

# The best of the best...

### Membership

Hartline Award (*Detach w/ most new squadrons*)  
Alabama - Missouri - North Carolina

Houghton Award (*greatest % increase in membership*)  
Category 1 - Nevada Category 2 - North Carolina  
Category 3 - Missouri Category 4 - New Jersey  
Category 5 - Michigan

Highest Renewal Percentage by Region  
East - France South - Louisiana  
Central - Wisconsin West - Nevada  
Midwest - North Dakota

Nation's Largest Squadron  
Newport Harbor, CA Squadron 291 (1,575)

First in Each Region to Reach 100%  
East - Maine South - Alabama  
Central - Iowa Midwest - North Dakota  
West - Nevada

### Americanism

Atwood/Beyea/York Memorial Award  
Detachment - Utah  
District - Ninth District, Georgia  
Squadron - Vestal, NY Sq 89

### National Emergency Fund

Largest Donations Per Capita in nation - Arkansas  
South - Arkansas Central - Iowa  
Midwest - Colorado West - Oregon

### Children and Youth

Detachment - Georgia  
District - Fourth District, Georgia  
Squadron - Phelps, NY Sq 457  
South - Tybee Island, GA Sq 154  
Central - East Grand Forks, MN Sq 157  
Midwest - Dorchester, NE Sq 264  
East - Westfield, MA Sq 124  
West - Indio, CA 739

### Child Welfare Foundation

Garland Murphy Award (largest donation) - Arizona & Indiana  
Udie Grant Award (top Legion Family combined) - Arizona  
Meritorious Achievement Award - Arizona & Indiana (\$110,000)  
Largest Donations by Region  
East - Vermont South - Mississippi  
Midwest - Colorado  
Excellence Award (largest per capita) - Nevada (\$18.65)  
Largest Per Capita by Region  
East - Vermont South - Mississippi  
Midwest - Colorado Central - Indiana

### Community Service

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

### Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Charles B. Rigsby Award (*Volunteer of the Year*)  
Jeffery L. Gibson - Phenix City, AL Sq 135  
Kirby Kepler Award (*best squadron rehab report*)  
McLean, VA Sq 270  
Allen I. O'Brian (*best District rehab report*)  
First District, Georgia  
Earl Webster Award (*best Detach rehab report*)  
Georgia

### Historian

History Book Award  
Squadron - LaPlata, MD Sq 82  
Detachment - Kansas

### Color Guard

Clyde Stillwell Award and Guidon  
12th District, CA Color Guard

### Commander's Legacy Scholarship Awards

Largest Donation - Ohio  
South - Tennessee  
East - Delaware  
Midwest - Nebraska & Kansas  
West - Oregon

### Snapshots of Service

*The first-ever awards for photography were won by (from top to bottom):*  
**Children & Youth:**  
**Colorado Springs, CO Sq 209, Americanism:**  
**Henderson, NV Sq 40, National Security:**  
**Newport Beach, CA Sq 291, and Veterans Affairs:**  
**Gladstone, MI Sq 71.**



# NATIONAL UPDATE

Official Newsletter of the Sons of The American Legion  
**Special Convention Edition - August 20, 2017**

## Reno convention one for the records

Sons representing a record 50 out of 55 Detachments gathered in Reno, NV this weekend for their 46th annual National Convention. Another record was the 919 delegates registered, an increase made possible by the all-time high of more than 365,000 S.A.L. members worldwide so far in 2017. That's 2,000 more than one year ago.

National Commander Jeff Frain gaveled the convention to order early Friday afternoon. Three days of meetings, reports, awards, and guest speakers culminated on Sunday with new S.A.L. national officers being elected and sworn in.

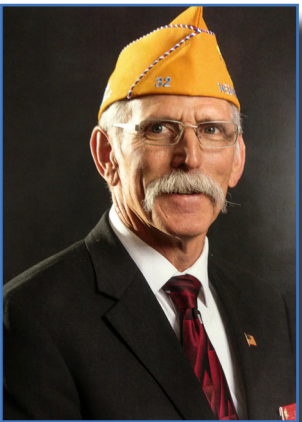
"This was a good year. Everything ran smoothly," reported National Assistant Adjutant Emeritus Harold Thompson, Jr (NE), Chairman of the Sons' National Convention Credentials Committee.

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## "Veterans are my passion"

The newest National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion is Danny Smith. He is the first-ever S.A.L. National Commander from the Detachment of Nebraska.

Smith is a 44 year continuous member of the Sons. His eligibility is through his father, a Korean War Air Force veteran. His parents were both charter members of their respective American Legion Post and Auxiliary Unit. He and his wife, Donna, have been married 42 years. Their children and grandchildren are all American Legion Family members. Danny has worked in



the construction industry for over 46 years. He and his family have all served as volunteers at their near-by veterans home and he has been active in several other community organizations, as well.

The new commander hits the ground running, wanting to pull closer together with other branches

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## Sons have a legacy to run

This year's Legacy Run was an accident-free motorcycle convoy that saw 262 people on 247 motorcycles travel 1,400 miles through four states in six days and raise well over \$600,000 for The American Legion's Legacy Scholarship. And the Sons of The American Legion had a lot to do with its success.

Although the Run officially began in Fort Dodge, KS on August 12, many riders started out several days and many miles before then.

"This was my 10th year," said Road Captain Doug Heiser (IN), who rode 1,100 miles just to get to the starting line. "It's not for everybody, but once you find out you enjoy it, they will come back and then it's a family reunion. The S.A.L. is a large contingency of those who are on the ride. Our numbers and the funds we raise keep increasing every year."

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## Big boost for TFA program

Shortly before the start of their 46th National Convention, members of the S.A.L. National Executive Committee held their pre-convention meeting and voted to adopt several resolutions. One would authorize the creation of an official Trophy and Awards Manual that will explain each of the organization's national awards and the procedures for reviewing and presenting them. It will be made available online.

Another resolution would create a decorative ribbon to be given to all Detachments that earn the prestigious "Triple Nickel" designation by reaching 105 percent of their member-

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Records / from Page 1

Sons came into Reno this year riding a wave of record-setting successes chalked up over the past 12 months. In addition to membership records, S.A.L. contributions to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation this year surpassed all previous fundraising efforts and many Detachments raised more money for CWF than ever before. The Legacy Run motorcycle convoy raised a new record amount of money to benefit The Legion's Legacy Fund and a record number of Sons not only rode in the 1,400 mile trek but also served in leadership positions throughout.

On Friday morning, National Executive Committee members of the S.A.L. voted to move \$300,000 from the organization's reserves to The Legion's National Endowment Fund for use by the Temporary Financial Assistance program. Once approved by The Legion's own N.E.C., it will be the largest one-time shift of reserve funds made by the S.A.L. and will do much good for the families of veterans and others in need. One other milestone this year was news that the S.A.L. has been given a two year appointment to the prestigious Veterans Administration National Advisory Committee of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service, a move that acknowledges enormous contributions of time and money Sons have poured into veterans' affairs in recent years.

Newly-elected officers of the Sons will have their work cut out for themselves if they want to arrive in Minneapolis next August with a fistful of new accomplishments. But the bar has been set high 45 times before and records are always there to be broken.



Legacy / from Page 1

Earl Ruttkofsky (MI) was the first S.A.L. Past National Commander to ride the entire Run 11 years ago. It's become a custom for him to give American Legion National Commanders a ride on his bike on at least one leg of the trip. Two other Sons PNC's that have become leaders within the Run are Joe Gladden (MD) and Bill Sparwasser (MD).

"Almost half of the Assistant Road Captains were S.A.L. and there were at least four Sons as Tail Gunners," said Sparwasser. "Sons ridership was about double from last year. About 20 percent of those involved this year were S.A.L. I do it because I see the direct benefit to our post-911 veterans. I personally know a young lady who was awarded a Legacy Fund scholarship."

Ron Moore, N.E.C. for the Detachment of France, rode five days from his home in Washington, DC to arrive in Kansas for the start of this year's Run.

"I can't say it's fun," according to Moore. "It's a very stressful ride. You don't see anything except the guy in front of you because you must be sure you're in control of your motorcycle at all times. But, to ride for the children of our fallen and disabled vets, it makes me feel I've given something back to this country and the veterans."

**Legacy Run (Clockwise): Bill Sparwasser and friends selfie - Doug Heiser and Sons at a rest stop - High desert scenery as riders close in on their Reno destination.**



Danny / from Page 1

of The Legion Family tree.

"We're all brothers and sisters in this organization," says Smith. "I would really like to see us come together as an organization and work together with those common goals we all share. We can do it."

"I've adopted The Legion's Endowment Fund and also the National Emergency Fund as my big programs this year. I know that Sons will continue to support Child Welfare. I don't believe I need to urge them to do that because everyone knows that's our premier program. I just want to take support for additional American Legion projects to the next level, to the level we have done with Child Welfare, and make more of them premier programs within the Sons, as well."

"I want every member of the Sons to pause and remember that we're all privileged to be a member because someone served and sacrificed. Veterans are my passion."



N.E.C. / from Page 1

ship goals, and have an 85 percent renewal rate, and charter at least five new squadrons, all before July 1 of the award year.

Perhaps most importantly, the N.E.C. voted to approve the transfer of \$300,000 from its reserves to The American Legion National Endowment Fund to be used for the Temporary Financial Assistance Program. It's the largest single donation ever made to a Legion program from the Sons' reserves and it's being made in recognition of The Legion's upcoming 100th anniversary celebration.

All of the N.E.C's actions this weekend will take effect if and when approved by The Legion's own N.E.C.

