

The Sons of The American Legion

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NATIONAL UPDATE

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Destination Baltimore: *Another year means another CWF record* Sons ready to convene

Known as the home of the Star Spangled Banner, Baltimore, Maryland has been an important city along the east coast since it was first settled more than 300 years ago. Hundreds of star-spangled members of the S.A.L. will descend on Baltimore this month for the 44th National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion.

The convention gets underway on Friday, August 28 with committee meetings and the pre-convention National Executive Committee meeting. National Commander Michael Moss will call the convention to order at 1pm on Friday afternoon in Hall C on Level 100 of the Baltimore Convention Center. General sessions will continue throughout the afternoon Friday, then start up again at 9am on Saturday and 8am on Sunday. In addition to year-end reports, visits from various dignitaries, convention delegates will elect the organization's newest national officers and the next National Commander of the Sons.

Also on Sunday, The American Legion Family is encouraged to attend the annual Patriotic Memorial Service. This year's memorial service starts at 1pm in the Baltimore Convention Center and will feature the inspiring music of The Texas Tenors.

The convention will conclude on Sunday afternoon in time for Sons to par-

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The administrative deadline for Child Welfare Foundation donations ends on May 31 each year. In the days and weeks leading up to that date, The Children and Youth office on the second floor of The American Legion National Headquarters receives a lot of mail and has to account for all of the money which comes cascading in.

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Above - Jason Kees, American Legion Deputy Director of Children and Youth Programs, and administrative assistant Aubrey Dunn are responsible for tallying CWF donations.

Baltimore *from Page 1*

participate in the annual American Legion Convention Parade that will run through downtown Baltimore. The parade route and Department line-up schedules and much more information can be found at www.legion.org/convention.

Delegates and guests to the convention are registered in advance through their respective Detachments. Representatives of each Detachment can pick up credentials in the S.A.L. Convention Office located in Hall G on Level 300 of the Convention Center.

While there is no specific dress code during the convention, there are some guidelines. Delegates who expect to be on stage to receive awards are expected to wear a coat and tie. Otherwise, trousers, shirts and shoes always

look nice when dignitaries and special guests pay a visit. Shorts, tank top shirts and flip-flops are discouraged.

Nearly all of the official convention hotels are located in downtown Baltimore within a few blocks of the convention center. Shuttle busses will move delegates between their hotels and the Convention Center. On Friday, the shuttles will run from 7am to 8pm, until 5:30pm on Saturday and until 2:30pm on Sunday.

Delegates and their families will have much to see and do while attending the convention. Golf enthusiasts will be glad to hear the Detachment of Maryland will be sponsoring a golf tournament on at 8:30am Thursday, August 27. The Detachment will also offer a dinner and karaoke for visitors from

6-to8pm on Friday evening. Shuttle busses will be offered.

Baltimore is home to several major league sports teams and National Convention visitors will have an opportunity to become fans. On Saturday, the Baltimore Ravens are at home against the Washington Redskins in an NFL pre-season game. For those remaining in Baltimore after the conclusion of the S.A.L. convention, the Baltimore Orioles have a home game at historic Camden Yards against the Tampa Bay Rays.

Overall, Baltimore is a colorful and diverse city. It's Maryland's largest city and economic hub. It's known for its beautiful harbor, quirky, distinct neighborhoods, unique museums and the world-renowned Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Many accomplishments in so little time

By **Mike Moss**
National Commander

One year ago, I raised my right hand as Commander of The Sons of The American Legion and took the oath to up hold our val-

ues. I hope I have done just that.

This year there were some first time accomplishments.

There were two detachments that had a first time visit from a National Commander. They were the Detachments of Montana and Nevada.

Although these detachments have but 1,400 members between them, they are as deserving of equal recognition as the much larger detachments. The Sons of The American Legion is well recognized within these departments for they are major contributors to The Legion's programs.

The Department of Maryland held its annual Polar Plunge for Special Olympics in January and I'm proud to say I was a participant, jumping into the frigid waters of Chesapeake Bay. The American Legion Family was able to raise over \$25,000 that weekend.

Throughout the year I focused on two major American Legion programs, one being the National Emergency Fund and the other The American Legion Endowment Fund. This was the first administrative year that the Sons have ever embraced the Endowment Fund as a fundraising project. We opened the door of awareness and have set a standard for future involvement. I'm happy to report that we have raised over \$24,000 for this project.

As always, the Sons of The American Legion continued our successful involvement with the Child Welfare Foundation. We continued to be the foundation's largest contributor by raising over \$365,000.

As I have traveled across our nation this year I have tried to focus on youth and the impact they have within our organization. I have met some outstanding young men in every detachment, all of them willing to serve our communities and our veterans.

You see, youth are the future of our nation. It's up to us to build our "Bridge to the Future."

I want to thank all the S.A.L.'s national officers, commission and committee members for the work they have put in this year. I also want to thank all departments of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and detachments for the wonderful hospitality everyone has shown my wife Linda and me during our travels this year.

I would also like to thank National Commander Mike Helm of The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary National President Janet Jefford for the passion they have shown toward our veterans and our youth, as well as the service they have shown to The American Legion Family.

God Bless the United States and God Bless the American Legion Family.



National Commander Moss has placed emphasis on youth activities this year and always managed to carve out time for kids during his visits around the country.

Top - Photo op with youngsters attending the Detachment of Arizona's annual youth camping trip
Middle - a gathering of youth during the Detachment of Louisiana Convention

Bottom - Delivering a Josh Dog in St. John's Hospital in Illinois

Endowment Fund awards established

The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation has introduced two new Sons of The American Legion awards, both named for prominent Legionnaires who were instrumental to the fund's birth and long-term success. The Harry W. Colmery Legacy Award will honor the detachment with the highest donation to the Endowment Fund for the membership year. The James A. Drain Founder's Award will honor the detachment with the highest per-capita in donations. The awards will be given annually. They will be presented for the first time at the upcoming S.A.L. National Convention in Baltimore.

So far this year, funds collected by Sons and donated to The American Legion Endowment Fund donations total \$30,411.

The National organization is asking every Squadron, District, County and Detachment to please make every effort to donate to the Endowment Fund, to help us reach our National Commander's goal of \$90,000.

Remember to write "S.A.L." on the memo line when sending a donation check to National Headquarters.

Left and Below - Harry's portrait watches over the new board room and historical artifacts related to the birth of the G.I. Bill.



Priceless heritage includes Endowment

In 1925, World War I veterans, widows and children continued to struggle to return to a regular life. Even though it was still in its infancy, The American

Legion stepped up to take action by undertaking a fundraising campaign that would make an impact across the nation.

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. Since those early days, tens of millions of dollars have been distributed to disabled veterans and children of those who served this great nation.

Your gifts and donations are added to a trust fund that is administered by The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation. The corporation, whose members are selected by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, takes great care to ensure that these gifts are wisely invested. Income from fund investments is then passed on to the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation and Children & Youth programs of The Legion to support national, state and local programs for veterans and children.

Is the ghost of Harry Colmery roaming the halls of Nat'l HQ?

Past American Legion National Commander William Detweiler spoke to members of the S.A.L. National Executive Committee in May with the purpose of announcing the creation of two new national awards for National Endowment Fund fundraising. But in the process, he let slip the mention of a running joke between staff members at the National Headquarters in Indianapolis. The joke is that the ghost of Harry Colmery has been roaming the halls of the headquarters.

Harry W. Colmery was National Commander of The American Legion in 1936-37 and is remembered as the man who wrote the G.I. Bill, post-World War II legislation that has provided benefits to millions of veterans over the past 60 years. He once occupied a small office on the third floor of the National Headquarters building in Indianapolis. Over the years, that office became little more than a dimly lit, smelly, cluttered storeroom that

most staffers preferred to avoid. The running joke was that Harry still haunted it. Recently renovated, it's now a brightly lit board room used by leaders of the Endowment Fund. A display case and wall hangings honor the work of Harry Colmery and help tell the story of how he became the author of the G.I. Bill.

Now a much more user-friendly space, one has to believe Harry is pleased with the fact the room is still being used to help so many.



THIS IS HOW WE ROLL



gone; you just have to look for it.”

Rick Trzcinski and Blair Sanders of **Kerrville, TX Sq 208** had a good idea for this year's S.A.L. National Veterans Assistance Day. They took four wounded veterans out on a fishing trip near LaGrange, TX. **(Left)**

Monroe, NC Sq 27 received a big thank you letter from the North Carolina USO because of a small boat load of goodies the Sons bought with money they had raised and donated just in time for the holidays last December. **(Right)**



For the fourth year in a row, Sons from **New Windsor, NY Sq 1796** hosted the Pearl Harbor Day. A local school provided the color guard and drill team. There was music and a keynote speaker. After wreaths were blessed and tossed into the Hudson River, all of the vets in attendance lined up and received a Pearl Harbor Day Coin. Lunch followed in the Legion Hall.

Sons member Joe Schultis, a member of **Auburn, IN Sq 97**, had an opportunity to fly to Washington, DC this spring as part of an Honor Flight entourage. Joe's job was to assist a World War II veteran named Arlo Bowman. Arlo had flown as crew chief on a C-47 troop carrier during the war, but he hadn't flown since he was discharged more than 60 years ago. To say the day



was emotional would be an understatement. In addition to getting V.I.P. treatment at the airport and a police escort to the World War II memorial in downtown DC, Arlo was greeted there by U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly. **(Left)** There were other monuments visited throughout the day and more excitement at the airport when they all arrived home late that night. Joe writes, "Patriotism is not

Detachment of Indiana Past Commander Kirk Rewerts made a year-long project out of raising money to benefit a foundation that maintains the boyhood home of Ernie Pyle in Dana, IN. Pyle was a World War II journalist whose columns were followed closely by millions of soldiers and sailors as well as families on the home front. At the end of his term, Rewerts and other Hoosier S.A.L. leaders turned over more than \$11,000 that will go a long way toward preserving cherished memories of a Hoosier icon.

John Luck is a member of **Vienna, VA Sq 180**. This winter, he was afforded an opportunity to accompany a group of veterans and college students on a trip to Vietnam to visit a variety of sights and battlegrounds. Included in the group of vets was a Marine Medal of Honor recipient and two ex-POW's who had been held for six years at the infamous "Hanoi Hilton." John says the trip was "profoundly humbling" and he has giving presentations about the trip to other S.A.L. members in Virginia. **(Left)**



In April, **Lititz, PA Sq 56** held a benefit breakfast for Disabled American Veterans in memory of Mike Duncan, the squadron's first and only commander until he joined the Squadron Everlasting earlier this year. After a full morning of breakfast buffets, and with help from the Auxiliary and Riders, the squadron realized they had raised \$2,000 for the DAV in Mike's name. **(Right)**



Much of the fun in this organization involves unofficial activities where Sons just get together among themselves. Such was the case this spring when Sons from eight different Detachments gathered at **Hamburg, NY Post 527** for a party celebrating a National Vice Commander candidate. There was food and music. There was a tour of a Naval Park Museum that included several ships and a submarine. There was a bus tour that headed for Niagara Falls and a casino. The gathering was also used as an excuse to conduct a small leadership seminar for about 30 participants.



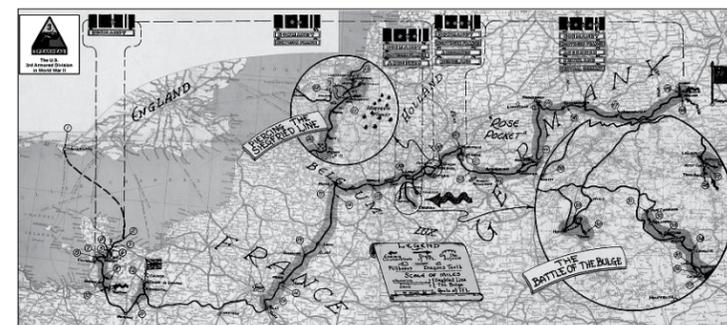
Saegertown, PA Sq 205 keeps veterans in their hearts and minds. This spring, they donated \$1,000 to the Pennsylvania Soldier and Sailor Home of Erie. The squadron also regularly donates T-shirts and cases of popcorn packets for the resident's enjoyment on an ongoing basis. **(Left)**



This was another banner year for **Milltown, NJ Sq 25**. In addition to breaking membership records, the squadron donated money to Fisher House and CWF. They also took care of their local food pantry and contributed to the holiday funds of three local churches. Money for all of this came from pancake and pasta nights the guys put on twice each year. They also served up a dinner with live bands to raise money for a family that lost everything in a fire. **(Left)**

Lou Baczewski is a teacher, an author and a member of **Streator, IL Sq 218**. His grandfather served in the 3rd Armored Division in Europe during World War II and Lou remembers listening to and recording the stories his grandpa told about combat. Eventually, Lou began to realize he wanted to do more than just retell his grandfather's experiences. So Lou is spending this summer biking through Europe, filming a documentary and retracing the path taken by his grandfather more than three generations ago. He's also turned this into a fundraising effort and he hopes to raise money and awareness for veterans and their families. **(Below)**

Congratulations to one of our newest – and proudest – group of Sons. **Ocean Springs, MS Sq 42** was chartered this year and now they have the paperwork to prove it. That's Detachment of Mississippi Commander Raymond Thorton delivering the paperwork to the Post's Vice Commander, Sandra Reid. **(Left)**



Legion launching tribute to Old Glory

The American Legion is launching a multimedia tribute to Old Glory that will explore the flag's meaning, the price paid for all it symbolizes and the special place it occupies in our conscience and culture.

The American Legion wants the public to be a part of this tribute to our flag. Social media users are encouraged to post photos of Old Glory, or share what the U.S. flag means to them, on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram using the hashtag #MyUSFlag. Those who want to participate also can pin photos of the flag to the Legion's Pinterest page. (www.pinterest.com/talhq/).

"Indivisible: The Story of Our Flag," will be a collectible American Legion Centennial bookazine. Through illustrations and text, it will tell the story of the U.S. flag from the American Revolution to the Global War on Terrorism. Voices, unique facts, historical anecdotes and more will team up with beautiful illustrations to tell that story.

Combining with the bookazine will be a web platform housed on www.legion.org that will include videos, frequently asked questions, U.S.



Sons having an impact

Everywhere you turn these days, you can see members of the Sons contributing to key roles in important American Legion programs. The photo above is just one of many examples. Boys Nation is one of the nation's premier youth leadership programs and more than half of the staff of Boys Nation 2015 are members of the S.A.L. Many of the staff are dual members of The Legion and the Sons. They include a Past National Commander of The American Legion as well as several senior staff members of The Legion's National HQ's in Indianapolis and Washington, DC. Many are also instrumental in their own Boys State programs.

Flag Code standards, stories of interest and other valuable resources. A mobile app also will be available as part of the campaign, and will feature information about the display of the flag, photos, videos and flag etiquette.

The American Legion has a long-standing history of flag advocacy. On Flag Day, June 14, 1923, the Legion convened a summit in Washington, D.C., to draft a code of flag etiquette. The Legion and 68 other patriotic, civic and military organizations created the U.S. Flag Code, which was signed into law by Congress on June 22, 1942.

Membership 2015 Leaders

Dist of Columbia	152 %
Oklahoma	131 %
Mississippi	126 %
Nevada	120 %
Idaho	115 %
Wyoming	110 %
South Carolina	107 %
Florida	106 %
Rhode Island	106 %
Montana	105 %
Minnesota	105 %
South Dakota	103 %
California	103 %
North Carolina	103 %
Iowa	101 %
Illinois	101 %
Louisiana	101 %
Georgia	101 %
Indiana	100 %
Maryland	100 %
Nat'l Total	99 %

CWF from Page 1

Total donations to CWF this year were \$618,896, surpassing last year by more than \$73,000. More than half of this year's total was donated by members of the Sons. S.A.L. contributions tallied more than \$360,510. That was 58% of all money raised for CWF.

In all the years Sons have been raising money for CWF, Sons have raised close to \$6.4 million.

The Detachment of Ohio raised more money for the cause this year than any other, reporting a staggering \$50,000. With close to 36,000 members, Ohio's contributions represented \$1.60 raised by each member of the Sons in the Buckeye State. Other major contributors included:

- Florida: \$29,155 (\$1.81 per capita)
- Colorado: \$27,274 (\$9.01 per capita)
- Arizona: \$25,494 (\$3.82 per capita)
- Pennsylvania: \$21,570 (\$0.36 per capita)
- Indiana: \$18,050 (\$0.48 per capita)
- New Hampshire: \$17,793 (\$3.00 per capita)

Leading the country in per capita contributions this year was the Detachment of Hawaii. With only 31 members, Hawaii's \$600 contribution amounted to \$19.35 per member. Mississippi's 564 members accounted for \$8,000, or a per capita of \$14.18. Colorado's \$27,274 was a \$9.01 per capita. Nevada's \$2,399 was an \$8.22 per capita. Wyoming's \$5,748 was a \$4.92 per capita.

Based on this year's contributions, the following awards will be handed out at the National Convention:

- U.S. "Udie Grant Legacy Award -- awarded to the top department nationally (combined totals from Legion, Auxiliary, S.A.L. and 8&40) -- Department of Florida.
- Garland D. Murphy, Jr. Award -- awarded to the most active individual detachment based on contributions -- Detachment of Ohio.

In April of 2014, the S.A.L. passed the \$6 million mark in all-time CWF contributions. Now at \$6.3 million, the \$7 million mark is within reach.



Ever wonder what Legion programs Your squadron could be involved in to help veterans? To have fun? Youth programs? Take a look at:

www.legion.org/programs

There's much (fun) to choose from!

(Left) - It took the efforts of three separate Pennsylvania S.A.L. squadrons to pull off a successful horseshoe tournament this spring. Thanks to the cooperation of Langhorne, PA Sq 148, Fallsington, PA Sq 834 and Levittown, PA Sq 960, more than \$2,000 was raised to benefit Operation Comfort Warrior.

Do you have a story to share?

Send ideas and pictures to:

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Next deadline is

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