

PROCEEDINGS

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF  
SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Pre-Convention Meeting

Indiana Convention Center  
Rooms 203 & 204 (Level 2)  
Indianapolis, Indiana

Friday, August 23, 2019  
10:00 a.m.

Reported by:  
Denise L. Hinxman, CSR, RDR, CRC

Captions Unlimited of Nevada  
P.O. Box 20905  
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*...At 10:01 a.m., Friday, August 23, 2019, the Pre-Convention Meeting of the National Executive Committee of Sons of the American Legion was called to order by National Commander Greg "Doc" Gibbs, New York, and the following proceedings were had:*

**Call to Order and Posting of the Colors**

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: With the colors of our nation in place, please join me with a right-hand salute by the numbers: One, two.

National Chaplain, David Rippe, please invoke the blessing of God.

Gentlemen, please uncover.

**Invocation**

**David L. Rippe, National Chaplain, Nebraska**

Before I give the blessing, I received some names of people we know in this organization who are ill: Of course, National Vice Commander Steve Gower; Keith Murdough of New Hampshire; and Mrs. John Mejia. Her name is Sugar. Please keep all of them in your prayers at this time. They're all very ill.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, as we gather today, make whatever

we do be works of excellence; that our work here be a difference as we seek to help others.

Help us to set our thoughts on things to benefit others and to speak only of what will help and encourage them. Amen.

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

*...The National Executive Committee observed a Moment of Silence.*

### **POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony**

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: 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 and MIAs that are still unaccounted for, as a reminder for us all 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 the defense of liberty and a full accounting of those missing.

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

I call upon National Vice Commander Pete Sierminski to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Pete Sierminski, National Vice Commander, Colorado**

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: Gentlemen, cover.

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

**Recitation of the Preamble to the Constitution of Sons of the American Legion**

**Edward M. Cleary, National Vice Commander, Arizona**

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

**Blue Star Banner Ceremony**

**Greg "Doc" Gibbs, National Commander, New York**

Serving as a constant reminder that servicemen and women on a daily basis are putting themselves at risk to ensure our freedoms, the Sons of the American Legion display a corporate Blue Star Service Banner at all meetings to serve as a symbol of our support of all military personnel serving

this great country.

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

National Adjutant Anthony Wright will now call the roll.

### **Roll Call**

*...National Adjutant Wright called the roll of the National Executive Committee as follows:*

### **NATIONAL OFFICERS**

National Commander

Greg K. "Doc" Gibbs, New York

National Vice Commanders

East: Michael S. Cotten, Delaware

South: Steve A. Gower, Sr., Virginia - Excused

Central: Matthew T. Christie, Illinois

Midwest: Peter J. Sierminski, Colorado

West: Edward M. Cleary, Arizona

National Adjutant

Anthony W. Wright, Pennsylvania

National Assistant Adjutants

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

James E. "Ed" Sheubrooks, Florida

Robert J. Avery, New York

David M. Ridenour, Indiana

Scott A. Williams, Virginia

Scott J. Thornton, Ohio

Jeffrey E. Hicks, New Jersey

National Chaplain  
David L. Rippe, Nebraska

National Historian  
Timothy S. Van Patten, II, New York

National Judge Advocate  
Joseph A. Paviglianti, New York

National Sergeant-At-Arms  
Gregory A. Falco, New York

National Assistant Sergeants-At-Arms  
Brian K. Waters, Pennsylvania  
Lyle G. Larson, Kansas - Excused  
Raymond P. Giehll, III, Indiana - Excused  
Augustin R. Diaz, Arkansas - Excused  
Charles Curtis, California

National Commander's Aide  
Gary W. Denmon, New York

#### **PAST NATIONAL COMMANDERS**

Danny J. Smith, Colorado  
Michael K. Seaton, California  
Robert A. McBride, Ohio  
J.R. Stillwell, Illinois  
John J. Smolinsky, Massachusetts - Absent  
Robert H. Faust, California - Excused  
James R. Hartman, Maryland  
Gregory D. Reis, Illinois - Absent  
Grant Jamieson, Michigan - Absent  
Charles E. Gannon, Maryland  
John M. Sherrard, California - Absent  
David P. Stephens, Indiana  
Christopher R. Cerullo, New York  
Frederick L. Hartline, Sr., Ohio - Excused  
Douglas P. Bible, Minnesota  
Richard L. League, Maryland - Absent  
David R. Faust, Wisconsin  
Robert A. Worrel, Indiana - Absent  
Eugene L. Sacco, California  
Roland D. Matteson, Arizona - Absent

Joseph M. Mayne, Minnesota  
 John T. Dietz, Kentucky - Excused  
 Jack E. Jordan, Texas - Absent  
 William E. Matoska, Maryland - Absent  
 Byron J. Robichaux, Louisiana  
 Richard L. Cook, Oklahoma  
 Kevin N. Winkelmann, Texas - Absent  
 Clifford A. Smith, Massachusetts  
 Steven C. Laws, North Carolina - Absent  
 Neal C. Warnken, Kansas - Absent  
 Michael J. Deacon, Iowa  
 William L. Sparwasser, Maryland - Absent  
 Earl R. Ruttkofsky, Michigan  
 Raymond P. Giehll, Jr., Indiana  
 Thomas E. Cisna, Illinois  
 Mark E. Arneson, Georgia - Absent  
 David L. Dew, Texas - Absent  
 James K. Roberts, III, Florida - Excused  
 Joseph W. Gladden, Maryland - Absent  
 Michael W. Moss, Colorado  
 Kevin L. Collier, Alaska  
 Jeffrey C. Frain, Arizona - Excused  
 Brian J. O'Hearne, Massachusetts - Absent

#### **NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMEN**

Alabama (N), Alaska (N), Arizona (A), Arkansas (B),  
 California (A), Colorado (B), Connecticut (N),  
 Delaware (B), Florida (B), France (Absent), Georgia (B),  
 Hawaii (Absent), Idaho (A), Illinois (N), Indiana (B), Iowa  
 (B), Kansas (B), Kentucky (B), Louisiana (B), Maine (B),  
 Maryland (A), Massachusetts (A), Michigan (B), Minnesota  
 (B), Mississippi (N), Missouri (N), Montana (A),  
 Nebraska (N), Nevada (A), New Hampshire (N),  
 New Jersey (B), New Mexico (B), New York (N),  
 North Carolina (N), North Dakota (Absent), Ohio (B),  
 Oklahoma (A), Oregon (N), Pennsylvania (Absent), Rhode  
 Island (Absent), South Carolina (A), South Dakota (Absent),  
 Tennessee (Absent), Texas (B), Utah (Absent), Vermont (N),  
 Virginia (N), Washington (N), West Virginia (Absent),  
 Wisconsin (Absent), Wyoming (B)

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

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: I now declare this Pre-Convention Meeting of the National Executive Committee of the Sons of the American Legion regularly convened.

**Reading of the Previous Meeting Minutes**

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: At this time I will have the National Adjutant, Anthony Wright, read the minutes of our last meeting.

NECMAN HENKEMEYER (MN): Mr. Commander, I move that since they were sent via email, that they be dispensed with.

I'm sorry, Dennis Henkemeyer, Minnesota.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: You have to act on the minutes.

NECMAN HENKEMEYER (MN): Oh. Approved as distributed. Pardon me.

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: Okay. If there are no objections, the minutes will stand as published subject to any written correction or additions.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Needs a second. Ask for any corrections?

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: I will second your motion, Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: All right,  
(indiscernible).

Any corrections or changes to the minutes as

published?

Seeing none, the minutes will stand as published.  
All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

Any opposed, same sign.

Carried.

At this time I'd like the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort our National S.A.L. Liaison, Ken George, to the podium for his remarks.

### **Greetings**

#### **Ken George, National S.A.L. Liaison**

Good morning, everybody. One more time. Good morning, everybody. That's what I want to hear. We're at our 49th convention -- let's get motivated, right?

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: 48th.

KEN GEORGE: Come on, guys, work with me.

*(Laughter)*

Congratulations on another membership year.

You're growing and you're meeting your goals. Currently you have nine Detachments that are at their all-time high in the history of their existence.

We got a lot accomplished this last year, the LEGION Act being the number one thing to pass. How does that impact the S.A.L.? Here's how it impacts it.

Let's hit the low-hanging fruit. Let's go for the

dualies. There's a lot of people in the ranks of the S.A.L. that weren't eligible in the previous sessions. Now there's only two: World War I and anything after December 7, 1941. If you served since that time to date, you are eligible.

So if you're out there, I want to see you join the Legion, and I want to see you maintain your status in the S.A.L. That's number one.

Number two is I want you to go out and encourage and find those people that we couldn't recruit before and let's recruit them back. Let's ask both questions: Which one are you eligible for? Because you're going to join both. All right.

And then another one, technology. I've got great news. I can't reveal all of it, but I can reveal some of it. There's a department out there -- there's going to be a second one -- that has online capability for renewal and for membership transmittals.

I can't reveal who that is, but that department knows who they are. And we're working out the bugs. And right now there's a soft goal -- I want to emphasize "soft" -- that we can get all detachments on online renewal by January 1st.

*(Applause)*

With that, it will make it a lot easier for everybody to join, renew.

And you adjutants out there -- how many adjutants I got, or was an adjutant? -- who would like to see online renewals where all you have to do is set up an ACH account, you put in the name and it sends it off and you're done, and you get a confirmation email saying these people have been renewed and in five days they're on your roster?

Would we like to see that? Absolutely.

So we have our convention. And I will say this. And I mean this because The American Legion actually demonstrates the way for democracy. So let's conduct ourselves with decorum, with dignity by showing our ability to demonstrate democracy, make policy for the good of the order, have a great convention.

Thank you.

*(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: Thank you, Ken.

At this time we will receive some of our commission reports. I will call on National Internal Affairs Commission Chairman Mark Tansel to the podium, along with Membership Committee Chairman -- is he going to be with us this morning? Anyway, Finance Commission is on deck. Sorry.

**Report - Internal Affairs Commission**

**Mark A. Tansel, Chairman, Internal Affairs Commission**

Good morning. Internal Affairs Commission met via conference call Monday evening August the 19th. All six members in attendance on the call.

The purpose of the call was to resolve some old business that was taken up at the convention last year in Minneapolis.

S.A.L. Resolution 1, Preconvention 2018, the title: National Convention Travel Reimbursement for the National Executive Committeemen of the Sons of the American Legion. Origin, Detachment of Mississippi.

After discussion -- we discussed it quite deeply. And after all the discussion, we decided to strike Point No. 3 of the Resolved clause, which is "Mileage, at the current American Legion rate, to and from the home airport."

So with that language being struck, the originator agreed to the language being struck, a motion was made to strike Guideline 3 from the Resolved clause, it was seconded, all members voted in favor of striking that resolution, and it was approved as amended.

So our disposition is that we recommend that this resolution be referred to the Subcommittee on Resolutions for further disposition.

Mr. Commander, that concludes the Internal Affairs Commission report minus the resolution.

NECMAN PIPHER (IN): Mike Pipher, NEC Indiana, moves

the adoption of the report minus the resolution.

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: Can we have a second to that?

NECMAN BROWN (GA): Bob Brown, NEC Georgia, I second.

NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE PAVIGLIANTI: Commander, one point I would address and make sure it's placed into the minutes is that from my understanding from the commission chairman is the commission's action was to approve the resolution and then submit it to the Subcommittee on Resolutions for their action.

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: Correct.

NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE PAVIGLIANTI: I don't believe I heard the word that it was approved. I want to clarify that in the statement.

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: Everybody have that? Any question regarding the motion?

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, nay.

Carried.

Finance commission, Bill Hill, come on up to the podium for your report.

### **Report - Finance Commission**

**William G. Hill, Chairman, Finance Commission**

The Finance Commission did meet twice over the summer

to address resolutions that were submitted regarding the dues increase.

I apologize for the exact number. I think it's actually eight now. There were seven for the dues increase of a \$3, and there was one submitted for a \$5 increase.

We reviewed all the resolutions. All the resolutions met the criteria; however, the one for \$5, there was not a projected budget for it.

What the Finance Commission does recommend to the Pre-NEC and to the Resolution Committee is that the seven, I think, that were \$3 were basically the same language in content. We recommend to the subcommittee for consolidation of those for one presentation.

But the Finance Commission did meet and approved the forwarding of those resolutions.

The second item was in the interim we had a request from The American Legion through our liaison, Ken George, for our budget.

The budget that we had forecasted was -- it was not a balanced budget. It showed a deficit of roughly \$312,000. The request was to come back, present a balanced budget.

What the Finance Commission did, we looked at it and we worked through the liaison. We did not increase any of our costs or expenditures.

What we did was we decreased -- there was a line item

in the budget that was for 612 -- roughly \$650,000 for -- let me make sure I'm specific -- the Operational Support Services line, was where we had the increase for American Legion.

Instead of increasing anything, we reduced that by a \$312,000 offset to create a balanced budget. That was submitted to Ken, through the Legion, and was approved.

I just want to make sure the Finance Commission also met to discuss that. We have now a balanced budget, and that has been presented and aligns with the \$3 increase for the dues, just as an alignment. I want to make sure that was clarification here.

Outside of that, the Finance Commission met and discussed that, approved that adoption. That information has been submitted to The American Legion through our liaison.

At this time, there are no further actions from the Finance Commission that I'm aware of.

That is my report, Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: Thank you, Bill. We have a motion for some action on the report.

ALTERNATE NECMAN COOK (OK): Jay Cook, Alternate NEC from Oklahoma, make a motion we accept the report.

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: Do we have a second?

NECMAN HUNTER (IL): Jimmy Hunter, NEC, Illinois,

seconds.

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: Thank you, Jim.

Any questions on the report?

ALTERNATE NECMAN PARSONS (CA): Alternate NEC Matt Parsons, California. Just a question through the chairs. Why are we passing a budget on a dues increase that hasn't been approved yet?

FINANCE CHAIRMAN HILL: That is our projected budget. The budget is not really not approved yet. It's a projected budget.

ALTERNATE NECMAN PARSONS (CA): If the dues increase doesn't go through?

FINANCE CHAIRMAN HILL: This budget is for 2020. If it does not pass, a revised budget would have to be proposed.

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: Any other questions on the report?

Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye.

Any opposed, nay.

Carried. Thank you, gentlemen.

If any other chairman has information that needs to be brought up before the National Executive Committee and not wait until the convention, please bring it forward at this time.

One more time, any business that we need to take care

of before the convention should be brought forth at this time.

**Old Business, New Business, and  
For the Good of the Sons of The American Legion**

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: Is there any old business that needs to be brought before the NEC at this time?

Any old business?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER GIEHLL (IN): Commander, PNC Raymond Giehll, Jr. Is Seth Rippe in the room? Seth? Are you here? No.

Commander, just as a point, we've had a National Updater who has done a great job for us for the last 24 years in Mike Pipher. And Mike ran his course; he's tired of kind of doing it.

So we've been kind of looking around for somebody to do that. We haven't found anybody yet, correct? Talked to Seth.

So just for the NEC, if you have somebody in mind who would be interested in doing that. We're not looking for somebody right this second, but we're looking for somebody pretty soon. Mike is going to continue through this convention.

And if you have somebody, see Seth Rippe or see me, and we will look to get somebody. Mike will help you with

the transition, just a point of information, so that we can get somebody on board doing that.

And thank you, Mike, for all the years you've done it. Because he's done a great job at it for a long time.

*(Applause)*

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: Thank you, Ray.

Thank you, Mike, for sure.

Any new business to be brought before the NEC at this time? Any new business to be brought before the NEC at this time? Any new business to be brought before the NEC at this time?

Anything for the good of the Sons of the American Legion?

NECMAN BROWN (GA): Commander, Bob Brown, NEC. I would suggest to the podium that we recognize all veterans in this room, especially those that are now just recently, because the LEGION Act, now Legion eligible.

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: Yes, gentlemen who are veterans, stand up. Those that are newly eligible please stand up as well.

*(Applause)*

Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you for your service.

*(Applause)*

Indeed, you guys are the backbone of our organization. Thank you for being here. We appreciate it.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEPHENS (IN): Dave Stephens, Past National Commander. Just from the PNC from Indiana, fellow members from Indiana, welcome to Indianapolis.

But one thing I'd like to bring up, I know you guys like to eat. Let you know here, in Indianapolis this week, is Devour Indy. Some of the finest restaurants in the city like St. Elmo's, Morton's Steakhouse, Oceanaire, go online to Devour Indy because a lot of these places, especially like St. Elmo's and all that stuff, would like to have reservations to make sure you get the discount.

Usually get about a three- or four-course meal for about 30, 40 bucks, where you'd be paying 60 or more.

Just to let you know, Devour Indy. Find it on the website -- not on our website -- but just Devour Indy when you're searching on Google or whatever. All your restaurants will be listed on there, menus and everything.

Thank you, Commander.

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: Any other announcements? If not, I'm going to give a couple myself.

### **Final Announcements**

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: I did have the pleasure of going to The American Legion World Series baseball games, which was fantastic, in North Carolina. And then

immediately following the Legacy Run all the way to Indianapolis.

Didn't ride myself. I had planned to, but my car fell on my hand and decided to change my plans. But I was on the ride.

And anybody here that's in the room that's a rider, or if you've got a close friend who is a rider back home, see my aide, Gary Denmon, right up front. He'll give you one of these patches that commemorates our support of the Legacy Scholarship Fund.

It was a great time. And I highly encourage anybody to take part of the ride, some of the ride, any of the ride. If it goes near you, through your state, hook onto it and do it. It's unbelievable to see 350-plus bikers all together all riding through small towns, and the waves you get and the signs and the flags, et cetera, it's a great time.

It was really enjoyable. And I thank our staff member, Ken George, for making sure that I was taken care of during the last three or four days. So it was great.

Yes, Idaho was the World Series champion. It was great watching all those teams, though, as well. The talent is unbelievable, guys. If you're really into baseball, you ought to go and just do it as a spectator. Just go there. It's unbelievable.

The people in the town take care of you like you

wouldn't believe. When they see any Legion gear on you at all, they're like: Thank you for coming, thank you for coming to our town. Very supportive.

Highly encourage any participation. It was a great, great time. Rained. Couple games rained out, but it was still a good time even in the rain.

If there's no further business to come before us at this time, I'm going to ask our National Chaplain, David Rippe, to lead us in a closing prayer.

Please uncover, gentlemen.

### **Benediction**

**David L. Rippe, National Chaplain, Nebraska**

Lord, as we conclude this meeting, we know that this is only the beginning of days ahead where our leadership will be tested. We ask that our wisdom be used for the betterment of the Sons of the American Legion. Amen.

### **Closing Remarks**

**Greg "Doc" Gibbs, National Commander, New York**

Cover. Until we meet again, let us remember that our obligation to our country can only be fulfilled by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship.

Let service to the community, state and nation be the main objective of the Sons of The American Legion. Let us

be ever watchful of the honor of our country, The American Legion, our organization and ourselves. And nothing shall swerve us from the path of justice, freedom, loyalty and democracy.

### **Retirement of the Colors and Adjournment**

NATIONAL COMMANDER GIBBS: With the colors of our nation in place, please join me for a hand salute by the numbers. One. Two.

I now declare this 2019 Pre-Convention Meeting of the NEC adjourned. We meet again at 1:00.

Thank you.

*...At 10:28 a.m., Friday, August 23, 2019, the National Executive Committee Pre-Convention Meeting of the Sons of the Americana Legion was adjourned.*

## CERTIFICATION OF COMPLETION

I, DENISE HINXMAN, Certified Court Reporter, do hereby certify;

That on Friday, August 23, 2019, I was present and took verbatim stenotype notes of the Meeting 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 11th day of September, 2019.

DENISE HINXMAN, CSR, RDR, CRC