

Sons + Legion programs = winners!

Membership

Hartline Award (*Detach w/ most new squadrons*)
Pennsylvania - Mississippi - California - Illinois - Florida

Houghton Award (*greatest % increase in membership*)

Category 1 - Utah Category 2 - Oregon
Category 3 - Iowa Category 4 - Arizona
Category 5 - Florida

Highest Renewal Percentage by Region

East - France South - Louisiana Midwest - South Dakota
Central - Minnesota West - Utah

Nation's Largest Squadron

- Newport Harbor, CA Squadron 291 (1,751 members)

First in Each Region to Reach 100%

East - Dist Columbia South - Mississippi West - Nevada
Central - Minnesota Midwest - Oklahoma

Triple Nickel Award

- Florida
- Mississippi

Americanism

Atwood/Beyea/York Memorial Award

Detachment - Georgia
District - District 9 - Georgia
Squadron - John B. Handte Squadron 89, Vestal, NY

National Emergency Fund

Largest Donations Per Capita in Nation - Arkansas

East - Connecticut Central - Iowa
Midwest - Montana West - Oregon

Children and Youth

Best Detachment - Georgia
Best District - District 9, Georgia
Best Squadron - Colton, CA Squadron 155
Midwest - Round Rock, TX Squadron 447
Central - Festus, MO Squadron 253
East - Leonardo, NJ Squadron 338
West - Arlington, WA Squadron 76
South - East Point, GA Squadron 51

Child Welfare Foundation

Garland Murphy Award (*largest donation*) - Ohio
Udie Grant Award (*top Legion Family combined*) - Florida
Excellence Award (*largest per capita*) - Hawaii
Meritorious Achievement Award - Hawaii

Largest Donations by Region

East - Pennsylvania West - Arizona
South - Florida Midwest - Colorado

Community Service

Scrapbook Winners
Squadron - La Plata, MD Squadron 82
Detachment - South Carolina

Historian

History Book Award
Squadron - Lady Lake, FL Squadron 347
District - District 6 - Florida
Detachment - Kansas

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Charles B. Rigsby Award (*Volunteer of the Year*)
Robert Filippi - Parkville, MD Squadron 183
Kirby Kepler Award (*best squadron rehab report*)
Kerrville, TX Squadron 208
Allan I. O'Brian Award (*best District rehab report*)
District 1 - Georgia
Earl Webster Award (*best Detach rehab report*)
Georgia

George B. Evans Grassroots Veterans' Advocate

Ralph Bozella - Longmont, CO Squadron 32

Commander's Legacy Scholarship Awards

Largest Donation - Maryland
South - Florida
Central - Illinois
Midwest - Nebraska
West - Oregon

Color Guard (Stillwell Award)

Detachment of California 12th District

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Liaison John Kerestan escorted to the stage and presented him with a plaque on which was mounted a large, gold wrench. Referring to Kerestan as the "Head Superintendent," the plaque played off Moss' theme this year of "Building Bridges to the Future." After having praise heaped upon him for contributing to all of the program successes this year, Kerestan quipped that he wasn't sure when the Commander ever got any sleep because it wasn't unusual to receive phone calls from Colorado at 7:30am Indiana time.



National Update

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(Above) S.A.L. member Alex Marsden shows his support for American Legion Legacy Riders as they pass through Ohio on their way to Baltimore. This year's ride will have raised more than \$300,000.



(Above) Some of the most important Sons in the country. They represent Detachments that won membership awards this year.

High flying Collier elected

Every National Commander of the Sons can expect to travel extensively during his year in office. But newly-elected Commander Kevin Collier, whose home is Anchorage, Alaska, has to fly five and a half hours just to arrive in Minneapolis -- and then fly on to whatever continental destination lies ahead.

A 31 year Honorary Life Member of the S.A.L., Kevin's eligibility flows from his grandfather, a veteran of World War I. In his private life, Kevin works as Patient Services Supervisor for Food and Nutrition Services at Providence Alaska Medical Center, a Children's Miracle Network hospital. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Food Nutrition Services from the University of Utah.

Sons will hear about Kevin's theme R.O.C.K.E.D. this year: "Remembering our Commitment - Keeping it

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Star spangled Sons in Baltimore

Members of the Sons of The American Legion had plenty to feel good about as hundreds of delegates sailed into Baltimore for the organization's 44th National Convention. Ask outgoing National Commander Michael Moss what he thinks were the year's biggest successes and he'll point immediately to three things: membership, The American Legion Endowment Fund, and a focus on youth.

National Membership Chairman George Flasiniski is glad it was his own Detachment of Pennsylvania that sent the 250 cards to National HQ this week that put S.A.L. membership over 100% this year, a new all-time high for the Sons at close to 368,000.

Randy Eicher, Chairman of the Children and Youth Commission is tickled that Sons' donations of \$1 million in the past 12 months exceeded will help CWF, Special Olympics, Children's Miracle Network and other Legion-directed projects.

"I am most happy with the fact we increased the number of Consolidated Squadron Reports that were turned in this year," says Eicher. He says the numbers being turned in only scratch the surface of what's really being done by squadrons across the country and those reports are the only source we have of accounting for dollars raised and hours served.

One of Commander Moss' chief goals this year was to take a first step toward making The Legion's Endowment Fund an integral part of the S.A.L. fund raising mechanism. He gives credit to the S.A.L.'s National Vice Commanders.

"Any program that can touch on two of the four pillars of The American Legion - assisting our nation's veterans and assisting our nation's children - that's what we want to get up in the morning and go do," says Southern Region Vice Commander Jerry Evans.

"The need for the Endowment Fund is never going to get smaller, it's going to get larger," says Eastern Region Vice Commander Greg Gibbs.

Visitors to the S.A.L. Convention

Friday and Saturday saw many visitors appear before delegates to the 44th National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion. Some of the faces were new. Some wore the familiar smiles of many years of friendship. All took turns offering words of thanks and congratulations.

Soon after the Sons' convention got underway, leaders of The American Legion Auxiliary were welcomed to the stage starting with Graci Huddleston (1), who is completing her year as Honorary National Junior President. Mary "Dubbie" Buckler stood with her counterpart, Sons National Adjutant Brian O'Hearne (2) and listened as Auxiliary National President Janet Jefford (3) challenged Sons to join in efforts to build the Legion Family because our shared efforts are needed now more than ever.

The Sons program takes its direction from The American Legion's Internal Affairs Commission. Larry Besson (4) and George West (5), Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Commission, respectively, took turns thanking Sons for repeatedly setting and achieving goals that support the heart of almost

all Legion programs.

Other important speakers who visited on Friday and Saturday included a couple of men who are likely to find themselves at the helm of The American Legion soon. Leading National Commander candidates Dale Barnett (6) and Charles Schmidt (7) talked of future plans to include more involvement by all Legion Family members. Past National Commander Jake Comer (8), making his 28th consecutive appearance at the S.A.L. National Convention, talked of how the decision to involve Sons in Legion fund raising efforts more than a generation ago may have had humble beginnings, but grew by millions of dollars since.

National Commander Moss traded gifts with National Commander Mike Helm and his wife, Debbie, that included a personalized quilt.

On Friday, American Legion Past National Commander Dan Dellinger started a new tradition of recognizing Sons for their outstanding fund raising efforts on behalf of The Legion's Endowment Fund. Commander Moss made the fund a priority for the first time and more than \$35,000 was raised. The first-ever James A. Drain Founder's Award was presented to the Detachment of Nevada for turning in the largest per capita in the country. Then the Detachment of Florida was awarded the first-ever Harry W. Colmery Legacy Award for the largest amount of money turned in by any Detachment.



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Flying / from Page 1

Every Day." Some of his chief goals this year will include, a 90 percent membership renewal rate and a push to have 400,000 members signed up by May 1. He'll be challenging Sons to raise 50 cents per member for the National Emergency Fund (\$200,000). He'll also continue a relatively new trend inside the S.A.L. to raise money for The Legion's Endowment Fund, which provides money for temporary financial assistance for the minor children of veterans who are in need and also provides money

Three special awards bestowed at Baltimore

Commander Moss called three special people to the platform Friday. Bob Brown and Ronnie Grist were recognized for their incredibly unselfish actions last May. They left the N.E.C. meetings early, flew home to Georgia, drove to Colorado, picked up Past Sons National Commander J.R. Stillwell - who'd been severely injured in an auto accident - and drove him to his cousin's home in Louisiana to recuperate. Commander Moss presented both of them

to help train Service Officers throughout the country. Commander Kevin's Endowment Fund goal will be 25 cents per member (\$100,000 total). Of course, he'll also continue to raise money for the Child Welfare Foundation and see how close the S.A.L. can come to raising \$600,000 and boosting its all-time level of giving to \$7 million for CWF ("Wouldn't it be a little piece of heaven when we reach seven?"). On the administrative side, Collier plans to provide squadrons with tools to help them do a better job of filling out the Consolidated Squadron Report Form.



his special S.A.L. Humanitarian Award for exemplifying the meaning of "our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

Minutes later, Moss had S.A.L. National *Continued on Page 4*



(Left) There's a good reason why membership in the S.A.L. continues to grow. Chris Figueroa, a member of San Antonio, TX American Legion Post 2 spoke to S.A.L. delegates on Friday about ways in which Sons might be eligible to participate in USAA products and services. When he mentioned his own grandfather's military service, he was quickly handed an S.A.L. membership application and, before leaving the stage, became the S.A.L.'s newest dual member. All you have to do is ask!



(Left) On Saturday, convention proceedings slowed considerably during debates surrounding several proposed resolutions and various amendments that were offered up. When one particular voice vote on an amendment was too close to call, National Commander gave Detachments a five minutes recess to caucus, then National Adjutant Brian O'Hearne took the podium and conducted a roll call of Detachments. A healthy democracy can sometimes be messy.