National Update

Official newsletter of the Sons of The American Legion

Special Convention Edition - Honolulu, HI - August 21, 2005

Sons fly into Honolulu

After riding hours aloft on the trade winds of the Pacific Ocean, hundreds of delegates descended upon Honolulu this week to participate in the 34th National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion. A total of 800 Sons registered for the convention that started earlier than usual on Friday afternoon and finished on Sunday. "That's about 60 percent of our potential," says National Assistant Adjutant Harold Thompson. "When we came to Hawaii in 1981, we had only about 50 delegates. I thought the cost of planes and hotels would keep our numbers down this year, but that's not been the case. We've registered about 60% of our potential, which is just about average."

(Left – Thompson and Ed Sheubrooks prepare boxes and bags of convention packets for each delegation)

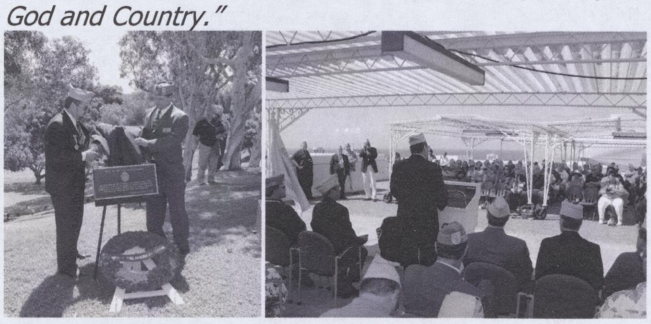
(Right - "Old cow patties" outgoing National Commanders Michael Deacon and Thomas Cadmus share a light moment on stage Friday)

A host of visitors addressed Sons from the convention stage throughout the weekend. The list of speakers read like a Who's Who of The American Legion Family, as well as additional special guests. Legion National Commander Thomas Cadmus thanked Sons for their successes in membership and fundraising. Incoming National Legion Commander Thomas Bock reminded Sons that, "Veterans are still coming home, even from Korea and Vietnam, as well as the middle east. We're here to help them. That's what we, The Legion Family, does best and we count on you to help us."

(Far Left – Tom Bock, gave Sons a verbal pat on the back. Left – Auxiliary Nati'l President Sandi Dutton "shares the love" with her friend from Iowa)

Plaque dedicated to fallen heroes

The Punchbowl National cemetery of the Pacific rests within the crater of an ancient Hawaiian volcano, land sacred to islanders and only used for special ceremonies including human sacrifice. Today the Punchbowl is the final resting place for nearly 40,000 U.S. servicemen and women whose lives were sacrificed in the name of freedom in many conflicts since the early days of World War II. On Friday morning, National Commander Deacon led Sons up Memorial Walk to the highest point overlooking the cemetery and dedicated a bronze plaque in the name of the S.A.L. The plaque will be affixed to a black granite rock and carry the S.A.L.'s words of thanks through eternity: *"As descendents of veterans, we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice to secure freedoms of democracy for future generations to enjoy. May we continue to carry on for God and Country."*

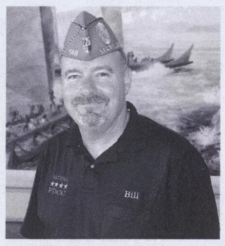


(Far Left – Deacon and PNC Kevin Winkelmann unveil the new plaque. Left – Dozens of Sons and guests were on hand for the dedication)

Sparwasser elected S.A.L. Commander

Bill Sparwasser knows the direction he wants the S.A.L. to move toward over the next year. The 44 year old Life Member from Essex, MD Squadron 148 was elected National Commander of the Sons on Sunday. His priorities for the coming year include veterans, children and accountability.

He wants to stimulate more creative ideas for raising money for various VA & R programs. The father of two sons and a daughter (all Legion Family members), also plans to push efforts to raise more money for programs impacting children and youth.



The need for accountability was born out of his travels this past year. "Everywhere I went, blue caps said they send in reports but never hear back on how we use the money," says Sparwasser. "I want provide information to squadrons so they know how the money they raised has been used. I also want to return reports back to Detachments so they can stimulate genuine and serious involvement within the squadrons. We're just PR at the top. They're the ones who get it all done."

Among other things, Sparwasser wants to organize a national motorcycle ride to benefit veteran and youth programs.

He's one of us!

Legion Family NASCAR fans are getting excited about the upcoming debut of The American Legion Racing Team. On Saturday morning, Sons greeted Missouri native Jerick Johnson ***(above)***, driver of The Legion car and also a proud new member of the S.A.L. Past National Commander Steve Laws recruited Jerick and his family into Hickory, NC Squadron 48 and presented him with an S.A.L. cover on stage. *(Continued on Page 2)*

AWARDS

Membership

Hartline Award *(most new Detachments)* – Pennsylvania
Houghten Award *(greatest % increase)* – South Dakota (Cat I) - Delaware (Cat II) – Arizona (Cat III) – California (Cat IV) – Pennsylvania (Cat V)
Largest Squadron – Shilo Squadron 791 – York, PA (1,261 members)
First to Reach 100% - France (East) – Mississippi (South) – Iowa (Central) – Montana (Midwest) – Washington (West)
Highest Renewal % - Maryland 91.5% (East) – Virginia 89.34% (South) – Michigan 90.18% (Central) – Nebraska 90.61% (Midwest) – Idaho 89.01% (West)

Americanism

Atwood/Beyea/York Memorial Award
Squadron – Squadron 365, New Jersey
District – North Central District, Maryland
Detachment – Maryland

Children & Youth

East: Squadron 191, Maryland **– South:** Squadron 51, Georgia **– Central:** Squadron 253, Indiana **– Midwest:** Squadron 37, Texas **– West:** Squadron 76, Washington
Squadron – Squadron 251, Georgia
District – North Central District, Maryland
Detachment - Maryland

Child Welfare Foundation

Largest Per Capita – Colorado
Largest Donation – Ohio

Community Service

Squadron Scrapbook – Marietta, OH Squadron 64
District Scrapbook – 22nd District, Pennsylvania
Detachment Scrapbook – Ohio

Veterans Affairs/Rehab

Kepler Award *(best Squadron report)* – Squadron 251, Georgia
O'Brien Award *(best District report)* – 9th District, Georgia
Webster Award *(best Detachment report)* – Maryland
Rigsby Award *(volunteer of the year)* – Jerry Hjelle, Squadron 54, Washington

Historian

Squadron Scrapbook – Omaha, NE Squadron 331
Detachment Scrapbook – Delaware

Color Guard

Stillwell Award/Guideon – Essex, MD Squadron 148

Love in Paradise

Funny things can happen when couples travel to a tropical paradise. So, it should not come as any great surprise that several Sons decided to take the plunge (and we're not talking about a dip in the surf off Waikiki Beach) while visiting Hawaii this week.

Perhaps most visible was the announcement that Sons National Chaplain Tony Morgan married his fiancé, Christina, on the beach at Waikiki on Thursday and Past National Commander Kevin Winkelmann exchanged vows with his fiancé, Lisa. Other Sons known to be following suit include: Indiana Third District Commander Rusty Rulapaugh and his fiancé, Linda; Indiana Detachment Commander leading candidate Mike Sheets and his fiancé, Janet; Detachment of New York leading candidate Al Deichler renewed vows with his wife Maxine; and the new Mr. & Mrs. Jim Peterson of the Detachment of New York. We want to be among the first to congratulate all of the moon-struck Sons and their brides!

More about Jerick

(From Page 1) One of the most interesting aspects of the relationship between The American Legion and car owner Team Johnson MotorSports is that total cost of sponsorship is being paid through the sale of caps, T-shirts and promotional race items. Jerick will continue to sign autographs and have pictures taken with Legion fans in the convention exhibit hall until Tuesday morning.

Delegate strength will change in '06

Beginning with the 35th S.A.L. National Convention at Salt Lake City next year, Detachments will be required to pay for all of their allotted delegates, not just those who attend the convention. In addition, delegate strength will be altered. Detachments will be allotted one delegate for each 500 members in their state, subject to approval by The American Legion at its fall N.E.C..

The change was the result of a resolution adopted Saturday, although not adopted without challenge.

Several Detachments sought to thwart the resolution utilizing a variety of parliamentary and financial arguments. An attempt to table the issue was defeated before a 67% to 33% roll call vote concluded the issue.

CWF nears milestone

Sometime in the next few months, the Sons of The American Legion are likely to cross a significant milestone. The S.A.L. is only $200,000 away from reaching the $3 million mark in contributions our organization has made to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

At the conclusion of the CWF's fiscal year in May, Sons accounted for $383,863 in donations; the largest amount of money from any organization. That was another all-time high in contributions and also marked the 12th straight year the S.A.L. was the top contributing organization to CWF.

More than $600,000 in grants will be announced by the CWF in October, thanks in large part to the generous work of Sons across the country.

Give the gift of life – give blood! Blood donors are needed on Monday, August 22nd from 9 am to 2 pm in the Hawaii Convention Center Hall III. This blood drive is in conjunction with the Tripler Army Medical Center.