commanders. So I have a number of folks that I would like to make distinguished guests of the 47th Annual Sons of The American Legion Convention.

I'll have them come up, and I'll present them with their convention award, if I can.

My wife, Pam Gibbs.

... Applause.

My daughter, Christine.

... Applause.

These are in no particular order. So bear with me. Well, my wife, obviously. Obviously.

... Laughter.

Kathy Dungan is with us, and Kathy is the current president-elect for the National Auxiliary. And she's with us today, and I'd like to make her a guest.

... Applause.

And the person who did my nomination speech, Christopher Cerullo. And the chairman of my campaign committee, David Lee.

... Applause.

My newly commissioned aide, Gary Denmon, who is helping me right here.

... Applause.

Robert Avery, who has been the adjutant for New York for a number of years and is also a National Assistant Adjutant.

... Applause.

Robert Neville, who is a Past Department Commander from New York. And Bob is a very special person because many years ago, when I just -- somebody said, "Hey, do you think you might want to be National Commander?" this guy was right there 100 percent ever since. Thank you, Bob.

... Applause.

Ray Jarvis, who is a Past Detachment Commander from New York and a very active member in our committee.

... Applause.

Fang. Fang, why don't you please come up and at least let me make you a distinguished guest for doing our installation. Thank you, Fang.

... Applause.

I believe I just -- I was State Commander when Fang was the National Commander. It was a pleasure to serve with him in many capacities.

James Casey, the adjutant for the Legion Department of New York, who, too, has been very supportive.

... Applause.

Barbara Corker, who is in charge of our New York Auxiliary and also has been a past department president as well.

... Applause.

Our current brand-new New York State Legion
Commander, Gary Schacher.

... Applause.

Our immediate outgoing New York Commander, New
York's first woman Commander, which is sad to say, but I'm
glad to say we finally have one, Rena Nessler.

... Applause.

New York's brand-new Sons commander, James Coates.

... Applause.

And he, too, is an amazing supporter.

Our Immediate Past Detachment Commander, Bill
Clancy.

... Applause.

Now, in New York, when you serve as Detachment
Commander, you travel with the Legion, the Auxiliary, and
you make at least 63 visits to different counties in New
York and you travel together as a group.

The person I shared that year with as the Legion
commander is with us on stage, Mike Bowen, Past Department
Commander of New York. I'd like to make Mike a special
guest as well.

... Applause.

John Chang, our New York NECman, is with us.

... Applause.

Also a dual member, Colonel Chang.

... Applause.

David Bishop, our immediate past NEC is with us for the Sons of New York.

... Applause.

We have Marie Mock with us, the incoming Auxiliary President this year from New York.

... Applause.

We also have James Trujillo with us from New York, the Immediate Past National Vice Commander for the Legion.

... Applause.

I'd like to call somebody up that's special. They aren't holding a high office that you might recognize, but they're one of the only people from my squadron who came all the way to Minnesota. That's Matt Young, one of our squadron members from Hamburg, a good friend.

... Applause.

All right. At this time I would like to turn the podium back over to our Past Commander Danny Smith. Thank you all.

... Applause.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: At this time, I want to call on Past National Commander Jim Roberts for the presentation of the colors to the outgoing National Commander.

... Applause.

PRESENTATION OF FLAG

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER ROBERTS: Good afternoon, everybody.

Mr. Commander, Mr. Commander-Elect, delegates, ladies and gentlemen, in my opinion I have the most honored detail of any speaker that has appeared before this 47th Annual National Convention.

I remember a year ago when our National Commander Danny Smith accepted the colors and told us that he would serve and represent us and The American Legion family with honor and dignity.

By accepting these colors, he took on the responsibility to carry them high. And in my opinion he has. Danny has never forgotten where he's come from. He's never forgotten the service which made him eligible to be a member of the Sons of The American Legion. He's not forgotten the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform and their families that give us the ability to do

the things that we do every day. Danny has done an exemplary job this year, and I mean that from the bottom of my heart.

Danny and I served together the year I was National Commander on my team, and we had a banner year. And, Danny, you have exceeded my expectations, and I can't thank you enough for that. By following in their footsteps and making history, we have shown our organization and our Legion family that we do matter and we do great things.

And I am honored to stand here today on behalf of you, the members of this great organization, the Sons of The American Legion, to present the colors that Commander Smith has carried with him all year, and he has carried them high.

So, Mr. Commander, I present to you your colors for your year of service to this great organization.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Now I'll call forward Past National Commander Chris Cerullo for the presentation of the flag to the incoming commander.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER CERULLO: What an honor. What an honor to nominate Doc Gibbs a couple of hours ago.

As I said in a Facebook thing a couple of weeks ago, very emotional for me, for all the years I carried the title of Past National Commander. But knowing that Doc is going to fill my shoes, our organization is going to go so far.

And I know when he starts traveling with that standard flag, the memories that he's going to put on that flag when he returns home to Hamburg, New York, and he sits there and looks at that flag, because we're going to have a banner year -- "Doc."

NATIONAL COMMANDER-ELECT GIBBS: Thank you, sir.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER CERULLO: Enjoy your year.

Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER-ELECT GIBBS: Greg Falco, Sergeant-at-Arms, could you please come up to the stage.

Greg is somebody special in New York. Obviously special enough that we made him Master Sergeant-at-Arms this year. But he's been a special friend to me for many, many years, and I want to make Greg a distinguished guest to the convention as well.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: At this time National Sergeant-at-Arms George Sevick, please come forward. I'd like to make you a distinguished guest at this convention.
... Applause.

UNFINISHED/OLD BUSINESS

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Unfinished business, we have a little unfinished business. Past National Commander and chairman of the PNC panel, Kevin Collier, if you're here, please come forward for a presentation.

While he's working his way to the front, if my sister and my daughter are still here, I would ask that you kind of be waiting in the wings over here. Maybe they got tired of seeing me.

... Laughter.

Little do they know I'm going to be home a lot more.

... Laughter.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER COLLIER: As many of you may or may not know, there's a group of gentlemen called the Past National Commanders Panel. It's a group of 15.

The Internal Affairs of The American Legion poses questions, ideas, thoughts and asks for our opinion, which, as Past National Commanders, we do tend to be a

little opinionated. So not a problem. We'll give you our opinion anytime you ask.

But they also put forward sometimes some quests for us to move forward with. And so at this time, on behalf of the Past National Commanders, National Commander Danny Smith, outgoing here, I'd like to call forward a gentleman, Mr. Michael Seaton.

... Applause.

Past National Commander Seaton, can you --

... Applause.

We've got a special plaque, certificate for him here that says the Sons of The American Legion, in appreciation, awarded to Past National Commander Michael Seaton on the 50th anniversary -- so he's been around for a little while -- serving as National Chairman of the Sons of The American Legion, presented at the 2018 National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion.

Thank you for your service there 50 years ago getting us going, getting us started with all the other gentlemen that were here, but you led us and got us started. So thank you, Michael. Thank you.

... Applause.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SEATON: The other day when I came up here to present our distinguished guest badge to our National Commander. Afterwards somebody asked me: Well, how old were you when you were National Commander -- or became national chairman, as it was called at the time.

I was 19, and it was just the year before I went on active duty with the United States Army. And it was a group of about five or six individuals. Many of them went on to become National Commanders. The first group included Woody Mudge, J.R. Stillwell, Bob McBride, Bob Krauss. They were the ones who put together and took the initiative to go to The American Legion and say, "What is the future of the Sons of The American Legion?" And that conversation led to this organization and this convention.

And I want to thank everyone who was a part of that. Thank you.

... Applause.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Have a couple of other distinguished guest badges I'd like to present. At this time I'd like to have my daughter, Stacey, come forward.

I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th Annual National Convention.

... Applause.

My sister also took the time to come and join us, and I'd like to have my sister, Pam, come forward for a couple of distinguished guest badges. I'd like to make you a distinguished guest of our 47th Annual National Convention.

... Applause.

This one I would like you to take home in honor of our father, who is deceased, and my mother is still alive, not getting around very well. But I'd like you to take this one home and honor them. Thank you.

... Applause.

And one more, David Rippe. David Rippe and I have been friends for a long, long time. David, appreciate your service as National Commander's Aide. I'd like to make you a distinguished guest to this 47th National Convention.

... Applause.

All right. Moving right along. Any other old business, unfinished business to come before this convention, unfinished business?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER FAUST: Mr. Commander, Past National Commander David Faust from Wisconsin. I'd like this convention to pause and have a moment of reflection

to recognize the passing of one of our leaders. That is Past National Commander Chuck Belles of Virginia, who passed away this year.

Chuck was elected National Commander 30 years ago this week. He was a great father, a great husband, and served our organization honorably and with dignity. I respectfully ask Father Gary Gummersheimer to lead us in a prayer in remembrance of Chuck.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Please uncover.

FATHER GARY GUMMERSHEIMER: Gracious God, when one passes on to the Squadron Everlasting, they do so with Your humble and wonderful pride. They do so because they trusted in Your words to them that they would rise and walk with You.

We ask and commend to You the soul of Charles Belles. May we be reminded of the work that he did to lead our organization, and may we carry on in his memory and in all of the memory of our past departed comrades. For God and country. Amen.

... Chorus of amen.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you. Let's observe a moment of silence.

. . . At this time, the delegation observed a moment of silence.

You may recover. Any other unfinished business?

NEW BUSINESS

New business? Any new business? Any new business?

JOHN CHILDRESS: Commander, John Childress from the state of West Virginia. I have a presentation I'd like to make.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Like a donation?

JOHN CHILDRESS: Yes, sir.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Bring it forward. While he's doing that -- we never refuse money -- I did have a couple of Commanders coins left, I found, and there were two more people that wanted one of those, and they secured one with \$50 donations to the Endowment Fund. So there was another hundred dollars taken in this morning for that.

Yesterday, our totals, along with that \$100 this morning, brought us to \$53,000 turned in yesterday for the various programs of The American Legion.

... Applause.

Wait, it gets better. I think we've been saving the best until last, while he's working his way up here --

we'll calculate all this out later -- total dollars invested this past year-to-date of record, \$10,282,591. Total volunteer hours, 1,978,324 recorded to date. Value of those service hours: \$45,600,368. Total in value of service and actual dollars that you folks donated in support of the programs of The American Legion, nearly \$56 million.

... Applause.

Well over \$5 million more than we did last year. You all deserve a standing ovation. Give yourselves a standing ovation.

... standing ovation.

Thank you so much. It's greatly appreciated.

JOHN CHILDRESS: Commander, on behalf of the state of West Virginia, Department of West Virginia, I'd like to present a check for \$1,872 to the Children's Welfare Fund donation.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you, sir.

... Applause.

Any other new business? New business. We're going to move on for the good of the Sons.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE SONS

Is there any business For the Good of the Sons? And

I believe there should be.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Mr. Commander, Past National Commander Cliff Smith from Massachusetts. I just want to give a shoutout to the Detachment of Minnesota. On Friday they had a wonderful comedy night event.

I especially want to recognize Mr. Doug Bible, his wife, Marcia, for all the hard work they put into that. And for people that attended that, they know what happened.

I just want to let you know that Past National Commander Bible runs a travel agency. So if you would like to get a nice bus tour, please see him.

... Applause and laughter.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER BIBLE: Remember, we survived 555.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Our new theme.

Yes, sir.

... Laughter.

Butch Ray.

BUTCH RAY: Mr. Commander, Butch Ray, delegate from Illinois, Past National Chaplain.

Earlier today we heard, of course, that Tommy Cisna, Past National Commander, could not be here because he is in the hospital here locally.

He sends his regrets. Of course, he would love to be here. He is doing fine. He is fighting the infection with the help of the doctors there.

He would really appreciate calls and texts. And he says if you're still in town and want to visit, please bring liquor.

... Laughter.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: I'll be right with you. I think there was an announcement over here.

PAST VICE NATIONAL COMMANDER WARNER: Past National Vice Commander Ken Warner. I'd like to thank you for your year of service, and thank you for allowing me the privilege to be on your leadership team. It was an experience my wife and I will never ever forget. And thank you, Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: You're quite welcome.

... Applause.

Any others? PNC Bible.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER BIBLE: Mr. Commander, Past National Commander Douglas Bible, I have two very important announcements for the delegation this afternoon.

It is my honor and privilege to announce the leading candidate for National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion, a man who speaks from his heart, Mr. Clint Bolt from Virginia. Please stand.

... Applause.

Also, I'd like to announce to this delegation the second leading candidate for National Commander, you've seen him on stage earlier this weekend, Mr. Michael Fox, from California. Please stand.

... Applause.

Thank you, Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: You're welcome. Any other under the good of the Sons?

We'll move on to my final remarks. It's always tough to say goodbye -- wait a minute. You're the boss now.

NATIONAL COMMANDER-ELECT GIBBS: Tell my wife.

... Laughter.

Just want to take a minute. On the way out the door, we're handing these out. They look like dog tags,

but it's really a flash drive. And on that flash drive, the Sons members will remember that when Jeff Frain and Chuck Treat worked on the Commanders and Adjutants plan book and the calendar, we have an updated version of the new calendar. And that new handbook is on this flash drive.

Please take one of these on your way out the door. If you are here and you are not a Sons member, take this back with you and give it to one of your Sons squadron members, please.

Also homecoming activity cards will be passed out so you know when that is.

Thank you, Commander Smith.

... Applause.

CLOSING REMARKS and ANNOUNCEMENTS
Danny Smith, Outgoing National Commander

You can see where that team is going to take us. They'll be educating us well into the future, I'm sure. Thank you, Doc.

My final comments -- it's always tough to say goodbye. That's why I did a video. But I could never thank you all enough for this experience. And you all will remain my lifelong friends. So with that, before we

get too emotional, let's play the video. Hopefully it works.

VIDEO: "Good evening. John Chang introduced me to this poem. It's called 'Just a Common Soldier' by A. Lawrence Vaincourt, and I'd like to share it with you.

JUST A COMMON SOLDIER
(A Soldier Died Today)
By A. Lawrence Vaincourt

'He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling fast,
And he sat around the Legion, telling stories of the past.
Of a war that he had fought in and the deeds that he had done,
In his exploits with his buddies; they were heroes, every one.

And tho' sometimes, to his neighbors, his tales became a joke,
All his Legion buddies listened, for they knew whereof he spoke.
But we'll hear his tales no longer for old Bill has passed away,
And the world's a little poorer, for a soldier died today.

He will not be mourned by many, just his children and his wife,
For he lived an ordinary and quite uneventful life.
Held a job and raised a family, quietly going his own way,
And the world won't note his passing, though a soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state,

While thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great.

Papers tell their whole life stories, from the time that they were young,

But the passing of a soldier goes unnoticed and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land

A guy who breaks his promises and cons his fellow man?

Or the ordinary fellow who, in times of war and strife,

Goes off to serve his Country and offers up his life?

A politician's stipend and the style in which he lives

Are sometimes disproportionate to the service that he gives.

While the ordinary soldier, who offered up his all, Is paid off with a medal and perhaps, a pension small.

It's so easy to forget them for it was so long ago, That the old Bills of our Country went to battle, but we know

It was not the politicians, with their compromise and ploys,

Who won for us the freedom that our Country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger, with your enemies at hand,

Would you want a politician with his ever-shifting stand?

Or would you prefer a soldier, who has sworn to defend

His home, his kin and Country and would fight until the end?

He was just a common soldier and his ranks are growing thin,

But his presence should remind us we may need his like again.

For when countries are in conflict, then we find the soldier's part

Is to clean up all the troubles that the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honor while he's here to hear the praise,

Then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days.

Perhaps just a simple headline in a paper that would say,

Our Country is in mourning, for a soldier died today.'

Remember who we are, what we do and why we do it.

We are proud possessors of a priceless heritage, a heritage borne of sacrifice and service.

We are male descendants of the veterans of the great wars. We are the Sons of The American Legion. Stay true to our mission of service and remember their sacrifice."

... Applause.

That last little piece, that's my message. Stay true to our mission, stay true to our mission and remember their sacrifice.

Are there any other announcements before we adjourn? I will announce that the Post-Convention NEC meeting will begin 15 minutes after we adjourn in this room.

If there's no further business to come before this National Convention, the National Chaplain will lead us in the closing prayer.

BENEDICTION
James Noble, National Chaplain

Today we travel a new road together, a road that's never been traveled before. Let us together face new obstacles. Let us together discover what's around the next bend.

Let us together share the moment of new experiences. Also please put the blessings and guiding hand on our new Commander, Greg Gibbs.

And we'd like to also thank our Past National Commander Danny Smith with all his safe travels. For God and country, amen.

... Chorus of amen.

RETIREMENT OF THE POW/MIA FLAG AND THE COLORS
and ADJOURNMENT

NATIONAL COMMANDER SMITH: Sergeant-at-Arms, please come forward and retire the POW/MIA flag.

Please cover. National Champion Color Guard from District 12, the Detachment of California, please advance and retire the colors of our country.

. . . At this time, the delegation rose and rendered a right-hand salute.

Hand salute. Two!

I now declare this 47th National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion adjourned.

... At 1:40 p.m., the 47th Annual National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion was adjourned.

CERTIFICATION OF COMPLETION

I, DENISE HINXMAN, Certified Court Reporter, do hereby certify;

That on August 24 - August 26, 2018, I was present and took verbatim stenotype notes of the 47TH Annual National Convention entitled herein, and thereafter transcribed the same into typewriting as herein appears;

That said meeting 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 6th day of September 2018.

DENISE HINXMAN, CSR, RDR, CRC