

Sons of The American Legion 45th National Convention August 26-28, 2016 - Cincinnati, Ohio

I arrived in Cincinnati on Thursday afternoon, August 25, 2016 and checked into our assigned hotel for Minnesota, the Millennium hotel. Registration was already closed, so I registered the next morning, on Friday.

The first meeting I attended was the 'Pre-Convention NEC' meeting at 10:00 AM. Though it followed the typical procedures for an NEC meeting, it consisted mostly of 'Roll Call' of Officers and NECmen present. No business was conducted. Minnesota Alternate NECman, Steve Sullivan, was also in attendance.

Our first National Convention meeting followed at 1:00 PM. Following the Opening Ceremonies, a 'Roll Call' of National Officers and Detachments was conducted, followed by a Welcome from the Host Detachment and Establishment of Convention Committees. Recess was called until 9:00 AM on Saturday, August 27.

On Saturday, August 27, we reconvened at 9:00 AM. Following Opening Ceremonies and Roll Call, the various Commissions and Committees presented their final Reports and called for approval of said Reports. Various Awards were also presented during this time, including both Detachments and Squadrons. Donations were accepted following the Reports and Awards. It was reported that 904 Delegates and 93 guests representing 46 Detachments had Registered,

This is when it really became exciting... thousands of dollars were donated to various programs, including: National Emergency Fund, Children Miracle Network, Legacy Fund, etc.; but the donations to the Child Welfare Foundation exceeded all expectations [over \$109,000]. This brought the total of ALL donations to CWF from SAL to over **Seven Million** dollars. The earlier CWF report had stated that SAL had donated over Six Million of the Total Fifteen Million awarded and we were working towards that Seven Million mark, but hadn't expected to surpass it at the Convention. The meeting Recessed at about 3:30 PM, followed by a quick caucus of the five Regions. I attended the caucus for our Central Region, led by Dennis Henkemeyer, Central Region Vice-Commander [of MN], which lasted around 15 minutes.

Needless to say, everyone was hungry by that point, since there was no break for lunch.

On Sunday, August 28, we Reconvened at 8:00 AM. Following Opening Ceremonies and Roll Call, a Sons of The American Legion Memorial Service was held. This was followed by the nomination and election of National Officers for 2016-2017. Our new SAL National Commander is Jeff Frain, from Arizona and our new National Vice-Commander for the Central Region is Michael Lawler, from Wisconsin, who served as SAL National Chaplain for 2015-2016. We then Recessed for the Joint Memorial Service, held in the main Ballroom.

I attended the Joint Memorial Service, held at 11:00 AM on Sunday, August 28.

We Reconvened around 12:30 PM for the Installation of National Officers. This is always a very emotional time for both outgoing and incoming Officers, but also an enjoyable experience. The meeting was Adjourned at about 2:30 PM.

I then attended the Post-Convention NEC meeting (since I have one more year to serve), held about 3:00 PM. Again, it consisted of the Opening Ceremonies and Roll Call, with no business conducted; however, our new National Commander, Jeff Frain, spoke of his plans for the coming year. Minnesota

Alternate NECman, Dennis Henkemeyer, was also in attendance.

The Parade started at 4:00 PM and passed directly between the Millennium hotel and the Convention Center. Though, I had considered walking with the Minnesota delegation (though it was very hot and humid), by the time the Post-Convention NEC meeting was over, it was really to late to change and join them. As usual, both the Parade and the Minnesota delegation was fantastic and I was able to get some pictures. A Post-Parade Party followed in the blocked off street between the hotel and Convention Center. Though it was scheduled to last until 8:00 PM; unfortunately, it was cut short because of a thunder shower around 7:00 PM.

I was at our Tenth District 'Spaghetti Feed', held at Camponellos when the rain started and we had to get a cab back to the hotel, even though it was only 3 blocks away.

Though our SAL Convention was over, I stayed over Sunday night and returned on Monday.

And now, for some personal thoughts regarding the Convention, etc.---

The trip went very well and I thought the overall Convention was great... the hotel room was clean and nicely furnished, but for the cost, didn't include a refrigerator or microwave; however, the elevators worked flawlessly (a 'dig' at the Sheraton in Indianapolis...lol). Given the weather, I was delighted the air conditioning in both the hotel and Convention Center worked well... obviously, dining is always expensive in any downtown area, but the food I had was very good. I ran into quite a few people I knew (including from our 10th District) and All in all, it was a very enjoyable experience.

I look forward to the coming year with our National Commander, Jeff Frain. His commitment and excitement is contagious, along with a terrific sense of humor. His motto is "Knowledge is Power" and his membership plan is interesting, though different. I'm sure we will all hear much more throughout the coming year from both National Vice-Commander, Michael Lawler, and Detachment Membership Director, Cliff Tieglund; as well as Commander, Gene Olswold.

I feel I would be remiss if I failed to thank those whose financial support helped to make it great: First, my Home Squadron 102, from Anoka, MN who donated very generously towards expenses; but, also the Detachment of Minnesota for their help and support for all of their Delegates. Their support enabled me to attend, and I greatly appreciate it. Thank You!

Respectfully Submitted,
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National Executive Committeeman
Detachment of Minnesota
Sons of The American Legion