Sons reached new heights this year

A long line of special guests took turns on stage in Minneapolis this weekend commending Sons for their fundraising, volunteer, and membership achievements over the past year. More than 900 delegates were regis-

tered for the Sons’ 47th National Convention, even though a Pacific Ocean hurricane prevented delegates from Hawaii from attending.

Minneapolis was the site of the very first American Legion National Convention 100 years ago. Although the S.A.L. was created in 1932, the organization did not begin conducting convention-like meetings until the 1970’s.

Sons continued their decades-long annual increase in membership this year, coming to the convention with 366,226 members spread across 6,152 squadrons in 55 detachments. Even with a significant number of Con-

Certainly, Commander Danny Smith with his father’s U.S. Flag and dog tags during opening ceremonies of the 47th National Con-

vention. Each day, different S.A.L. riders took turns carry-

ing the flag and tags the entire length of this year’s run in memory of Danny’s veteran father.

“What’s up, Doc?” is for real

His campaign motto was “Honoring the Past...Contin-

uining the Legacy.” Now, having been elected to serve the next year as National Commander of the Sons, Greg “Doc” Gibbs is poised to help our national organization move forward at the same time The Legion is observing its 100th year of service to veterans, military, communi-
ties, and youth.

An honorary lifetime member of Hamburg, NY

Squadron 527, “Doc” has been a member of the Sons for Continued on Page 2

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Above - Sons who served as group leaders of this year’s American Legion Legacy Run presented National Com-
mander Danny Smith with his father’s U.S. Flag and dog tags during opening ceremonies of the 47th National Con-

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Above - Debate on both sides was passionate, and somewhat heated, when Sons considered a constitutional amendment on Saturday that would change eligibility requirements for membership. The Detachment of California submitted the proposed resolution. When a voice vote was declared incon-
clusive, Commander Smith ordered a 10 minute recess so detachments could caucus. In the end, it wasn’t even close. The resolution, which needed a two thirds majority to pass, was soundly defeated 176 yeas to 712 nays. In spite of the resolution’s overwhelming rout, the resolution is likely to be rewritten and resubmitted at a future convention.
solidated Squadron Report Forms not filed, the record of the S.A.L.’s impact on overall American Legion Family contributions is impressive. Sons reported contributions of more than $10 million in cash and just under two million hours in volunteer service given to nearly three dozen American Legion programs this year, a combined value of more than $55 million.

Auxiliary National President Diane Duscheck started things off Friday afternoon, recounting stories of outstanding successful fundraising efforts undertaken by young Sons she has encountered during her travels throughout the year.

American Legion National Commander Denise Rohan arrived on stage wearing a cowboy hat and carrying supplies for cooking S’mores, a nod to S.A.L. Commander Danny Smith’s penchant for posting campfire chats on social media. “Any time we needed S’more (money or help), the S.A.L. was there to help us out,” said Rohan.

Legion Internal Affairs Chairman Robert Newman, Sons Subcommittee Chairman George West, and National Commander candidates Brett Reistad and “Bill” Oxford took turns praising the efforts of Sons over the past 12 months. Oxford hails from North Carolina, site of The American Legion Baseball World Series. He presented commemorative baseballs to Commander Smith and Delaware’s Detachment Commander Scott Underkoffler. Delaware’s team won this year’s world championship.

Child Welfare Foundation President Dennis Boland donned his own S.A.L. cover and handed out awards to several detachments, praising their involvement in raising more than $500,000 for CWF. Sons accounted for more than $325,000 of that amount.

Auxiliary Executive Secretary Mary “Dubbie” Buckler and Legion Centennial Chairman Dave Rehbein encouraged the organization to plan for the future.

On Saturday, long time S.A.L. supporter and Past American Legion National Commander John “Jake” Comer reminded the audience that true understanding only comes when you get out and do things.

Other special guests who appeared on stage included Past National Commanders Bob Turner and Dale Barnett, both dual members and long time supporters of the Sons. Five members of The American Legion Youth Champions, also dropped by to thank the S.A.L. for supporting the programs they’re involved in.

Left - Soldiers Wish Executive Director Mark Oschenbein showed Sons a real life example of what our fundraising efforts can do. He presented $5,000 to a Navy veteran and her family who found themselves homeless in recent months.