

**Sons Of The American Legion  
Detachment of Illinois**

**SPRING DETACHMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
Franklin Park Squadron 974  
March 30, 2019**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Detachment Commander Gort called the meeting to order at 1305 Hours.  
The colors were in place, hand salute rendered.  
Detachment Chaplain John Nemanich gave the prayer.  
1<sup>st</sup> Division Commander O'Connell led the Pledge of Allegiance.  
Commander Gort led the POW/MIA Ceremony.  
Detachment Sgt-At-Arms placed the POW/MIA flag on the chair.  
Detachment Senior Vice Commander Phil Stander led the Preamble.

**ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS**

Detachment Adjutant Jeff Van Horn called the roll.

**Detachment Officers:** Commander Gort; Sr Vice Stander; NEC Hunter; ANEC Melone; Adjutant J. Van Horn; Asst Adjutant Ray; Finance Officer Tharp; Judge Advocate Stillwell; Parliamentarian Cisna (excused); Chaplain Nemanich; Historian Shipley; Service Officer Cavanaugh; Sgt-At-Arms Haddick; Sgt-At-Arms Emeritus Dailey (excused); Commanders Sgt-At-Arms Z. Van Horn & Schoo; Sr Vice Sgt-At-Arms Mount (excused); Division Sgt-At-Arms 2-Haddick & Schuppner, 4-Phelps & Woodburn (excused), 5-I. Hayse (excused) & Trainer (excused); Commanders Aide Radnitzer & Trout; Sr Vice Aide Geary; Webmaster Sense; PUFL Stillwell;  
**Division Officers:** 1<sup>st</sup> Commander, Sr & Jr Vices; 2<sup>nd</sup> Commander, Sr Vice (excused), Jr Vice (absent); 3<sup>rd</sup> Commander, Sr Vice (absent); 4<sup>th</sup> Commander, Sr Vice (absent), Jr Vice (absent); 5<sup>th</sup> Commander (absent), Sr & Jr Vice;  
**District Officers:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Commander (Excused); 4<sup>th</sup> Commander; 7<sup>th</sup> Commander & Sr Vice; 9<sup>th</sup> Commander, Sr & Jr Vice; 10<sup>th</sup> Commander, Sr & Jr Vices; 11<sup>th</sup> Sr Vice; 12<sup>th</sup> Commander; 13<sup>th</sup> Commander (excused), Sr Vice (Excused); 16<sup>th</sup> Sr Vice (excused); 18<sup>th</sup> Commander; 19<sup>th</sup> Commander; 21<sup>st</sup> Commander; 22<sup>nd</sup> Commander; 24<sup>th</sup> Commander & Sr Vice  
**PNC's:** Stillwell, Cisna (excused)  
**PDC's:** Hayse, J. Schultz (excused), Stillwell, Potempa, B. Schultz, Slevin Sr., Cisna (excused), Tharp, Christie, Williamson, Sawicki (excused), Melone, Ray, Hunter, Cavanaugh, Geary, Shipley  
**Advisors:** 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> (excused)

**JUDGE ADVOCATE COMMENTS**

Detachment Judge Advocate Stillwell discussed who is eligible to make motions, etc. during the DEC.

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**MINUTES OF WINTER DEC**

12<sup>th</sup> District Commander Schuppner motioned to accept all the Winter DEC Minutes as printed, with the second, passed.

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

List the guests – see SIGN IN sheet

Commander Gort instructed Sgt-At-Arms to escort Department Commander Mike Carder & Department Sr Vice Commander Roy Weber to the podium for remarks.

**RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE**

Commander Gort appointed Stinson (1<sup>st</sup> Division) as Chairman of Resolution Committee with Westerhausen (3<sup>rd</sup> Division) and Z. Van Horn (4<sup>th</sup> Division) as Committee members.

**DIVISION COMMANDERS REPORT**

1st Division Commander, 3<sup>rd</sup> Division Commander, 4<sup>th</sup> Division Commander & 5<sup>th</sup> Division Sr Vice all spoke about upcoming events and Squadron activities remaining for the year.

**FINANCE REPORT**

Detachment Finance Officer Tharp asked if there were any questions regarding the printed finance report. He then discussed importance of filling out expense report form correctly. With none, 24<sup>th</sup> District Commander Trout motioned to accept the report, with the second, passed.

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT & SQUADRON ACTIVITIES & #1 PINS**

Detachment Senior Vice Commander Stander gave the membership report, including review the Uncertified Squadrons. Reviewed the Charter Actions who were removed and asked that they be contacted. 93 cards were turned in. He then awarded #1 Pins to the following:

Division Winner – 3<sup>rd</sup> Division (given to Division Commander)

District Winners:

1<sup>st</sup> Division – 3<sup>rd</sup> District (given to Division Sr Vice Commander)

2<sup>nd</sup> Division – 10<sup>th</sup> District (given to 10<sup>th</sup> District Commander)

3<sup>rd</sup> Division – 16<sup>th</sup> District (given to Division Commander)

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4<sup>th</sup> Division – 21<sup>st</sup> District (given to 21<sup>st</sup> District Commander)

5<sup>th</sup> Division – 24<sup>th</sup> District (given to 24<sup>th</sup> District Commander & Sr Vice)

Sr Vice Commander Stander motions to accept his report, with the second, passes.

**STANDING COMMISSION & COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Americanism Commission**

All stood to salute the colors; our Chaplain led us in an opening prayer and the meeting convened at 09:40 with all members in attendance other than Tommie Cisna and Nicklaus Hernan, both of whom were excused; there were 8 guest who signed in and a few other that didn't.

Chairman's opening remarks:

- I ran across scripture I believe would be appropriate, fitting and that I'd like to share, it's from 1 Corinthians 1:10 - *I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.*
- I'd like to welcome all to this meeting and ask that we follow the agenda to move this meeting along in a timely manner. As a reminder, if there is a matter to be brought to a vote, only the Commission members will have a voice. We're happy to have guests in attendance here, and look forward to any input you may have, but again, please follow the agenda or hold your remarks until new business / open discussion
- Last Friday, the 22<sup>nd</sup>, it was my privilege to represent this Detachment when I attended the Auxiliary Patriotic Conference in Springfield for the purpose of presenting our Detachment check of \$1,500 as a donation to their Scholarship Fund
- I have learned that there will be no change in the CSR this year; there have been numerous changes suggested to streamline the report and those changes may be addressed in next year's report, but it will be the same for now

Religious emphasis – John Nemanich

- John attended the Lincoln Pilgrimage and had the honor of offering Table Grace Prayers at two dinners he attended along with National SAL Commander, Doc Gibbs
- This past Saturday, John attended a Convention Committee meeting in Springfield with his interest being in the Memorial Ceremony

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Flag Alliance – Tommie Cisna – No report

Boys State – Jimmy Hunter

- I contacted Chris (Benigno) to see if there was anything new going on with Boys State and he replied status quo
- But we still have to push for the recruiting. The dates again are June 8-14.
- There will be a board meeting Saturday April 6th at 10:30 am at the Illinois American Legion Headquarters 2720 E Lincoln St in Bloomington. Anyone interested can attend.
- If you want to be on staff go to the link to apply <https://goo.gl/forms/IEhx1XONwltNP7Ur2>
- Anyone that has been on staff is asked to complete the leadership survey. For that you go to <https://goo.gl/forms/IEhx1XONwltNP7Ur2>
- Jimmy will be happy to help anyone that needs help with making presentations.

Legacy Scholarship Promoter - Nick Hernan (Although excused, Nick sent his report via email)

- I regret to inform that between my new job and a close friend being sent to Iraq the day after the Spring DEC, we are having a big send off the day of the Spring DEC, and I will be unable to attend. I have prepared a short report on the State legacy run, but I have no info on the national right now
- Also, please note I need to have my info updated, as I am no longer with Pekin Post 44, my district, etc. is all the same but I am with Morton Post 318, if someone could get this updated for me. Many thanks in advance.

My report is as follows.

- Currently no info yet on the National Legacy Run.
- This year Illinois will be hosting a statewide legacy run, benefitting Operation Comfort Warrior. The ride will take place on June 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. Sign up will be at the Effingham American Legion Post at 07:00 and departing at 08:00. All bike and vehicles will be welcome to participate.
- Ride will leave Effingham, go to Fairfield Legion Post, then Marion Legion Post. From Marion Post to Collinsville Post, then Morrisville Post, then Springfield Post. Supper will be provided by Springfield Post.
- Following morning the ride will depart from Springfield Post, go to Taylorville post, then Decatur Post, then Champaign Post. From Champaign the ride will continue to the Danville post where the ride ends.
- There will be 50/50 throughout the run, and door prizes to be raffled off. Additional information can be obtained from Mike Lee of Springfield Post 32 (217) 741-3009.

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Oratorical Contest – Jim Borgman

- The 82<sup>nd</sup> Oratorical contest was held March 2<sup>nd</sup>
- First place went to Caleb Maue, a home-schooled young man from Homer Glen in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division
- He received a \$2,000 scholarship and an invitation to compete at the national contest on April 5-7 which has a first-place scholarship of \$18,000
- Unfortunately, due to the lack of recruitment efforts, the semi-finals, which is set up for 30 contestants, only had 17 young adults that were on hand to offer their orations

Old business - None

New business / open discussion

- SVC Stander pointed out that while the southern legacy run of the Detachment was well reported, there is also a northern run which was unaddressed.
- PDC Bill Geary advised that Wauconda Post 911 is slated to be one of those stops
- SVC Stander stated he was planning to attend the northern run and agreed to gather the information and will submit a report on the run to Adjutant Van Horn who agreed to post the information on the website and as an addendum to his report.

Chairman's closing remarks:

- Boys State – You've heard this plea before gentlemen, your assistance is essential to the future of this program in which enrollment has been diminishing year after year, and desperately needs your help in recruiting participants. Eligibility is completion of Junior year in High School; please get involved in promoting this most valuable program.
- Tools at your disposal to share your events and showcase your Squadron are in place with Legion Town at [www.legiontown.org](http://www.legiontown.org) and Snapshots of Service at [brandon@salgeorgia.org](mailto:brandon@salgeorgia.org). Once again, this year, I was honored to be involved in the 9<sup>th</sup> District's rendition of the Four Chaplains Ceremony and when I got home, I went online to Legion Town and was happy to see how easy it was to upload pictures and a brief description of the event. I also sent a submission to Snapshots of Service and I was happy to see that thru my postings, the ceremony was also included in the American Legion's online newsletter. Within days of the event, the ceremony was made know with every Detachment and Department in the US; all it took was a few moments of posting. Let other Squadrons and Posts see what you are doing and see what others are doing and get some ideas for events that you can do as well in your Squadron

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- NEF – This is one of Commander Gibbs’ programs and it was just recently heavily tapped again with the devastation caused by recent tornados in the Southeast, and I know we have all been painfully aware of the historic flooding devastation in this part of the country, please consider contributing to this fund – it’s there in times of need, but only if we keep it funded
- National Americanism Commission –
  - Scrap book & history book entries will receive certs of participation, please consider making an entry for your Squadron. There was recently an email blast sent out with info on this subject from Vice Chairman Hammerschmidt outlining rules and guidelines. While it may be too late for this membership year, please consider this Squadron or District project for the next membership year
  - We expect our commission’s authored Resolution for Chaplains training to pass without issue at the upcoming Spring NEC
- CSR tool – if anyone who is involved in the preparation of your Squadron’s CSR and you are familiar with Excel, you should have received a completely formatted Excel spreadsheet program that makes reporting very easy, if you didn’t receive this, please send an email request to me or our Adjutant and either of us will be happy to send it along. This is it, we’re in the midnight hour to get all Squadrons to commit to submitting their CSRs. Division and District Commanders - The most recent Illinois CSR tally sheet from last year’s CSR totals will list the Squadrons that participated on the back side, please review that list and target those that failed to submit a CSR, work with them to ensure their reports are submitted.
- National Commander Gibbs has a special request to get our youth involved at the 100<sup>th</sup> National Convention. If we can get at least 20 young members age 20 to 30 there will be separate breakout sessions tailored to them; please consider bringing our youth and be sure to announce your plans so that the proper arrangements can be planned
- Due to impending relocation plans, this will be the last regular DEC meeting that I will be acting as Chairman of for this commission, if anyone has thoughts of stepping up, to act as Chairman, please voice that interest with SVC Stander, and likewise if anyone from the 1<sup>st</sup> Division would like to serve as the 1<sup>st</sup> Division representative. It has been my distinct privilege to be involved with this commission and be in service to this Detachment and everyone in it, thank you for your time over the years
- Commander, this concludes my report and I thank you for the privilege to serve this Detachment under your esteemed leadership

Motion by IPDC Hayse to accept, with the second, passed.

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**Children & Youth Commission**

***"The mission of the Sons of The American Legion Committee on Children & Youth is to formulate, recommend and implement plans, programs, and activities of The American Legion. The Committee's responsibility is to promote the care and protection of the children of veterans; improve conditions for all children and youth with due concern for maintaining the integrity of the family home; prevent social and physical ills of children and youth where possible, utilizing services and cooperating with sound organizations and agencies for children and youth; maintain a balanced program that provides for their physical emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs; and such other purposes as maybe assigned to it by The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion National Executive Committee; and to assist The American Legion Children and Youth Program in carrying on for God and Country."***

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**What is this program, and why do we have it?**

The Children & Youth program emphasizes protecting, caring for and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans and military families. By protecting, caring for, and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans and military families, SAL members fulfill our promise of being community leaders and responsible American citizens while caring for military families. In doing so, we are building a future membership base among our target demographic, military families.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

**1. Support Children and Youth in community**

Here are some things to know when supporting children and youth:

- Star Spangled Kids – This is an ALA program to educate children and youth on the history of the United States from the aspect of patriotism, Americanism and the U.S. Constitution.
- Youth Hero Awards/Good Deed Awards – This is a way that the American Legion Family can recognize youth in our communities who demonstrate good citizenship, either through a brave physical act or a good deed.

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- Josh Dogs – An American Legion Family alliance, Josh Dogs and GI Josh are is a plush dog and accompanying storybook used to help ease separation and hospital stay fears for children
- April is The American Legions Children and Youth Month.

***On the SAL Member Level***

- Offer to make a “Star Spangled” presentation to your local schools. Invite post members to help learn how their military service was meaningful in defending the U.S. Constitution.
- Contact local high schools to invite them to encourage their students to use their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution by participating in the American Legion Oratorical Contest
- Monitor newspapers, TV and neighborhoods for children and youth who have performed a heroic act of physical valor, such as performing CPR, helping evacuate in the event of a fire, calling 911 for an emergency, etc. Work with your squadron to nominate them for a Youth Hero/Good Deed Award.
- Contact local schools, churches and youth groups to make them aware of the Youth Hero/Good Deed Awards. Make sure to leave unit contact information.
- Identify children in your community who may be or are facing hospitalization for the first time and who may benefit from a Josh and friends’ dog and book.

***On the Squadron Level***

- Create a Squadron Citizenship Award for children and youth who have learned the ideals of the U.S. Constitution.
- Share a constitutional fact each month in the Squadron/Post newsletter, the newspaper editorial and/or on social media
- September 17<sup>th</sup> is Constitution Day (Citizenship Day) – for next year. Host a party that revolves around the U.S. Constitution for children
- Print and distribute pocket constitutions to school children.
- Once a child has been identified as a Youth Hero/Good Deed applicant, complete the nomination form.



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- When a Youth Hero/Good Deed award has been processed by national headquarters, contact local media, community school leaders and the child's parents and plan for a public presentation of the award.
- Plan a special celebration of children during the month of April in honor of Children and Youth Month.

**Support Military Children and Youth**

Here are some things to know when supporting military and youth

- Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2 (KDH2) – This is a recognition program for military children who experience extended separation from the military parent or parents.
- GI Josh Dogs – An American Legion Family alliance, GI Josh is a plush dog and accompanying storybook used to help ease separate fears for the military children
- April is the Month of the Military Child.

***On the Member Level***

- Volunteer as a Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) camp program.
- Volunteer at a Family Readiness Group event where KDHS "I'm a Hero 2" buttons/stickers can be distributed.
- Give a GI Josh to the child of a deployed service member.
- Wear purple on April 15<sup>th</sup> in honor of Purple Up! For Military Kids day

***On the Squadron Level***

- Host a dinner, game night, community fair, etc. that will bring military and non-military families together.
- Host a KDH2 celebration with recognition buttons/stickers to let military kids know we appreciate their sacrifices.

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- Support GI Josh – identify military children who may have a parent or sibling deploying.
- Plan a special celebration of military children during April in honor of the Month of the Military Child.
- Encourage members to wear purple on Purple Up! For Military Kids Day (April 15<sup>th</sup>)

**3. Support Veterans' Children and Youth.**

Here is some thing to know when supporting military and youth

- Some of our homeless veterans also have children living on the streets with them.
- *Klinger, a Story of Honor and Hope* – Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) is affiliated with the American Legion Family.

***On the Member Level***

- Contact your local churches, homeless shelters and food pantries to identify homeless veterans' children. Ask what their specific needs are and offer them your services as an ALA member.
- Contact your local news sources (newspaper, community television, community websites and social media accounts) and town council. Offer to give a presentation about you and your unit's work for homeless veterans and their children.
- Contact your voluntary services representatives at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Offer to work with them to help meet the needs of children of homeless veterans who come to the VAMC.
- Contact local schools to access their need for supplies and extra cloths for homeless children. Offer to supply items as needed.
- Volunteer at a TAPS camp program.

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***On a Squadron Level***

- Train members to be a resource for front-line agencies who receive requests for help.
- Contact local schools to assess their need for supplies and extra clothes for homeless children. Offer to supply items as needed.
- Contact your post service officer to offer help with the needs of children of veterans who need financial help. (The American Legion – Temporary Finance Assistance).
- Help raise awareness for the needs of homeless children in your community by sharing unit activities on the unit website, social media pages and newsletters.

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**On the Detachment Level...**

How are your efforts to raise funds for Children & Youth programs going?

**Children’s Miracle Network** – Since 1983 The American Legion Family has been a large supporter of CMN. We ask that you continue to support this fine program that treats millions of children each year. It is our hope to present Josh Dogs at the Springfield CMN Hospital during the 2019 Illinois American Legion Family Convention this July in Springfield.

**The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation** – Established in 1954, the CWF has given away millions of dollars to worthwhile programs and Not-for-Profit organizations for the benefit of children. In 1981 the Sons of The American Legion were challenged to assist in fundraising efforts for this program. Since that time, the SAL has raised over \$8 Million. As the saying goes, it was great to reach 8, wouldn’t it be Fine to reach 9?

**Special Olympics** – Each June in Bloomington Illinois the Special Olympic Games are held on the ISU campus. The Illinois American Legion Family has long had a “Snack” tent for the participants and their families! Please continue to support this fine program.

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**Josh Dogs** – The Detachment of Illinois has been a supporter of the Josh Dog Program for the last 10 years. Josh and his brother GI Josh were developed to help children through times of anxiety for a hospital stay or from the deployment of a parent.

**SAL Detachment Scholarship** – Detachment scholarship forms are now being sent out with each monthly mailing. Please distribute these within your Divisions, Districts and Squadrons!

Remember; Children are our Future! We stand dedicated to assist them in every way we can.

Motion by 3<sup>rd</sup> Division Commander Slevin Sr to accept, with the second, passed.

Commander turned podium over to Sr Vice Stander at 1418.

**Finance Commission**

At our September 15<sup>th</sup> D.E.C. the finance commission approve a six-month trial period for Constant Contact in the amount of \$45.00 a month for up to 500 members. Last D.E.C. Commander Gort approached us and wanted to extend the Constant Contact program and increase it to 501 to 2500 members since we are getting more members on the email list. The new amount will be \$49.00 a month if prepaid for 12 months. The Finance Commission did approve this. The finance commission also met at the headquarters in Bloomington on February 24<sup>th</sup> and reviewed and made adjustments to the budget for 2019 and 2020. The budget will be presented at the pre-convention D.E.C.

Sr Vice asked for \$850 total for Convention reception line. \$350 for business cards and gifts and \$500 donated (each organization is participating). Funds to come out of Overage. Sr Vice also asked for up to an additional \$400 for National Commander's Homecoming to come out of Overage. Sr Vice also asked for up to \$200 for Legion Coins to be presented as awards at Convention. All present members agreed to his requests.

Motion by 3<sup>rd</sup> Division Commander Slevin Sr to accept the report, with the second, passed.

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**National Security**

Meeting opened at 12:20 AM. The following members were present: 1<sup>st</sup> Division – Jim Borgman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Division – Bill Geary (Chairman), 4<sup>th</sup> Division – Zach Van Horn. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Division member, Kevin Williams was absent. The 5<sup>th</sup> Division member, Fred Hickem was excused. The following guests were present: Jeff Haddick, John Nemanich, Paul Hayse, Dennis Pheifer, Ed Cavanaugh, Jim Schuppner, and Kevin O’Connell. Chairman Geary said he would read a prepared report at the podium during the DEC meeting. He asked of the group, ideas and ways that the Legion and SAL does or can do to support National Security. Some of the answers are as follows: Training our youth in patriotism and support of our Country, which we do with programs like Boys & Girls State, Youth Police School, High School Oratorical Program, and Flag Education among others. The Legion also has programs like Law Officer of the Year, Firefighter of the Year, and others. We can support our Troops and observe patriotic holidays. Many other comments were given, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:35 AM.

(Chairman Geary gave his report to the members and guests present at the DEC. It included the above info and he also read the following)

National Security: What a broad and controversial topic. Like the rest of the Federal Government there are many Agencies and Offices handling various facets of National Security. The four pillars of the American Legion include one pillar which is now called National Security. Originally that pillar was Defense. Our US Department of Defense is just one facet of National Security and constitutes our Armed Forces. Others include the Department Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. There are many agencies attached to the Department of Homeland Security. Some of the divisions of Homeland Security include “ICE”, Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency, the Border Patrol Agency, the National Security Agency, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

It seems like everyone would want our Nation to be secure. Unfortunately, there are varying opinions of what we should do for National Security. To me it seems logical that we should prevent drugs and criminals from entering our country. It also seems logical that those from other countries should enter the US in a peaceful and legal way. Most of our ancestor did just that. Many entered through Ellis Island in New York and were given proper permission to be here in the United States. Many of them became citizens through the Naturalization process and their children born here became US Citizens just because they were born here. Those are our ancestors. My great-grandfather is one of them. Today there is turmoil in Central America which is driving many people from those countries. They are coming to our country. There lies the controversy. Do we let them just cross our border and infiltrate our cities. If that is the answer, then we don’t need a Border Patrol. There are a lot of problems with that scenario. One of the biggest problems is that along with the law-abiding immigrants there will be criminals and

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illegal drugs. We don't need more criminals and illegal drugs in this country, we have too much of that already. Another problem is housing and feeding all the thousands of refugees. To me it defies logic to have open borders. We need to stop illegal immigration. I realize this is a political hot topic and it is in the news every day. We can only hope the problem gets solved, but I don't have much faith that it will because of the political division in our country. We have many other problems in our country, but it seems our congress is fixated on this topic and can't seem to get anything else done. If they could work together and improve the legal immigration system, we might have a chance at a solution, but they can't seem to work together. The Democrats blame the Republicans and the Republicans blame the Democrats.

Besides Immigration, there are other topics concerning National Security. Some of those include our relations with Foreign Countries. We have military troops in many foreign countries. Some like Germany and Japan are just peaceful bases. Others like Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria we have fighting forces risking their lives every day. Other Countries where we don't have troops, we have good relations or not so good. Russia, Iran, North Korea are a few that are not so good. Our Armed Forces have to be ready at all times for any possible attacks. Also, our intelligence agencies have to be diligent so that we know ahead of time what threats might become reality. That includes being ready and to stop any terror attacks.

As I said at the beginning, National Security is a broad and controversial topic. I hope that someday the controversy will stop, and we can all work on the same page to solve our National Security problems.

Motion by 10<sup>th</sup> District Commander Haddick to accept, with the second, passed.

### **Poppy's**

Chairman discussed upcoming "Poppy" season and asked that Squadrons help distribute and collect donations.

Motion by 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Commander Bacon to accept, with the second, passed.

### **Legislative Commission**

The Department Legislative Commission has not met since 22 September 2018. However, the American Legion Department of Illinois recommends supporting HB 34. A surviving spouse of a disabled Veteran would retain the property tax reduction awarded his or her spouse.

Go to [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) and find the Legislative Action Center locate your representatives enter your zip code and your Federal Representatives will be

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available including an email address for contact to their office. You can also sign up for Action E-List which will automatically let you know when there is a critical piece of legislation being considered or a pending vote so that you can contact the appropriate office to ask for support or ask for nonsupport of the bill.

You can also find both the House and Senate schedule for the day.

Multiple functions to stay informed and to participate in supporting Veteran issues in Congress or at the Presidential level as well.

As always, the American Legion respects any ones right to disagree with any legislation however should you disagree with any of the Legion's positions, do it as a private citizen not as a Legionnaire.

Current American Legion Legislative Priorities: While this list is too comprehensive to go into detail today, it is important to at least have some familiarity with the National Agenda to be able to discuss with friends, neighbors and maybe influence others to actively support Veteran issues through their representatives.

You can find detailed information by going to [www.legion.org/legislation](http://www.legion.org/legislation)

- Mission continues beyond basic training
- Unrecognized armed hostilities recognition
- The future of VA health care
- Protect the best care anywhere
- VA recruitment and retention
- The road home from TBI and PTSD
- Improving care for women veterans
- Improve access to care for MST victims and survivors
- Veteran suicide prevention
- Support for veteran caregivers
- Prevent veteran homelessness
- Blue Water Navy vets deserve benefits
- Electronic health records
- Licensing and credentialing
- Veterans Preference hiring
- Access to capital for small business
  - Federal contracting for veteran-owned businesses
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program
- New approaches to transition
- Maintain integrity of the GI Bill
- Cyber security
- Strengthen the U.S. military
- Fund law enforcement agencies
- Financial protections from scams
- Protect the U.S. flag from desecration

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Gold Star families  
Expedited citizenship through military service

As always, the American Legion supports anyone's right to disagree with any of these priorities however please remember to do so as a private citizen not as an American Legion Family member.

Motion by 1<sup>st</sup> Division Commander O'Connell to accept, with the second, passed.

**SAL Leadership Training Commission**

I feel we need to make some changes in our training material. Currently we tell those in attendance the duties of each individual office. We can continue to do this. But I believe we should add more information. I have been asked by the Department Leadership Training Committee to assist with the rewrite of the new training manual. I was asked some time ago if I thought the training material used to train the Legion was adequate for training the Sons. I answered yes. But now I feel we need to add some material. Because in the past when we presented a charter to a new squadron, we provided a Training secession. But recently Detachment has not been asked to provide any training. In the past I was mistakenly under the impression the Legion was following the rules. Which are, when a post takes on the responsibility of starting a new squadron, they are supposed to appoint advisors to attend meetings. This would insure everything is done correctly. But I am discovering that many posts are unaware of their responsibilities. And do not provide advisors. We have advisors at the state level why not at the post level. The advisors attending the meetings would not only provide advice on proper procedure but would create a bond between the Legion and the Sons. Without this bond and without any training the new squadron is left to run amuck. So, it is understandable why there appears to be disagreements between the Legion and the Sons. If this problem is not corrected very soon, we will begin losing more members than we are now. When the Sons of the American Legion was originated, it was a children's organization. It was created to bring sons and grandsons of WW1 Vets into the Legion Family. Children need advisors and adults need advisors as well. The material I talking about adding to Department training and to Detachment training is advisor training. If a business did not provide training for their new employees, they would not be in business very long. The Sons have an opportunity to increase our membership greatly. At the Fall Fourth Division meeting it was announced 450,000 Boy Scouts were resigning from the organization. A few months later it was announced the Girl Scouts were suing the Boy Scouts. And just a couple of months ago it was announced the Boy Scouts were filing for bankruptcy. I believe the Sons should grasp this opportunity to invite as many of these ex-Boy Scouts to join the Sons of



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the American Legion. I believe the public should be made aware that the SAL will provide training in Good Citizenship. And the Department and Detachment must begin training advisors as soon as possible.

Motion by 18<sup>th</sup> District Commander Cavanaugh to accept, with the second, passed.

**Veteran's Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission**

Chairman had reports by each Commission member:

Veterans Suicide Prevention (White Paper)

Deeply concerned about the number of military veterans who take their own lives at high rates higher than that of the general population, the nations largest organization of wartime veterans established a Suicide Prevention Program under the supervision of its TBI/PTSD standing committee, which reports to the National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission.

When service members transition from military into civilian life, they undergo multiple personality and social identity changes. Losing camaraderie and belongingness to a unit can strip individuals of their social support; many veterans refer to their former military units as family. The loss of trusting relationships and a social support system can reduce the way a veteran manages intimate relationship stressors, financial instability and may lead to substance abuse or legal issues.

Many service members find purpose and meaning during their time in the military. Serving our nation in uniform, whether here at home or in combat operations overseas, can be personally rewarding in numerous ways. Service members often report that having a mission, working as a team, and completing daily tasks to be fulfilling. The military provides individuals the opportunity to contribute to something larger than themselves, to learn new skills and grow. The loss of the psychological benefits from their military obligations can lead some veterans to struggle with despair as they transition into civilian life.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has taken great strides to reduce veteran suicide. The VA has expanded the Veterans Crisis Line, which responds to 500,000 phone calls every year as well as thousands of electronic chats and text messages.

The American Legion remains deeply concerned by the high suicide rate among service members and veterans and is committed to finding a way to help end this crisis. The American Legion has established a Suicide Prevention Program and

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aligned it under the TBI/PTSD Committee. This committee is currently reviewing methods, programs and strategies that can be used to reduce veteran suicide.

VA&R Committee  
George Koop

**The Haven**

The Haven is special place where veterans are bussed from the Marion VA and can spend a day relaxing, unwind and forget about the day to day worries. When you first walk into the Haven it reminds you of a large rustic cabin and you relax immediately. Walking through the Haven on the left you will see a very large kitchen where meals are made for the vets, and on the right side is a huge area with tables, chairs, pool table and sofas. You will also see the whole back wall is made up of windows and outside you see the lake, and a covered pavilion with picnic tables for cook outs or just relaxing.

For indoor recreation there is a pool table, play cards, watch TV, or just relax in front of the fireplace. Outdoor you can hike through the woods, fish off the dock, picnic, or just enjoy the outdoor tranquility of being next to the lake. I have seen special events like painting where a volunteer will come out and assist the Vets as needed as they try their hand at painting.

Anyone who wishes can visit the Haven and experiences the extraordinary facility, relax and see what the Haven is all about. Each visit is a great experience and well worth the trip. Not all visitors are veterans from the VA, Boy Scouts hold campouts, and work days to help out around the facility.

The Haven site was choose in 1947 with a lease for the land from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with the construction starting in 1948 and in 1950 the Haven was dedicated on what is now a federal protected refuge.

The Haven is very special because it is operated be the American Legion and is directed by the Egyptian Past Commander's Club which provides support and financial aide through the 5th Division American Legion, SAL and Auxiliary. It is operated 365 day's a year and has two full time live-in caretakers who provide meals and take care of the veterans during their visit. They also upkeep the facility and take care of the grounds work.

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The EPCC was formed in 1937, and member Ray Hubbs came up with the idea for a facility at Crab Orchard lake that would serve as a rehabilitation program for vets.

Operating the Haven is big expense and is paid for by Division per capita tax at .15 cents a person plus, membership fees of the EPCC. Donations and fundraisers are always at hand to keep the Haven going. There is a jamboree each year and all are welcome, this includes a steak dinner, drinks and plenty of socializing, this is event is always a good time and of course all proceeds go the Haven.

**AMERICAN LEGION OPERATION COMFORT WARRIORS**

While the care at most U.S. military hospitals and warrior transition units is first rate, the American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors was created to provide the so-called "nonessentials" items that usually don't show up as a budget-line on government spreadsheets. The American Legion will not forget our heroes. Modeled after an earlier American Legion fundraiser for troops recovering at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, Operation Comfort Warriors provides comfort items for our nation's wounded warriors. Items such as loose-fitting sweat suits to cover a soldier's healing body without adding pressure to the burns he suffered during an RPG attack in Ramadi. Or an iPod to help drown out the tinnitus that has plagued the medic ever since she drove too close to a roadside bomb in Afghanistan. Or a gripping novel that provides a welcome distraction from PTSD.

From gift cards for patients at Walter Reed to electronics for Marines at Twentynine Palms, and every place in between, Operation Comfort Warriors is the American Legion's expression of gratitude. These items will not make our wounded heroes whole again, but they do show that the American Legion cares and is grateful for their service and sacrifice.

The American Legion contacts officials at military health care facilities, Red Cross stations, and their surrounding communities and obtains "wish lists" to determine which items are needed by patients at that facility. Once a need is identified, the items are ordered by the American Legion and delivered in an expeditious manner. It's as simple as that. No red tape.

All administrative and marketing costs for Operation Comfort Warriors are paid by the American Legion's general fund, meaning 100 percent of donated funds go directly to purchasing comfort items for the troops.

You can visit [www.legion.org/ocw](http://www.legion.org/ocw) for more information and the latest news about Operation Comfort Warriors. The website also accepts credit card donations.

Respectfully Submitted  
Jimmy Hunter

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VAVS REPORT  
Spring DEC March 30,2019

The VAVS volunteer opportunities in Illinois for the Sons are almost endless. We have 5 VAMC's, 43 OPC'S, VET CENTERS and CBOC'S, 10 NATIONAL CEMETERIES and 4 Illinois Veterans Homes - Anna, LaSalle, Manteno and Quincy.

Rep/Depts

Lovell Federated - Rep Bill Geary; Dep n/a; Jessie Brown - we are getting closer to getting Derrick Stinson as the rep; Dep n/a; Hines - n/a I was given a name for someone who was interested, but after multiple attempts by phone and email with no response we need to look elsewhere. Illiana - Rep Ed Cavanaugh; we are getting closer to getting me re certified as the dep; Marion - Rep Donnie Houghland; Dep n/a

Illinois Veterans Homes - Anna - Donnie Houghland; LaSalle - n/a; Manteno Jimmy Hunter; Quincy - Ed Cavanaugh

so we have in Illinois 62 places across the state to volunteer at.

Respectfully Submitted

Bruno "T" Williamson

Detachment VAR chairman

**VE&E Commission Questions and Answers**

***"What is this new VE&E Commission and what do they do?"*** The SAL National Veterans Employment and Education Commission's Mission Statement is "To assist The American Legion in ensuring that America's Veterans have the opportunity to provide, with honor and dignity, the economic necessities of life for themselves and their families."

***"How does the VE&E Commission plan to accomplish this?"*** By getting the word out on "Hiring Our Heroes" job fairs being held around the nation as well as education benefits available in each state, in addition to or as an alternative to, federal GI Bill benefits.

***"How can our Squadron help?"*** By assigning members of your Squadron to your own VE&E Commission/Committee to assist us in getting this info out to your local Veterans that can benefit from it.

***"Where do we find this information and how can we get it out to the Veterans?"*** By going online and finding local job fairs and benefits available in your state. Then by taking this info, as well as info received from National or Detachment, and placing it on your Squadron/Post websites and Facebook pages as well as in your newsletters. Also by printing it out and posting it on your Post's bulletin board and in other locations around your community where local Veterans will see it. You can also request that your Post e-mail this info out to their members. Be creative with your distribution.

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When you leave the military, the biggest question is **"What's next?"** Your Squadron can help with the answer to this question by providing this information to our Veterans. Please assist us in making this new Sons of The American Legion Commission a successful one nationwide while assisting the "Heroes" who have kept America and everyone in it free and safe.

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**End Veteran Homelessness**

The National Veterans Employment and Education Commission is requesting all detachments to form their own VE&E Commission/Committee and then in turn, encourage your districts and squadrons to do the same.

One of our goals this year is to **"End Veterans Homelessness"**. Some things you can do to assist with this initiative are: promote veteran employment, volunteer at Stand Downs and Job Fairs, encourage property owners and landlords to house veterans exiting homelessness and collect/distribute move-in essentials.

The VEE commission has also placed on the national website a brochure created by the VA for First Responders. These emergency workers are many times in contact with homeless veterans on a daily basis. This brochure gives these First Responders information that they can provide to these down-on-their-luck veterans. Why not make copies of this brochure and distribute them to your local police and fire departments?

Another way that you can assist is to research organizations in your home state that assist homeless veterans and then throw your support behind them.

What organizations can you find near you? Please assist us as we assist The American Legion to "End Veteran Homelessness".

You can find links to upcoming Veterans Job Fairs for Illinois and surrounding states; by going to [recruitmilitary.com/events...](http://recruitmilitary.com/events...)

Motion by 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Commander Bacon to accept, with the second, passed.

Sr Vice Commander turned podium over to Commander Gort at 1456.

**Public Relations Commission**

Public Relations for The Sons is an important task that all members should be involved in.

At all functions that The Sons are volunteering at, you should be wearing your cover. Other suggestions could be, shirts with Our emblem or ball caps, something that designates that you are a Proud Son taking time to volunteer.

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Make sure to take time to let your Post and your Unit knows that you are here to help with activities and are willing to help promote PR within The Post and community.

At this time of the year, many Son's will be assisting in fish suppers at The Post. The Son's should also wear their covers when distributing Poppies. We need to take pictures, send them to your local paper, and let the community know the service you are providing.

Make sure to get pictures of this, for there is a National "Snapshots of Service" program that we can participate in. Details are on the National website

The Consolidated Report Form, (CSR) that all Squadrons should fill out at the end of the year is quick look at what The Squadron has accomplished throughout the year. Please promote because, "This is who we are" Let's bring those numbers up this year.

There is no such thing as "We didn't do anything during the year" or "We don't want to blow our own horn"

A Squadron will always make a difference in your community.

We need to promote and educate our communities on what we do.

Most importantly, we need to fill out Our Consolidated Report Forms

It was also stated that if you have a political or any type of "stance" that disagrees with the Legion Family, don't advertise it with the Legion Family name, emblems, etc.

Motion by 24<sup>th</sup> District Commander Trout to accept, with the second, passed.

**Audit Committee**

Sr Vice Stander stated the Audit was reviewed by Finance Officer and Finance Commission. Auditors stated everything was fine.

Motion by Stander to accept the report, with the second, passed.

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**Ad Hoc Constitution & Amendments Committee**

PDC Stillwell stated some changes in our Constitution need to be made and will be working on that.

**Commander's Advisory Committee**

Chairman stated all reports are the Commander is doing a great job representing the Detachment and Legion Family. The topic of "absentee" officers and people who request National appointments and positions was discussed. It was stated that any request for a National Appointment needs to be brought to the Commander's Advisory at the Winter DEC for approval by the Detachment then sent to the SAL Advisors for their approval before going to the NEC to be submitted to National.

Motion by IPDC Hayse to accept, with the second, passed.

**COMMISSION/COMMITTEE DONATIONS**

Jeff Trout donated \$5 to GTTY for fine  
Squadron 109 donated \$21.72 to CWF  
Squadron 167 donated \$13.15 to CWF  
Squadron 169 donated \$26.48 to CWF  
Squadron 596 donated \$16.58 to CWF  
Squadron 2 donated \$100 to CWF

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Chairman Stinson stated the only resolutions were the hospitality resolutions. All were accepted. Motion by NEC Hunter to accept the report, with the second, passed. Commander Gort presented Certificate of Appreciation to the Legion Family Members.

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN'S REPORT**

NEC Hunter introduced National Vice Commander Christie for his remarks.

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**NEW BUSINESS**

Charter Actions - Any actions we submit to Department after our Spring DEC will either have a cancellation or extension to the Pre-Convention DEC. At the Pre-Convention DEC, those extensions will be reviewed and will have action again. They will be cancelled at this point unless they are certified with at least 10 members.

**The following Squadrons are NOT CERTIFIED**

11th District, Squadron 491 McHenry	2019-0 cards	CANCEL
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**The following Squadrons have 10 MEMBERS OR LESS**

11th District, Squadron 391 Lombard	2019—0 cards/2018—14 cards	EXTEND
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11th District, Squadron 392 Peotone	2019—1 card/2018—16 cards	CANCEL
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12th District, Squadron 675 Oswego	2019—0 cards/2018—21 cards	CANCEL
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15th District, Squadron 417 Cambridge	2019—0 cards/2018—19 cards	EXTEND
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18th District, Squadron 766 Bradley	2019—9 cards/2018—20 cards	EXTEND
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18th District, Squadron 499 Spiecher-Gilman	2019—7 cards/2018—27 cards	EXTEND
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19th District, Squadron 559 Champaign	2019—9 cards/2018—26 cards	EXTEND
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20th District, Squadron 442 Winchester	2019 - 2 cards/2018—1 card*	EXTEND
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*\*Squadron 442 should have been canceled last year. They slipped through the "cracks" with the changes at Department. They did, however, certify themselves this year.*

21st District, Squadron 168 Pana	2019—8 cards/2018—11 cards	EXTEND
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22nd District, Squadron 439 Highland	2019—1 card/2018—15 cards	CANCEL
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23rd District, Squadron 30 Olney	2019—3 cards/2018—50 cards	EXTEND
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23rd District, Squadron 69 Robinson	2019—2 cards/2018—74 cards	EXTEND
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24th District, Squadron 596 Ridgway	2019—0 cards/2018—22 cards	EXTEND
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**The following is both not certified and has under 10 members:**

7th District, Squadron 46 Wilmette	2019—0 cards/2018—16 cards	EXTEND
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Motion by 24<sup>th</sup> District Commander Trout to accept these actions and send to Department. The extended actions will be reviewed at Pre-Convention DEC. With the second by 3<sup>rd</sup> Division Commander Slevin Sr., the motion passed.

Sr Vice Commander Stander and Mr. Borgman discussed the recent Department Oratorical Contest. Below is a summary submitted by Mr. Borgman.

This year will mark the 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest which first started as a National Contest in 1938 with 11 Departments advancing their finalists to National competition. Today there are approximately 30,000 contestants participating each year representing 52 Departments of the American Legion. Nationally there is \$138,000 in scholarships handed out not to mention scholarship money that is generated on the District and Department levels which will vary from Department to Department. The overall national contest winner gets an \$18,000 scholarship. Second place takes home \$16,000, and third gets \$14,000. Each department (state) winner who is certified into and participates in the national contest's first round receives a \$1,500 scholarship. Those who advance past the first round receive an additional \$1,500 scholarship. The American Legion's National Organization awards the scholarships, which can be used at any college or university in the United States.

Speech is a part of every High School curriculum in the U.S., as is the study of our U.S. Constitution. The American Legion has taken these two studies, public speaking and knowledge of the document that guides our Democracy and defined a structure for our youth to express the various facets of the US Constitution and American citizenship – a constitutional speech contest that provides scholarship funding.

There are two segments to the competition; in the first segment, contestants deliver an eight to ten-minute prepared oration on their subject of choice from the U S Constitution. The second segment is one of four assigned subjects that are made know in a random selection minutes before the contestant must deliver that oration. This year's assigned subject will be chosen from the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> Amendments.

Information has been distributed to high schools across the country and each American Legion Post, as well as posted on the Legion's website at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org). The Sons are encouraged to promote this program in their local communities and then assist in conducting the contests. Most contests at the Post level are held in January, District contests in February and Department contests in March. The 2019 National Finals will be April 5-7 in Indianapolis at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel, 2544 Executive Drive, Indianapolis, IN. Quarterfinal and semifinal contests are scheduled for Saturday, April 6, with the finals scheduled for Sunday, April 7.

Submitted by,  
Jim Borgman

National Americanism Commission, SAL

**Convention remarks:** Adjutant Van Horn discussed upcoming Convention.

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**PUFL Administrator remarks:** PUFL Admin stated 165 PUFL's

**Other items:** IPDC Hayse motioned to re-confirm the Detachment's endorsement of Harl "Butch" Ray for National Commander. With the second by NEC Hunter, motion passes.

**ADVISOR'S REMARKS**

Advisor Phelps stated something needs to be done with Wilmette Squadron.

**50 - 50 DRAWING**

Sgt-At-Arms conducted the 50-50. Total was \$170 with PDC Potempa winning \$85. He donated \$25 to GTTY.

**Closing & Benediction**

Chaplain Nemanich said a prayer.  
Sgt-At-Arms removed the POW/MIA flag.  
The Colors were in place, a hand salute was rendered.  
Commander Shipley adjourned the meeting at 1618.

Minutes completed by:

Jeffrey Van Horn  
Detachment Adjutant