



2024 FALL
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
NEC REPORTS



2024 NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) REPORTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| National Executive Committee Meeting Agenda | 3 |
| National District I Reports | 4 |
| National District II Reports | 10 |
| National District III Reports | 17 |
| National District IV Reports | 25 |
| National District V Reports | 32 |
| National District VI Reports | 37 |
| National Officers Reports | 45 |
| Pre-Convention NEC Meeting Minutes | 59 |
| First Business Session Meeting Minutes | 71 |
| Second Business Session Meeting Minutes | 77 |
| Third Business Session Meeting Minutes | 94 |
| Fourth Business Session Meeting Minutes | 121 |
| Post-Convention NEC Meeting Minutes | 136 |



AMVETS NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) MEETING

Saturday, December 7, 2024

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Call Meeting To Order..... | National Commander Horace Johnson |
| Invocation..... | National Chaplain Rigley K. Jackson |
| Honors To The Colors..... | National Provost Marshal Arthur Majors |
| Roll Call..... | National Executive Director Joe Chenelly |
| Adoption Of Agenda..... | National Commander Johnson |
| Approval Of Minutes..... | National Commander Johnson |
| NEC Reports | |
| District I..... | Commander Tom Davitt |
| District II..... | Commander Randy Ferguson |
| District III..... | Commander Earl Hood |
| District IV..... | Commander Sheldon Hartfield |
| District V..... | Commander Deborah Wehrli |
| District VI..... | Commander Jack Isaacson |
| Committee Reports | |
| Finance..... | National Finance Officer Kelly McFarlain |
| VAVS..... | VAVS Chairman Bobby Lumpkins |
| National Staff Reports..... | Executive Director Chenelly |
| National Service Foundation..... | NSF President Harold Chapman NSF Executive Director Joe Chenelly NSF Finance Director Agha Husain |
| Old Business..... | National Commander Johnson |
| New Business..... | National Commander Johnson |
| Benediction..... | National Chaplain Rigley K. Jackson |
| Honors To Colors..... | National Provost Marshal Arthur Majors |



National District I

| | |
|--|-----|
| National District I Commander Thomas M. Davitt | 5 |
| Connecticut, Dana Dillon, NEC | 6 |
| Maine, James E. Laflin, NEC | 145 |
| Massachusetts, PDC Caroline J. Kenyon, NEC | 7 |
| New Jersey, Fred Vineyard, NEC | 9 |
| Rhode Island, Ronald H. Bennett, NEC | 146 |

New York report not received by deadline

Report of Thomas M. Davitt, National District I Commander

National District I

Membership

National District One is working hard in each Department processing renewals and Life Memberships. Each Department is printing off their posts membership rosters so they can be used in managing membership. Each Department is also requesting that the Life Membership cards and information from National is sent to the local post. That way they can make a group presentation of the Life Membership with post membership present for congratulations. Departments have been holding membership drives during this month of November in honor to all Veterans.

Upcoming Events

Departments have events planned for the Pearl Harbor Memorial Program that is held in each community to honor and remember all the service men and women on December 7. Several States and National Veteran Cemeteries have honors as well with an Eternal Flame Memorial which has local programs to remember.

Programs

Departments have been busy with local post hosting scouting activities with the Boy Scouts and Cub Scout packs. Veterans Day programs were held throughout District One with local and State Commander's conducting community events honoring our military veterans. Several Memorials were repaired and dedicated during Veterans Day for the Departments of Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Maine. Americanism Committees in each Department have been initiating the AMVETS National Americanism Program going to the local schools and meeting with the Guidance Dept. The Department of Massachusetts is in the planning stages for the annual Passion Plunge on Saturday February 8, 2025, at 12:00pm at AMVETS Post #79. Pledge Sheets are available. Donations are made to Special Olympics of Massachusetts (SOMA)

Legislative

Each Department has a busy legislative representative and local AMVETS appointed to the Governors Councils to share and coordinate local bills in support of our veterans. Housing initiatives to support disabled veterans, veteran housing options as well as senior

housing. Fuel Assistance and medical prescription assistance is also worked by these committee members in each Department.

Service

Each Department works with local state government to ensure homeless veterans and families are addressed and supported. I commend each Department for their efforts and attention with this most serious issue.

Report of Dana Dillon, NEC Department of Connecticut

National District I

Membership

We have received notice from some of our members that they have received their Renewal Notices from National. Our Commander affirmed that it is time to send in their membership dues. Like many Departments, our Membership Numbers continue to trend in the wrong direction. While we do well in retention, we continue to have members who do not renew and lose members due to members who have passed away. The big problem is we are not getting new members. If we are going to survive as an organization, we must get new members. We also must find ways to get new members active and involved with what we do. This is the key to survival.

Upcoming Events

Many of our posts are getting ready to pass out meals or gift cards to needy families in their neighborhoods for Thanksgiving

Programs

Connecticut usually does a good job in this area. However, our Department's Second Vice Commander has been having trouble accessing the department records to help Posts submit their reports. He can only access his own post. We have made many attempts with National to get this corrected, but as of making this report, the problem still exists.

Legislative

We continue to advocate for veterans and military.

Service

We do not have an NSO.

Other

We in Connecticut are saddened by the loss of a long-time member and friend, Nick DeCerbo. In May 2024, Nick celebrated his 100th birthday. Nick served in the Army under Patton. While serving AMVETS, he was very active at the West Haven VA Hospital. He was a member of AMVETS Post 9 and was also active at the Department Level, where he served as our Surgeon General. Nick brightened the lives of everyone he came into contact with.

Membership

We received our up-to-date annual membership cards for each post at National Convention. While we're passing the cards out to every post in the commonwealth, we found out that some cards were mixed up with different posts. We didn't notice this until we opened the sealed cards designated for each post. Also some posts are still missing cards. Our State Vice CMDR will be calling Warren Cox, the Chairman for membership, to give him a heads-up on the situation. At this time, we're getting new members but they're coming in slowly.

Programs

Committees are still being formed as I'm sending this report. We have the following: Polar Bear Passion Plunge for Special Olympics - On November 7th, the committee held their first meeting at Post 79 in Natick. We went over a few items needed for the plunge. We will properly meet 1 or 2 more times prior to the plunge. The date is set for the plunge, it will be on Saturday, February 8, 2025. It will be held once again at Post 79 in Natick. The amount we raised last year will be tough to beat.

Americanism - We held our first meeting prior to the November SEC . Handed out fliers to be delivered to various schools in the commonwealth. We set the cutoff date and the judging date. After judging is completed the next phase will be forwarding the winners to National for their judging.

Scholarship - that committee will start in January 2025 by passing out applications during the January SEC.

Legislative

In regards to the bill (h4172) Hero Act for the commonwealth. Our State Senate and House of Representatives have reconciled the differences. They did forward the bill to the Governor's desk for her signature. While we're away at the National Convention. On August 8th, the Governor did sign the bill into law.

There was one bill (HB 4885) Firearm Safety Reform Bill. This bill was passed by the State Senate and the House

of Representatives on July 18, 2024. The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation submitted a letter to request the Governor to veto this bill on the grounds of damaging the hunting and conservation community. The Governor signed the bill into law on July 25, 2024. This bill would go into effect by the end of October 2024. During the Big E in Western MA, Members of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation were there with a referendum petition to repeal the law. The petition needed 90,000 signatures of registered voters to have the gun law repeal on 2026 ballot. On October 2nd, the Governor signed an emergency preamble to expedite the gun law to go into effect as of this date instead of the end of the October. She just bulldozed it though. This is no longer a Second Amendment issue but its a First Amendment issue. They're in the process of submitting more than 90,000 voters signatures for review. This is well above the 37,287 required to put a repeal before voters. The Governor's emergency preamble to the law, takes effect right away and can't be suspended until voters render their verdict on the 2026 repeal effort.

Service

We had a few events that came up since National Convention. On September 2nd, on Labor Day in Marlborough for their Annual Labor Day Parade. The local Post 1980, did something different for this year. Because the last few years members of the State Honor Guard kept on falling out during the parade. The post made a float to carry as many members as it could. In the judging of all the floats. This year the post received the Mayor's trophy for Best Made Float.

On September 14th, Post 208 in Hudson, held their Annual Fishing Derby for hospitalized veterans. We did have residents from several VA Hospitals in the State. We also had several voluntaries from the AMVETS, Ladies Auxiliary and Son's of AMVETS. Everyone had a fun time.

On September 21st, Our Annual State Golf Tournament at the Woods golf course in Westminster, MA. We had several teams of four. Once all the teams were done, they proceeded to the VFW/AMVEST Post in Westminster for a hot meal and to do raffles. We gave prizes to the

Report of PDC Caroline J. Kenyon, NEC Department of Massachusetts (*continued*)

National District I

winning team. We also had different chances on the golf course for Ex: hole in one on a par 3 and closest to the hole. It was a great day and everyone enjoyed themselves.

On October 6th, It was the Annual Fall Foliage Parade in N. Adams, MA. We had well representation from the AMVETS, Ladies Auxiliary and Son's of AMVETS. We also used the float that was used in the Marlborough Labor Day Parade. We had for State in the front row: State President for the Ladies Auxiliary, State Commander for the AMVETS and State Commander for the Son's of AMVETS in that order.

On November 10th, the Annual Veteran's Day Ceremony held at the National Cemetery in Bourne, MA. We had AMVETS, Ladies Auxiliary and Son's of AMVETS all represented.

On November 11th, Veterans' Day, we had several AMVETS, Ladies Auxiliary and Son's of AMVETS attend Parades and Ceremonies in their local areas.

Other

Under Other - for our State Honor Guard, we've been notified by the Boston Celtics. They have guaranteed us 2 home games to post colors. But that doesn't mean we might do more games from that point on. Our own ALT NEC, Wayne Anthony, is our point of contact for Celtics, Patriots, Red Socks and Revolution.

Report of Fred Vineyard, NEC Department of New Jersey

National District I

Membership

Membership – is declining in all States. National, District and all State Posts need to offer incentives to members that recruit the most new members each month or quarterly. We need to work together to reverse the downward trends in past years.

Many Posts have kept Life Membership of their deceased members on their roster. NJ Posts are very happy to have returned to the previous membership software – it's simple and easy to navigate.

National Membership Department has been very helpful in handling all questions/issues

Upcoming Events

Pearl Harbor Service is upcoming next month

Programs

Monthly Coffee & Conversation held at NJ Dept. HQ during September thru June.

Americanism Flag Coloring Contest was successful once again with 2 local schools participating and chosen entries receiving gift cards to local family entertainment centers.

Legislative

We continue to work on behalf of all Veterans when new bills are proposed. Currently NJ is hoping for the proposed increase in Property Tax Deduction to pass. This would increase Veteran current \$250 annual credit to \$2500 over 4 years.

Service

Our NJ Posts continue to help with annual events such as Veterans Day, POW-MIA and Pearl Harbor. Honor Guard from NJ Post 911 is present at all events.

Other

Wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season!



National District II

| | |
|---|----|
| Delaware, David Haines, NEC | 11 |
| District of Columbia, Aaron J. Smith, NEC | 12 |
| Maryland, Andre R. Martel, NEC | 13 |
| North Carolina, David Wilburn, NEC | 14 |
| Pennsylvania, Robert Bankhead, NEC | 15 |
| Virginia, Kyle Blake, NEC | 16 |

District II Commander and West Virginia reports not received by deadline

Report of David Haines, NEC Department of Delaware

National District II

Membership

National Commander, District II Commander, Department Commanders and fellow AMVETS.

Membership:

Renewal is about 80 %

Programs:

5 posts have reported for the period 3 posts in the Department are involved in legislative efforts in Dover. Delaware and toys for tots and ROTC programs across the State. **Food drives are a regular part of our programs.** There are two student ROTC Cadets who have be attend Freedom foundation in Valley Forge, Pa on Am vet Scholarship's. The Department has awarded Two ROTC scholarships of \$ 1000.00

Post #2, participates in Scholarship's and ROTC Scholarships, along with major donations to the men's "Home of the Brave for Veterans" and the new "Women Home of the BRAVE" for women Veterans" in Milford Delaware and Milford's Veterans Home. Set up flu shots for members and family. Made donations of over **\$155, 000.00** for the year to date to charitable causes in addition to Two \$5000.00-dollar Scholarships for ROTC Graduate's during the period. Wreaths across America participant. Held our annual Veterans Day Ceremony Post 2 also has the **2nd Largest** Ladies Aux post in the country members Just over 625

Post #5: post has assisted post # 2 at its various functions and is picking up momentum,

Post #1694: They are doing numerous fund raisers and are planning a "White Clover drive at various business locations in Seaford Delaware.

Post #22 Membership reports little change, one life member passed away in September. Subordinates (ladies auxiliary and sons) report two new members each. Social quarter activity continues to be robust and has resumed kitchen operations on a daily basis

Charitable donations are approaching \$30,000 in the current reporting year. New activity at a breast cancer 5k

run walk in Dewey Beach was well attended. Boardwalk Buddy Walk was another great turnout. A new initiative to raise funds for St. Jude's Hospital was launched in June and is close to achieving it's \$1,000 goal.

Post #8323 Is active in community, and had a number of fund-raising drives including assisting of building ramps for Veterans

Service:

Department also participated in legislative proposals which consisted of over \$110000.00 going to the Delaware Veterans Trust Fund to help assist Veterans and their Spouses These funds comes from our Video lottery machines. The Department also assisted a number of Vets through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Legislative Issues:

The Department and posts are active in legislation both at the State and National level. We coordinate with the VFW and American Legion, on various pieces of legislation with both state and federal elected officials. Department maintains close relationship with key legislative leaders and their staff.

DEC Meeting Held in November 2024

Upcoming Events:

Trip to Washington DC to Vietnam Wall April 2025

Commander, this concludes my report and I move for adoption.

Respectfully submitted,

David Haines

NEC

AMVETS Department of Delaware

Report of Aaron J. Smith, NEC

Department of District of Columbia

National District II

Membership

We are always looking for new ways to improve our membership. I have changed very member of our department to bring in at least two members this year. Our commanders are working on having a 100% renewal rate by the end of the year.

Upcoming Events

Johnnie Collins, Jr. AMVETS Post 0008 will host a Holiday Party for Seniors at the Greenleaf Senior Apartments on Friday, November 22nd. The Department will hold its department meeting at Fort Myers Officers Club, Ft Myers, Virginia in March TBD. Attended and participated in several meetings and seminars at the AMVETS National Convention in Springfield, IL in August. Also attended the Blinded American Veterans Foundation 38th Annual congressional Award Ceremony held on Capitol Hill with National Commander Horace Johnson and Past National 1st Vice Commander Johnnie Collins on September 25th.

Programs

I am pleased to report that the Program reporting for the Department of District of Columbia for the Period 1 July thru 31 December 2024 is 100%. In Programs we reported in the online Data Systems in the categories of Americanism, Community Service, Fundraising, Remember Me and Supporting Veterans/Families. To date we have reported 513 volunteers with 4674 hours of volunteer service for a total value of \$136,025.90.

Service

Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services (VAVS), AMVETS, Department of the District of Columbia, Inc., donated coats weekly at the VA Medical Center for Homeless Veterans and their families. Johnnie Collins Jr. AMVETS Post 0008 continues donating to the DC Medical Centers, Community Living Center (CLC) monthly bingo. Ms. Angela McKnight, VAVS Representative for AMVETS Department of the DC volunteers weekly and attends quarterly virtual or in person meetings that are held by the Center for Development and Civic Engagement and VAVS Executive Committee. Operations Winterhaven was held at the VA Medical

Center in Washington, DC on Saturday, November 2nd. Members from AMVETS Post under the Department of the District of Columbia volunteered to distribute winter coats, backpacks, gloves, hats, underwear, socks and toiletries to homeless veterans and their family members.

Other

Johnnie Collins, Jr. AMVETS Post 0008, Washington, DC hosted a Luncheon on Friday, October 18th for AMVETS National Commander Horace Johnson at Patton Hall Officers Club in Fort Myers, Virginia. AMVETS, Department of the District of Columbia, Inc. hosted the District II Meeting in Alexandria, VA on October 19th. Commander this concludes my report, and I move for its adoption at the proper time.

Report of Andre R. Martel, NEC Department of Maryland

National District II

Membership

Our membership activity continues to reignite and there is growing hope that we may be at 100% or more by next summer. Activity within Post rosters and in MAL continues to grow and while it is taking an effort to renew many of the annual members, we can see a spark of activity and a hope of renewed success. We'll know much more by the Spring NEC.

Upcoming Events

Our next DEC's will be in early December and February. Holiday activities are high on our list - for the communities, children, and neighborhoods. The Annual Thrift Store Holiday celebration will be in early December – an affair where they make significant financial donations to local civic and non-profit organizations across the State. Those donations are then, likewise, matched by the AMVETS, Department of Maryland. Nominations for the Department's PNC A. Leo Anderson Memorial Free State Award of Excellence are being prepared. Governors, legislators, volunteers, Veterans assistants, etc. have been past recipients. Announcements will be made at the February DEC.

Programs

All Posts have restarted or continued at increased levels their programs activities for the year. Reporting is high on our list of priorities and we plan to be at 100% reporting by the end of the calendar year.

Legislative

Our legislature is currently not in session but returns in January 2025. We expect several pro-veteran bills to be introduced and are working through the Joint Veterans Committee of Maryland to positively influence those actions.

Service

VA centers and hospitals continue to open up to volunteer activities and Maryland is taking advantage. More activities have taken place at VA Hospitals in Baltimore and Martinsburg and at several other centers including the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home and at other nursing homes across the State.

Report of David Wilburn, NEC Department of North Carolina

National District II

Membership

The Department of North Carolina is holding on to about 2,400 members. We are trying different ideas to get new members and to keep them active. We are looking forward to this upcoming year.

copy of Upcoming Events: National Convention will be in Greensboro, North Carolina this August 19 -23 2025.

Programs

Our Department has several different types of programs. We have annual golf tournaments throughout the year while others have car shows. We have bingo and other events such as Holiday parties. Some Posts have pool tournaments and dart tournaments. We also put flags on the graves of veterans for Veterans Day and Memorial Day. We also participate in JROTC with handing out medals and certificates.

Legislative

Our department attends the legislative meeting in Raleigh, North Carolina each month. Nothing much to report at this time.

Service

We have a few Posts that have Amvets Honor Guards. Others have some people who help with VA benefits for veterans. We try to go to the VA hospital and have activities for the veterans.

Report of Robert Bankhead, NEC Department of Pennsylvania

National District II

Membership

Posts continue to address problems recruiting new members. All Posts look for new avenues to increase their membership numbers We currently have 8011 Members.

Upcoming Events

The January SEC will be virtual

Programs

We continue to present ROTC/JROTC Medals, participate in Scouting amongst other AMVET programs. Still having some issues with getting access to the reports.

Legislative

The Executive Director our Legislative Director stays abreast of the issues affecting Veterans and provides direction as needed.

Service

Our Department Service Officers continue to assist Veterans across the Commonwealth with amazing numbers.

Report of Kyle Blake, NEC Department of Virginia

National District II

National Commander Johnson, National Officers, Members of the National Executive Committee and fellow AMVETS

Membership

We are always looking for new ways to improve our membership. We are holding our own at the time.

We have around 1950 members. We are trying different membership drives to boost

We have opened 2 new Post within the past couple months.

Programs

Department 2nd Vice reports that Posts continue to submit their Programs through the online reporting system

Veterans Day Free drinks and hotdogs were provided at a post.

Veterans Day we had Posts participate in parades and also have floats.

Our VAVS rep's continue to keep in touch with our hospitalized and ailing Veterans across the State at multiple VA centers around Virginia.

Service

With the Holidays around the corner we are reaching out to our VAVS rep's to get wish list's for the VA hospitals and the Care Centers.

With the Holidays approaching and cold weather on the way, it is instrumental that we help serve our veterans with cloths, food and other goods.

Each Post has been conducting various services to assist/support veterans and their communities, and has represented our District very well.

Legislative

The Department Third Vice Commander updates the membership on legislative actions during our DEC meeting and State Conventions.

Our Department continue's to support Virginia and Congress bills to assist Veterans. We are a member of the State JLC Commonwealth of Virginia Veterans Board.

Upcoming Events

NEC meeting in December

Other

Our VA Posts statewide continue to grow in membership and are monthly active in their communities. Veterans Serving Veterans. State wide we have growth in our Red Fridays. Memberships are also growing in our Ladies, Sons and Riders. Continue to work on MALS and looking forward to opening a new post in the state of Virginia, at the request of local Veterans.



National District III

| | |
|---|----|
| Alabama, Earnestine Doubek, NEC | 18 |
| Florida, PDC A.J. John, NEC | 20 |
| Georgia, Brett N. Colbert, NEC | 21 |
| Louisiana, Gary L. Stuart, NEC | 22 |
| South Carolina, James M. Colwell, NEC | 23 |
| Tennessee, Lee Ann Adams, NEC | 24 |

District III Commander and Arkansas reports not received by deadline

Report of Earnestine Doubek, NEC Department of Alabama

National District III

Membership

Department of Alabama NEC Report Overview:

- Paid-Up for Life Members: 723
- Annual Members: 55
- Posts: 6
- Members at Large (MAL): The majority of members are listed under MAL.
- Program Value (July 1, 2024 - October 31, 2024): \$47,763.91
This value includes volunteer hours, mileage, cash donations, and costs.

Post Activities and Contributions:

- Post 7 POW-MIA Remembrance Day: Placed POW-MIA tables at area businesses and government buildings.
- Veterans Day Support: Assisted with Veterans Day activities at Daleville City Schools and helped house and feed several veterans.
- Recognition: Chaplain John Logsdon recognized as Veteran of the Year by the Enterprise Chamber of Commerce.
- Post 21 Free Breakfasts: Hosts free breakfasts for veterans on the second Saturday of each month.
- Veterans' Gift Bags: Partnered with North Alabama Friends of Veterans to provide 76 gift bags to veterans in local nursing and assisted living facilities.
- Veterans BBQ & Dinner: Organized a BBQ cook-off and a free veterans' family dinner on November 10, 2024.
- Veterans' Day Parade: Participated in the Athens Limestone Veterans' Day parade.
- Post 23 Veterans Memorial Overlook: Maintains the Veterans Memorial Scenic Overlook year-round.
- Veterans & First Responder Luncheon: Served lunch to veterans and first responders on October 12, 2024.
- Membership Drive: Conducted a membership drive and donation booth at the OPP Fest on October 26, 2024.
- Flag Retirement Ceremony & Veterans' Appreciation Dinner: Held on November 9th and 16th respectively.

- Post 1955 Veterans Day Ceremony: Participated in the ceremony at the Morgan County Veterans
- Memorial on November 11, with SEC David Picou as the guest speaker.

Assisted Living Visits:

Visited 15 veterans at the City Center Village Assisted Living Facility on November 12, bringing cake, ice cream, and thank-you cards.

Service Officer Activities:

Assisted at least two veterans with preneed burial applications and facilitated information for applying to veterans' state nursing homes.

Upcoming Events:

- Virtual SEC Meeting: February 15, 2025
- Post 21 Horse, Pony, and Mule Fun Day: April 26, 2025, Answered Prayers Farm, 5857 Stateline Rd., Taft, TN 38488
- Post 23 Christmas Parade & Fundraiser: December 7, 2024

Activities:

- Christmas parade with trailer/float and fall fundraiser (cash, prizes, and restaurant certificates).
- Post 1955 Wreaths Across America: December 14, 2024, Roselawn Cemetery, Decatur, AL
- Veterans' Birthday Party: December 27, 2024, Tutt Fann State Veterans' Home, Huntsville, AL
- Membership Drive & "Greenlight a VET" Event: Date TBD.

Legislative Update

SB135 (ACT NUMBER 2024-358): Sponsored by Senator Andrew Jones (House companion bill HB197, sponsored by Representative Chip Brown). This new law requires the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a plan to address Alabama veterans' behavioral health needs. It also mandates the consideration of pilot programs to address gaps in veterans' behavioral services.

**Report of Earnestine Doubek, NEC
Department of Alabama (*continued*)**

National District III

Conclusion

The Department of Alabama continues to provide invaluable support to veterans through various programs, events, and community engagements. As the year progresses, the department's activities will remain focused on advocating for veterans' well-being and ensuring that the needs of our veterans are met both locally and legislatively.

Report of PDC A.J. John, NEC Department of Florida

National District III

Membership

As of mid November 2024, Florida has 68 Posts with 15199 members. The October SEC training was conducted with the topic being, "Closing the Back Door." This topic covered recruiting and retention. The Membership Commander focused on ways to increase renewals and engaging new members. With this new approach we should exceed our membership totals over last year.

Programs

Florida Programs Reporting continues with the steady progress of raising our Program values. The dedicated work and commitment in accomplishing AMVETS program goals is key in Florida continuing its involvement in supporting all of our programs.

Service

Florida was devastated by two hurricanes this year. Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton impacted Florida two weeks apart. The Department of Florida Service Foundation using the Disaster Relief Fund was able to provide much needed assistance to a number members of the AMVETS Family. As of today approximately 12 members have received assistance from the fund. The fund was established to assist members of the Florida AMVETS Family who experience hardship during declared disasters. This fund is supported by the entire Florida AMVETS Family with donations and fundraisers .

Other

The Spring SEC will be held February 18-23 2025 at the Rosen Centre Hotel, 9480 International Drive, Orlando, FL.

Report of Brett N. Colbert, NEC Department of Georgia

National District III

Membership

The Department of GA currently has 12 active Posts (despite the system showing 13 Posts). Post 88's charter has been revoked, however, it still remains listed as an active Post. We are waiting on the National Membership Office to remove Post 88 from active status. Department 1st Vice Cmdr Nita Wiggs reports as of September 30, 2024 we have 1759 members of which 1638 are life members and 121 are annual members.

Upcoming Events

Department Winter SEC January 10-12, 2025 and will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn, Warner Robins, GA

Programs

Department 2nd Vice Cmdr Wanda Allen reports as of October 31, 2024, the Department is currently reporting at 75% (9 out of 12 Posts) with a total program value of \$1.3 million. Notable program reporting includes: following the devastation of Hurricane Helene, Posts in the northern half of GA banded together to collect and distribute over 25,000 lbs of supplies to our southern neighbors (110-Sandersville, 621-Waycross, and 607-Valdosta); all south GA Posts became hub sites for their respective areas to distribute food and donated goods to their local communities. The Department of GA Riders will be escorting 2 different convoys of supplies and donations. Chapter 10 Riders will transfer goods in Franklin, TN for transport to Asheville, NC. Chapter 12 Riders will escort a convoy of supplies (to include coats) to Post 845, Rockwell, NC.

Legislative

Nothing to report

Service

Post 911 consistently hosts clinics for veterans to receive help preparing disability service claims.

Other

The Department of GA is deeply grateful to Department of LA Commander Emmett Bailey for his support of our southern Posts following Hurricane Helene. J. C. Williams Post 607 (Valdosta) celebrated the 70th Anniversary of their charter on October 25, 2024.

Report of Gary L. Stuart, NEC

Department of Louisiana

National District III

Membership

The Department of Louisiana has six posts with a membership of 966 members, this includes 285 MAL. Of this total 888 are life members.

Upcoming Events

Our next SEC meeting will be held in Alexandria, Louisiana in February with Post 7 hosting. The exact date will be set at a later date.

Programs

As of 11-19-2024 the Department has 4 posts reporting for 66.66%. 3,967 volunteers worked 2,801 hours for a total program value of \$842,038.50.

Service

The Posts in the Department are doing different programs and community events. A few are hurricane relief, support National Guard Troops, Veterans day activities, donations to different charities, supporting Girl and Boy Scouts. This is just to name a few, there are many more.

Other

The Department is working to try and get two more Posts started. One in Bastrop and one in Shreveport. There will be a meet and greet held in Bossier City to meet people that want to start Post in Shreveport. It will be January 11 2025 at the LeBossier Hotel and Event Center 4000 La. 782-2 Bossier City La. (318) 747-0711. Time will be determined at a later date.

Report of James M. Colwell, NEC Department of South Carolina

National District III

Membership

The Department of South Carolina at last count has 1,552 members. The breakdown is as follows: Post 000-433; Post 2-49; Post 33-35; Post 70-981; Post 111-31; Post 177-23.

Upcoming Events

Postes participated in local Veteran's Day parades, Wreaths Across America, Fall NEC, and Toys for Tots.

Programs

Programs are reported at 100%. Noted programs reported to the Department of SC are Fundraising, Remembering Me (RED shirt Friday), Supporting Veterans Families (internments, odd jobs, repairs, appointments, etc.), Community Service, Americanism, Membership, Suicide Awareness, and Peer to Peer. The Department showed 877 volunteers giving 8585 hours X \$28.54 = \$245,016. Volunteers traveled a total of 17,258 miles X \$.42 = \$7,248. Expenses totaled \$4,190. Donations accepted: \$6,883. Total: \$263,337.

Legislative

As directed by National email blasts.

Service

The Department of SC and member Posts held a 50/50 raffle with \$1,250 from the drawing and the Department matching the \$1,250 for a total of \$2,500 going to the Equine Heart Healers Ranch. This a non-profit that teaches horse riding skills and provide counseling and decompression for Active Duty, Veterans, First Responders, and their families and children suffering from PTSD. This facility is located in Ware Shoals, SC.

Other

The Department of SC will be initiating a Quilt Raffle January 2025 with proceeds going to another non-profit Veteran support group. Post 70 port Royal, SC will host the District III meeting February 1-2, 2025.

Report of Lee Ann Adams, NEC Department of Tennessee

National District III

Membership

The Dept. of TN has 2061 active members and 505 members at large. Of these, 1836 are Life Members. Recruitment and retention continue to be a priority. Our 'Next County Program' is an incentive, assisting with funding new posts in new communities. Membership rosters are being updated with complete and current information to improve communication between posts and members alike.

Upcoming Events

April 4-5, 2025: Dept. of Tennessee Spring S.E.C. Meeting, Fairfield Inn, Decatur, TN.

June 2025: Department of Tennessee State Convention.

August 2025: AMVETS National Convention, Greensboro, North Carolina.

September 2025: Annual Golf Tournament, Ridgewood Golf Club, Athens, TN.

Programs

The Americanism Contest packets for 2024-2025 have been sent to all TN Posts for distribution to their schools. Judging of the entries will be held at our April SEC. We look forward to the announcement of the 2023-2024 contest winners, having submitted 12 entries for judging at the National level.

Our Pocket Constitution Program remains strong. After delivering over 26,186 Pocket Constitutions to 8th grade students across the state, Dave McKale, 2nd Vice, engaged the 917 Society to assist in expanding our outreach to more schools this coming year.

The Spirit of America, Founding Forward Program was attended by 3 TN students. Travel, tuition and spending cash were sponsored by National and the TN Ladies Auxiliary. A 4th student, sponsored by the TN Service Foundation canceled due to effects of Hurricane Helena.

AMVETS Against Drug & Alcohol Abuse Essay/Poster Contest Form have yet to be updated. We look forward to these updates as well as to the announcement of winners from last year's contest.

Program reporting continues to be an issue for some of our posts; we strive to improve reporting within each post. As of September 28th, TN reported \$2,580,167.39 in 'Programs' value this year. Fundraising is imperative to maintain our programs. The amazing efforts of our posts and of our TN Service Foundation has resulted in all the Dept. Programs being funded again this year. TN Service Foundation continues to work with the National Service Foundation regarding Thrift Store revenues in an effort to renew the payment of funds due to Departments.

Legislative

The Dept. of TN has rejoined TNVet, an organization composed of multi-Veteran Service Organizations, seated at one table to promote legislation for our veterans. Current issues awaiting sponsorship include Disabled Veteran Property Tax Exception (Tax Equalization); Veteran Day on the Hill; and the Tennessee Helping Heros Grant. More than just a lobby group, TNVet provides an opportunity to build relationships with other Veteran Service Organizations for the good of ALL veterans.

Service

The TN Veteran Relief Fund, funded by the Annual TN Golf tournament, has received, reviewed, and assisted with several requests for urgent financial aid from TN veterans. TN AMVETS are actively participating in disaster relief from the devastation of Hurricane Helene. Restricted for several years due to COVID, we are proud to be back in our TN State Veteran Homes. Activities are being held to provide needed items as well as fellowship to our aged comrades.

Other

TN National Guard Members have been deployed to the Middle East. The Dept. of TN has a new Facebook page: American Veterans Department of Tennessee



National District IV

| | |
|--|-----|
| Illinois, Richard Shea, Jr., NEC | 26 |
| Iowa, Barry Remington, NEC | 28 |
| Kentucky, Deanna Maynard, NEC | 29 |
| Missouri, Doug Johnson, NEC | 147 |
| Ohio, Andrew McElrath, NEC | 30 |
| Wisconsin, Wayne Amborn, NEC | 31 |

*District IV Commander, Indiana, Michigan, and
Minnesota reports not received by deadline*

Report of Richard Shea Jr, NEC Department of Illinois

National District IV

National Commander Johnson, Members of the National Executive Committee and fellow AMVETS:

Recent Events:

First, I want to thank anyone who came out to the last National Convention in Springfield IL, we were honored to be your host. As most of you might know our previous ED resigned in Aug for a job we could not compete with, we in IL wish you the best Keith. We have hired a new permanent ED Navy Veteran Joe Bartley from post 94.

Now for the bad news, while filling the role as interim ED for Dept of IL , PNC/PDC James B King (Past Everything in Amvets) passed away doing what he loved, working and helping Veterans especially IL Veterans. His way of getting people to do things and his mentorship to so many will be forever missed, his lasting “in his honored opinion” will be cherished and remembered. Please keep PNP Carol King and the King family in your thoughts and prayers. And if losing Jim wasn’t bad enough the following week we lost Kentucky’s favorite Veteran Alan Smith our 4th Nat JA, these two were icons in Amvets when it came to helping and mentoring veterans all you had to do was ask. Please keep the Dept of Kentucky and the Smith family in your thoughts and prayers.

Upcoming Events:

The Department of Illinois held its annual school of instruction in September, over 100 members representing 51 posts were in attendance. We held our workshops to talk about programs, membership, service officers, public relations and many other topics. We held our annual picnic at the VFW in Springfield where Amvets Post 94 meets, since our headquarters does not have the room for it. Our headquarters address is 2206 South Sixth Street Springfield, IL 62703

We are now getting ready for our Operation Red Sleigh program where with donations from individuals, posts, and the Illinois Service foundation. We supply veterans and active-duty members with gifts and a Christmas dinner. It has been a great program for us every year and just keeps growing.

Our winter SEC is scheduled for 15 February 2025 via Zoom.

Membership:

AMVETS Department of Illinois’ membership has undergone some extensive overhauling within our membership roster, from eliminating duplicates and deceased it has shrunken our numbers but now is a more accurate count of 5,961 total members. We in IL offer a wide variety of membership tools to gain attention and set us apart from other department VSOs. We offer online capabilities to join IL Amvets and our cutting-edge website sets us apart from others. Illinois Amvets is constantly trying to improve our coverage and remain at the fore front of Illinois veterans’ organizations.

Programs:

AMVETS Department of Illinois reached 100% programs reporting for this past year. In addition, Illinois AMVETS volunteers continue to work to provide volunteer events such as bingo, picnics, and the like. Illinois Amvets has many programs that we are proud of one of which is the ROTC award, every year we handout medals to various high school and college students around our state and a few overseas, one of our other programs is our Operation RED Sleigh that provides gifts for children and a Christmas dinner for a needy Veteran family. Both programs are funded by our service foundation, Post and personal donations.

Service:

AMVETS Department of Illinois currently has 4 department VSOs located throughout the state. All VSOs are working thoroughly and effectively to assist veterans and their families by filing claims bringing benefits to our IL Veterans. We couldn’t be prouder of our service officers.

Legislation:

We plan on doing a joint legislative day in the 2025 Spring Session to impact our legislation and put forth many veteran specific legislative items we would like updated or introduced. If you have any questions referring to any vet related Illinois legislation, please contact our IL HQ.

**Report of Richard Shea Jr, NEC
Department of Illinois (*continued*)**

National District IV

Communications:

We have a full-time Operations Manager at Illinois Amvets State Headquarters. Ashley Murphy oversees all IL Amvets PR, social media, and communications, and pretty much everything else that we need. If you want something shared, disseminated, or to be noticed in Illinois call or email Ashley at 217-528-4713 or ashley@ilamvets.org.

Any questions please contact our State Headquarters at 217-528-4713.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Shea Jr
NEC Illinois

Report of Barry Remington, NEC Department of Iowa

National District IV

Membership

Our membership has risen in the past 2-3 months. Primarily due to having a new 1st Vice at my post and a very good Department 1st Vice.

Upcoming Events

With the weather changing, and the snow flying, some activities will not be held until Spring comes. Our next SEC will held at Post 31 in Evansdale, Iowa.

Programs

Post 49 conducted a Punch Bowl Ceremony on Veterans Day. Our speaker was LTC Rampe, head of the ROTC Unit at the University of Northern Iowa. In December we will join up with a Legion post and travel to the Iowa Veterans Ceremony to participate of the Wreaths Across America. The ROTC Unit at Northern Iowa requested Post49 to attend a forum and speak to the cadets concerning their experiences during the Viet Nam War. This is the third year that Post 49 has participated.

Legislative

Our legislature will not go back into session until mid January 2025. During the first week, veterans organizations gather at the capital and are able to meet with representatives and senators concerning veterans bills that will come before the legislature.

Service

We have just concluded Vets In The Park. Each Wednesday during the summer months, Post 49 invites all veterans to a meal at the post. Interest has gathered steam and they now have businesses and individuals step up and volunteer to host a meal. They serve on an average of 50 to 100 veterans at each meal. Post 2 in Des Moines did a fundraiser for the hurricane victims in the southeast part of the country. When completed, they were able to fill a semi which was donated by a trucking company and provided a semi, trailer and driver to transport the filled trailer of food, clothing and anything else that was needed. Post 2 was also able to raise \$5,000 in cash which was donated by people of Des Moines.

Other

Our Department Convention will be held in Richmond Iowa in June.

Report of Deanna Maynard, NEC Department of Kentucky

National District IV

Membership

Use the net forum online for membership and stop using spring link. For any additional help contact Warren Cox, membersupport@amvets.org, National Membership Director. There is powerpoint on how to conduct membership.

Upcoming Events

SEC in Franklin, Kentucky January 11, 2025. National IV District Meeting Burnham, Illinois February 9, 2025. Spring NEC March 15, 2025 Washington, PA, tentative.

Programs

2nd Vice Commander Sandy Vorhies discussed Founding Fathers Foundation and their mission-To provide annual grants and funding from component Family Foundation Accounts to help develop and promote the Education of all Americans in the knowledge and understanding of our Constitution, including the following resounding truths and principles as taught by our Founding Fathers. AMVETS Against Drug and Alcohol Abuse Posters, Essays, and Poems, and Americanism Contests.

Legislative

Participation with the Sons in Washington, D.C. to see and educate them on our priorities for the current year, and visit our local reps.

Service

Commander Hartsfield will appoint the National IV District Judge Advocate since Alan Smith past away. A memorial Dinner and service was held.

Report of Andrew McElrath, NEC Department of Ohio

National District IV

Commander,

The Department of Ohio has 102 posts, and membership is slightly down from this time last year. We recently held our Fall Conference in Columbus Ohio and had a full meeting agenda and some great training. Our upcoming meetings will be held in Columbus and are listed below:

AMVETS Dept of Ohio Mid-Winter Conference 2025
Marriott Columbus Northwest, 5605 Blazer Pkwy
Dublin, Ohio 43017 February 20-23, 2025

AMVETS Dept of Ohio Annual June Convention 2025
Marriott Columbus Northwest, 5605 Blazer Pkwy
Dublin, Ohio 43017 June 12-14, 2025

At our State Convention this past June Ohio AMVETS Charities presented a check to PNC JP Brown III in the amount of \$100,000 to the new National AMVETS Charities Family Service Center, newly purchased in Washington, PA. To accompany this mission, the Ohio AMVETS Service Foundation also donated \$25,000 and Ohio AMVETS Post 1928 donated \$4,000 again to the National AMVETS Charities Family Service Center, great job to all those that participated.

I would like to congratulate the 2024-2025 Commander for the State of Ohio, Steve Albery, who is off to fast start working hard for our Nation's veterans. I look forward to continuing working with him in support of his project the National Charities Family Service Center located in Washington, PA.

I am excited for the direction of the AMVETS organization, while it may not always be easy and we often disagree, I do believe that AMVETS is the nation's leading Veterans Service Organization because we are an organization of action. I look forward to working with this year's National Officers, National IV District Officers, and AMVET members from across the country to advance our great organization.

I travelled to St. Peters Missouri Post 106 for the IV

District National meeting. There was a membership round table and a programs round table prior to the district meeting on Saturday 11/2. During the membership roundtable National 1st Vice Paul Shipley answered questions concerning membership, mostly revolving around the migration away from the Springley platform and back to NetForum.

Commander Hartsfield appointed Robert Lee from Missouri to the remainder of the JA term vacated by Alan Smith passing.

The celebration of life for PNC Jim King was well attended and PNP Carol King was very appreciative to all of those that were in attendance to share stories and memories of PNC King. In attendance from Ohio were National Sons Commander Owen Jackson, AMVETS National 2nd Vice and PDC Sandy Voorhies, National Provost Marshall Art Majors, IV District

1st Vice and PDC Sara Pierce, Department Commander Steve Albery, Ladies Auxiliary member Larissa McElrath and myself.

Commander, this concludes my report and I move for its adoption.

Andrew McElrath, PDC
AMVETS Department of Ohio, NEC

Report of Wayne Amborn, NEC Department of Wisconsin

National District IV

Membership

The AMVETS Department of Wisconsin has 2645 members of which 2088 are Life Members, 322 are Annual with 235 at Large Members. We have 54 Posts and 8 Districts in our State.

Upcoming Events

Winter Dance and SEC January 17th and 18th 2025 at the FW Hall in Waupaca. Spring SEC and Commander's Testimonial at the Oneida Hotel and Convention Center, 2040 Airport Rd, Green bay, Wi 54313 (820-471-4997). State convention June 19th to 23rd, 2025 at the Oneida Hotel and convention Center.

Programs

The AMVETS Department of Wisconsin reached \$750,890 Total value in programs reporting. Most Posts have recovered from Covid and are doing programs and fundraising consistently now.

Legislative

The state of Wisconsin is considering the allowance of 70% or higher disabled Veterans to receive the equivalent percentage of property taxes refunded on their taxes. Presently only those with 100% rating receive their taxes back.

Service

The AMVETS Department of Wisconsin has 8 VAVS serving our Veterans in the following locations: Iron Mountain, Chippewa Falls, Minneapolis, Madison, King, tomah, Union Grove and Zablocki. Hospital tours are once again available with limited access to some areas. Our Representatives are doing what they can for our Veterans.

Other

On September 14th, 2024 we had a very successful State Executive committee meeting at the Oneida Hotel and Convention Center. Several Posts Donated money to the Commander's project which is in support of Veteran's Outreach of Wisconsin in Racine, Wisconsin.



National District V

| | |
|--|----|
| National District V Commander, Deborah L. Wehrli | 33 |
| Nebraska, Carol Tcshampl-Diesing, NEC | 34 |
| North Dakota, Murray Strom, NEC | 35 |
| Texas, Curtis Thomas, NEC | 36 |

Kansas and Oklahoma reports not received by deadline

Report of Deborah L. Wehrli, NEC National District V Commander

National District V

Membership

The district is getting a few veterans to join, but overall membership is down. Still working to inspire the younger veterans to join. Going to functions that will have veterans to try to recruit members.

Upcoming Events

The Next NEC meeting is in March pending the construction of the new headquarters. The Next SEC meeting in Nebraska is sometime in February, along with the raffles.

Programs

Have been doing Military Funeral, will be having Christmas Partys at the four Veteran Home, Homeless Veterans and VA Hospital.

Legislative

The legislative will be trying to pass a bill to protect the veteran for all the companies and lawyers from receiving money for filing a claim for disability.

Other

Still working on the Carillon for the Omaha National Cemetery.

Membership

AMVETS members recruited several new members to the organization at the 3rd Annual Women Veterans Symposium held in Kearney, NE in October. Since the funding to pay for the first year of membership for new female veterans through the program at National dried up, AMVETS Department of NE has since started their own grant program to pay for the first year of any new member as an incentive to join. This type of incentive program continues to work well in Nebraska.

this organization as they prepare to transition to more permanent housing.

Other

AMVETS Dept. of NE has started a new raffle to raise funds for Department programs and our carillon maintenance fund.

Upcoming Events

Our Winter SEC is planned for February 2025.

AMVETS Department of NE members will be participating in Wreaths Across America on December 14 by helping place wreaths on veterans' graves at Omaha National Cemetery.

Programs

Dept. of NE is putting together Christmas cards with gifts to hand out in December to every veteran at each of the Veterans Homes and Hospitals in Nebraska.

AMVETS officers and members presented at and attended the funeral of AMVETS Department of Nebraska Chaplain Paul Meier, a Vietnam Veteran who was laid to rest in the Omaha National Cemetery in Nebraska.

Legislative

Executive Officer Deb Wehrli has partnered with Melissa Allen of the DAV to develop a women veterans' license plate for NE.

The Nebraska Veterans Council, which contains several AMVETS members as representatives, meets November 18 to review proposed legislative bills regarding veterans' issues.

Service

The Department sponsored a donation drive of men's clothing, towels, and bed linens to benefit New Visions Homeless Services for homeless male veterans who are participating in the rehabilitation programs offered by

Report of Murray Strom, NEC Department of North Dakota

National District V

Membership

We are still getting new members in by them hearing and see what we do for the communities we serve. They want to be part of the progress we have done.

Upcoming Events

ND ACOVA is FEB 13 and 14 this meeting is on teams and can be viewed by anyone. Spring SEC is FEB 15 in Steele, ND.

Programs

Americanism will be in the schools right after the 917 new pocket constitutions were sent to all schools and home schoolers that requested them. This goes out to 8th graders as provided by state education department.

Legislative

The new legislature starts in January for North Dakota with a newly formed military caucus of military legislators who will sponsor bills and promote the bills we are supporting.

Service

Color guards and honors guards are busy because the state has dropped the honor guard from budget. Families still receive a folded flag and honor coin. We are working on getting free head stones for National Guard members also.

Other

We are working to get bridges named after fallen heroes in the areas where they grew up. There is a push to get every veteran in North Dakota signed up with the VA so in the future if something new gets added to the growing list we can advise them of this inclusion.

Report of Curtis Thomas, NEC Department of Texas

National District V

Membership

We are continuing to pursue new members throughout the state by setting up information booths at different community events like festivals, holiday events, parades and other special occasions. Having car shows with other service organization participating, bowling tournaments and other events.

Upcoming Events

We are planning on having a booth at the Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowl at Amon Carter Stadium in Fort Worth, TX on December 27, 2024 in the Veterans Village; this will be our third time participating.

Programs

We continue to help homeless veterans through cookouts participating in homeless veterans standdowns, donations of clothing, food and financial contributions for the different entities within the VA Volunteer Services. Feeding breakfast to first responders weekly, participating in 9/11 ceremonies, Veterans Day Ceremonies/parades, donations to Special Olympics and the Boy/Girl Scouts, Cancer Society, Homeless veterans and community services by providing school supplies, Halloween parties, Christmas parties, Easter Egg Hunts, etc. We continue to encourage our posts to report online.

Service

Donated thousands of dollars to food banks throughout the state; giving veterans transportation of veterans to their VA appointments and other places when needed, and a helping hand when needed around their homes.

Other

Department of Texas Spring SEC is March 7-9, 2025 at the Holiday Inn Hotel, 5701 S. Broadway Ave, Tyler, TX



National District VI

| | |
|---|----|
| Alaska, Terri Good, NEC | 38 |
| California, Ronald E. Robinson, NEC | 39 |
| Hawaii, Donald Lazarus, NEC | 42 |
| Washington, Steve Bird, NEC | 44 |

District VI Commander, Arizona, New Mexico, and Oregon reports not received by deadline

Report of Terri Good, NEC Department of Alaska

National District VI

Membership

Several Membership drives through out different functions, Picnics, Community events, Club activities, membership increasing within the dept.

Upcoming Events

Donations to ASYMCA, food baskets, Participation in Toys for Tots. Free Meals for Veterans and their families. Sponsor a family. Participation and donation for Wreaths across America

Programs

Increasing partnership with ROTC, Navy League, CHARR, multiple donations and joint efforts with other non-profit organization. Veterans day ceremonies attended Wounded warrior's

Legislative

Dept Commander working with community Veterans committees, 3rd Vices monitoring and communicating legislative priorities and shout outs. (some 3rd vices need to know how to communicate with National Legislative leadership

Service

Consistent attendance at monthly Unaccompanied Military Services. Chaplains providing services to Veterans and their families and wellness checks

Other

One of our posts that was as close to closing doors as you could get, during the year has become debt free, Participating and working with numerous organizations to help veterans in need and community support!

Report of Ronald E. Robinson, Jr., NEC Department of California

National District VI

AMVETS Department of California Winter N.E.C. Report July to November 2024 Created by National Executive Committeeman (NEC) Ron Robinson

The AMVETS Department of California has made significant progress in advancing its mission to serve veterans, their families, and their communities. Through impactful initiatives like the AMVETS One Bus Tour and the Welcome Home Program, the organization has directly improved the lives of veterans while raising awareness of critical issues. The leadership of Commander Helen Wong and the efforts of the headquarters team have been instrumental in ensuring compliance, enhancing operational efficiency, and fostering partnerships. Legislative successes in California have further demonstrated the state's commitment to supporting its veteran population. AMVETS remains a vital resource and advocate for veterans, continuing to uphold its core values of service and dedication.

Membership

The AMVETS Department of California has made significant strides in strengthening membership engagement and growth across all branches of service. With a current total of 7,810 members, including 6,525 life members, the organization has focused on retaining members while welcoming new ones. Recent outreach efforts have included support for ROTC and JROTC programs, community engagement initiatives, and targeted recruitment of eligible veterans such as retired military instructors. By enhancing visibility through events, podcasts, and a newly launched marketing video, the department continues to highlight the value of membership. Furthermore, ongoing efforts to improve administrative compliance, introduce IT infrastructure upgrades, and strengthen post-level operations aim to ensure that every member experiences the full benefits of belonging to AMVETS. The organization remains committed to "Leaving No Veteran Behind," fostering camaraderie, and expanding its reach to serve more veterans and their families.

AMVETS One Bus Tour

The AMVETS One Bus Tour has been a key initiative, addressing the urgent issue of veteran suicide. Since its launch in May 2022, this program has expanded nationally, engaging communities and distributing life-saving resources. The third "Tour Across America," held in May 2024, visited cities such as Phoenix, Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, Boise, Reno, and California's Inland Empire. The upcoming Golden State Tour in November 2024 will continue this impactful work in cities across California, including Oroville, Redding, Eureka, and Sacramento. These tours emphasize AMVETS' commitment to "Leaving No Veteran Behind" and provide vital resources like suicide prevention toolkits and access to the Veterans Crisis Hotline (988, Press 1).

Committee members:

| | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Co-chair Ross Smith | Kirt Wilson |
| Co-Chair Lisa Roybal | Leona Wheeler |
| Jeff Lukens | Ron Robinson |
| Johnny Byrum | Carlos Castle |
| Jo Keller | Karina Guzman |
| Tom Johnson | Ray Delgado |

Welcome Home Program

The Welcome Home Program remains a vital initiative, providing homeless veterans with the furnishings and items needed to transition into stable housing. In October 2024, the program served 41 veterans, delivering 416 items valued at \$30,336. For the year, it has supported 356 veterans, with a total value of \$218,772 in delivered items. Since its inception in 2012, the program has served 6,781 veterans, delivering 81,979 items worth \$3,276,376. Despite a backlog of 63 veterans awaiting assistance, the program continues to restore dignity and stability to those in need.

ROTC and JROTC Programs

The ROTC and JROTC programs remain integral to AMVETS' mission to connect with young leaders and foster community engagement. Chair John Byrum has led efforts to recognize cadets through awards and sponsorships for events such as the JROTC Air Rifle

Report of Ronald Robinson, NEC Department of California (*continued*)

National District VI

Match and Color Guard Competition. These programs highlight the dedication and skills of cadets while providing opportunities to recruit retired military instructors into AMVETS membership.

Department of California Activities

Under the leadership of Commander Helen Wong, the Department of California has been actively engaged in numerous initiatives. In July, Commander Wong installed officers at Post 1947, participated in the 4th of July Parade in Redwood City, and oversaw a successful Transition Meeting at the Clovis Veterans Memorial Building. She also attended the AMVETS National Convention in August, supported local recruitment efforts, and participated in events such as the Fresno Big Fair and the SF Chinatown Lions Dance Festival. In October, she led a hybrid D.E.C. meeting in Friant, California, and represented the Department at the California State Commanders Veterans Council meeting. These activities reflect her commitment to advancing AMVETS' visibility and impact across the state.

Headquarters Operations

The headquarters team has made substantial progress in operational efficiency and strategic planning. Preparations for the Winter D.E.C., scheduled for January 16–18, 2025, at the Visalia Marriott, are underway. Efforts to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations remain a top priority, alongside collaboration with CALVET to provide housing and care resources for homeless veterans. The launch of a new marketing video across social media platforms has enhanced AMVETS' public outreach, while the transition to a new IT provider promises to improve internal operations.

Legislative Developments for Veterans

California has also made significant legislative progress in supporting veterans. Recent measures, such as the elimination of fees for obtaining a "VETERAN" designation on driver's licenses and ID cards, have improved access to these recognitions. Additional benefits, including property tax exemptions and state park access, continue to support veterans and

their families. These legislative efforts demonstrate California's commitment to addressing the needs of its veteran community.

Summary

The AMVETS Department of California continues to strengthen its programs and initiatives, demonstrating unwavering dedication to its mission of serving those who have served. Through impactful programs, strong leadership, and community engagement, AMVETS remains a vital resource for veterans, their families, and their communities.

AMVETS CALIFORNIA COMMANDER HELEN WONG

Since election in June, time has gone by fast with all the activities in the past months.

- In July, I was present at Post 1947 to install their incoming officers. Then I participated in the 4th of July Parade in Redwood City with members of Post 53. Later in July was the Transition Meeting at the Clovis Veterans Memorial Building which saw many participants in person and some on Zoom. It was quite impressive and we got a lot of good training accomplished. Bernadette made sure we had plenty of lunch to keep our strength up! Also in July, I attended the Service Foundation meeting and went to the pre-opening at the new Oceanside Thrift Store. The store was very clean, spacious, and neat, so different from what the image of thrift stores usually are. Thanks to Daniel Parr, Director of Thrift Store OPS, for an excellent job along with all the staff. Meanwhile, our Interim Executive Director Julian Manalo has kept our Department members informed on the weekly Zoom updates and drafted our 10 year Strategic Plan which was edited, then accepted by the D.E.C. The updates have continued weekly as much as can be held.
- In August, Interim ED Manalo was on deployment with his Reserve obligations so F.O. Ross Smith was helping out by covering at Headquarters to keep business going. Seventeen of us attended the AMVETS National Convention in Springfield, IL where we learned the latest information on the

Report of Ronald Robinson, NEC Department of California (*continued*)

National District VI

National Service Foundation among other business. We were on hand to support our candidates for National offices: PDC Sandra Durbin for National 3rd Vice and PDC Ross Smith for National Judge Advocate. While neither were elected to those positions, PDC Smith was appointed to be the National Deputy JA.

- In September, I installed the remaining officers for San Francisco Golden Gate Post 34, and also recruited 2 new life members, while the Post 1st Vice recruited a new annual member. I attended the VA National Vet Art (local) Show held at the War Memorial Veterans Building's Veterans Gallery, and congratulated the local first place winners in the art categories. The Bay Area Honor Flight hub had scheduled a group to go to Washington, DC and several were Vietnam Veterans that I knew so I wrote letters to them so they would receive letters at mail call while there. Another September event I attended was the Fresno Big Fair which on the day our group was invited to have a booth space, they were honoring Veterans and 1st Responders. I was very proud of Post 99 for showing up and for Bernadette and Eslam for volunteering along with Linda. On Sept. 22, Provost Marshal CJ Reeves & I manned a booth at the SF Chinatown Lions Dance Festival and recruited a new member. Later that week, I attended the monthly Service Foundation meeting in Garden Grove, and the ribbon cutting at the Grand Opening of the Oceanside Thrift Store.
- In October, we held our hybrid D.E.C. in Friant, CA. with many committee meetings forming mission statements and looking at projects for the year. Upon returning, Lance Cardoza interviewed me and one of our newest Golden Gate Post 34 members in San Francisco at the

also this month which I will be attending to represent our organization. The Secretary of CALVET or her representative is scheduled to give a CALVET report and Goals followed by a Legislative Brief on the top 5 to 10 significant bills. Legislator of the Year and All-Vets Day at the Capitol will also be discussed. Election of officers for 2024-2026 will also be held besides establishing the next meeting dates.

Veterans Building for the AMVETS Podcast. His company, Capitol International Group, LLC has been conducting AMVETS Podcasts monthly for many months now, and has been going to the posts to interview members. The recording is up on the YouTube channel and on the California AMVETS website. The 3 times yearly meeting of the California State Commanders Veterans Council (CSCVC) is

Report of Donald Lazarus, NEC

Department of Hawaii

National District VI

Membership

The high cost of living continues to significantly impact the Hawaii Department's membership growth and retention goals.

Upcoming Events

- Ewa Battlefield Commemoration Ceremony: December 7, 2024 (9:00–10:30 AM)
- AMVETS Christmas Concert: December 16, 2024 (9:00 PM–12:00 AM)

Programs

1. AMVETS-VA Adaptive Fitness Program
This program provides adaptive sports opportunities for over 930 adaptive veterans annually at the Ewa Beach location. It also offers monthly virtual nutrition education sessions, reaching over 1,100 veterans.
2. AMVETS Hawaii BioModulator Program
This initiative provides advanced pain management tools as an alternative to pharmaceuticals. The program is supported by clinical experts, including TAMC's Pain Management team. The mission is to alleviate chronic pain for veterans and active-duty service members to restore their quality of life.
3. Suicide Prevention Program
A year-round initiative aimed at reducing suicide rates among veterans by connecting them with quality healthcare services, including mental health and trauma care.
4. Adaptive Fitness Program
Designed to inspire individuals of all abilities to thrive through fitness. The program aims to impact 10,000 lives by fostering a culture of health, resilience, and community.
5. University of Hawaii-West Oahu & AMVETS Hawaii STEM Program
This year-round program empowers veterans through STEM education and workshops, providing tools for success in academic and professional fields.
6. Hawaii Veterans Beekeeping Program
A year-round on-the-job training program, teaching veterans the skills of beekeeping. This initiative promotes economic stability, post-trauma

support, and reintegration into civilian life while benefiting agriculture and ecosystems.

7. Warriors' Ohana Gardens
A therapeutic gardening program using vertical Tower Gardens to grow vegetables, providing both physical and mental wellness opportunities for veterans.
8. POW/MIA Program
AMVETS members actively participate in the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency's repatriation and memorial ceremonies.

Annual Memorial Commemorations

Ewa Battlefield Pearl Harbor Commemoration Held annually on the first Sunday in December at the historic Ewa Airfield. This ceremony honors the Marines and civilians who lost their lives during the December 7, 1941, attack.

Legislative

AMVETS Hawaii supports Bill 82, exempting senior veterans (65+) from annual motor vehicle registration fees in Honolulu County. The department continues advocacy on healthcare, women veterans, mental health, military sexual trauma, homelessness, and toxic exposures. Hawaii faces critical physician shortages, ranking as the worst state to practice medicine. Legislative actions must address this crisis to attract healthcare professionals.

Service

- VA claims assistance
- Job search and employment services
- Military funeral honors
- Legal and VA benefits support
- Transportation for elderly veterans
- Assistance for homeless veterans, including groceries, toiletries, and clothing

Other

Our program initiatives at the West Oahu Veterans Center (WOVC) continue to enhance the lives of veterans, service members, and their families. WOVC serves as a community hub, fostering collaboration among military and civilian groups for the betterment

Report of Donald Lazarus, NEC Department of Hawaii (*continued*)

National District VI

of veterans. During this reporting period, we hosted over 102 events at no cost to active-duty military, veterans' organizations, the VA, and other nonprofit groups. Activities include:

- Events: VA Annual Veterans Games ("Koa Challenge"), 5K Runs/Walks for Suicide Prevention, graduations, birthday and bridal showers, car and bike shows, poker runs, bike blessings, sporting events (softball, basketball, pickleball).
- Classes & Trainings: CPR/AED & First Aid, VA Home Loan Benefits classes, Karate, and Big Tire Bootcamp outdoor fitness sessions.
- Community Gatherings: Post meetings, Scout troop meetings, church services, swearing-in and awards ceremonies, and community meetings.

Report of Steve Bird, NEC Department of Washington

National District VI

Membership

Department Membership: 3178 Working to develop Service Department to attract veterans into AMVETS

Programs

AMVETS J/ROTC awards programs. Efforts have begun early to plan for the 2025 cycle. The department provides Medals, certificates for programs. In Washington, Idaho and western Montana.

Legislative

Gerald Cummins AMVETS Member from Jonathon M. Wainwright Post #1111 Walla Walla, WA. Has been appointed to represent AMVETS on the WA. State Governor's. Mr. Charles Wharton will remain a member of the Washington State Veterans Legislative Coalition (VLC). The VLC discusses the individual Bills during meetings, votes on them and speaks "collectively" to the Legislators through emails to Committee Members, phone calls to Aides and personal testimony on the record during Legislative Committee Hearings.

Service

Unchanged from last report: No changes have occurred regarding the AMVETS Department of Washington Service Department. The Service Department has closed pending new hires. Since that time the Department has established a new IRS - EIN number and has incorporated with the State of WA. If new VSO's are hired then a new contract with Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs will be negotiated.



National Officers

| | |
|---|----|
| National Commander Horace Johnson..... | 46 |
| National Ladies Auxiliary President Cindy Rice..... | 47 |
| National Sons of AMVETS Commander Owen Jackson... | 48 |
| National First Vice Commander Paul Shipley..... | 49 |
| National Second Vice Commander Sandy Vorhies..... | 50 |
| National Third Vice Commander Chris Studebaker..... | 51 |
| National Judge Advocate Frederick L. Bates..... | 52 |
| National Executive Director Joseph Chenelly..... | 53 |
| National Membership Director Warren Cox..... | 55 |
| National Programs Report Colondra Etheredge..... | 57 |

AMVETS Riders President, NSF President, National Chaplain, Inspector General, VAVS Representative, and National Service Director reports not received by deadline

Report of Horace Johnson, National Commander

Members of the AMVETS National Executive Committee,

It has been three months into my year as National Commander, and I am still in awe at the level of dignity, respect, and honor I have received since being elected National Commander. Thank you all for allowing me to be the face of AMVETS 2024 through 2025.

I know now that the responsibilities are astronomical. When officers at this level are successful, it's because he/she has been through a lot of sleepless nights, difficult meetings, debates, and discussions. I deal with all types of necessary discussions; good, bad, and indifferent; having to make decisions that have to satisfy the many, but also being satisfied with if my decision does not appeal to the Majority, the Majority can overrule; and that is the best part.

Leadership in this Organization is unique, because at every level of Leadership, you are not the sole Leader; you are the spokesperson of a group of people; in my opinion, which is checks and balances.

I haven't had the opportunity to travel as much as some of our past National Commanders have, but I am sure that will change during the next three months. In this first quarter, I attended two National District meetings, Districts II and IV, and several Department Meetings that were quite eventful.

I was invited to the National Ladies Auxiliary Officer's workshop Banquet, which was very nice, and fun filled. I was a guest at the Gold Star Mother's Weekend, which was three days of special events.

On September 11th, National Executive Director Joe Chenelly and I attended the annual memorial service at the Flight 93 National Memorial in Pennsylvania.

I also traveled to Washington, PA, to tour our new National Headquarters building and the AMVETS Charities Family Services Center building, both of which are making great progress in their renovations.

We already have our first new staff member working in the new buildings.

Along with Johnny Collins and Clyde Pike, we attended an awards ceremony for the Blind Veterans of America at the Capitol Club.

I attended multiple days of the AMVETS Spirit of America Program in Valley Forge at Founding Forward, which was recently renamed from Freedoms Foundation. With AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary National President Cynitha Rice, I was able to observe and participate in great youth-focused patriotic education programs.

I represented AMVETS at the White House on Veterans Day morning and attended the Presidential and Vice-Presidential wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington, VA. Along with AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary National President Rice, Sons of AMVETS Commander Owen Jackson, Junior AMVETS National President Corbyn Dolf, and the National Rider President Natalie Cummings, we laid our own AMVETS wreath on Veterans Day at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Last month, as the 118th Congress is wrapping up, I made several office visits on both the House of Representatives and the Senate sides of Capitol Hill, meeting with House Veterans Affairs Ranking Member Mark Takano, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Representative Jimmy Panetta, and the incoming Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs Majority staff leadership.

Yours in Service

Horace Johnson
AMVETS National Commander

Report of Cindy Rice, AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary National President

National Commander Johnson, National Officers, Past National Commanders, Members and Guests. Welcome to the Fall NEC. I am honored and humbled to have been elected AMVETS National Ladies Auxiliary President for the year 2024-2025. I have many mentors who have helped me through the years from Department to National. Their insight and knowledge is so valuable and much appreciated.

My theme this year is “Together We Can”, stop Diabetes. It takes a TEAM to make things happen and there is no I in TEAM. A leader is only as good as the officers she has surrounding and supporting her, and I have an amazing team this year. Let’s all work together this year as a “Team” because “Together We Can” accomplish our goals. Together We Can communicate. Together We Can thank each other.

My project this year is the AMVETS Diabetes Research Institute at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. I chose this project because it speaks to my heart, over half my family has been diagnosed with this prevalent disease. Many of you know someone afflicted with this disease: such as a friend, a family member or an acquaintance. You yourself may already have been diagnosed. There are several types of Diabetes: Type 1, Type 2, Prediabetes and Gestational Diabetes. Diabetes is a growing global problem. According to the World Health Organization between 1980 and 2014, the number of people with diabetes around the world rose from 108 million to 422 million. Diabetes can lead to blindness, kidney failure, heart attacks, strokes or even amputations. However, both the illness and its effects can be managed through diet, treatment, and regular screenings. The sooner you identify the problem, the sooner you can do something about it.

In my role as National Auxiliary president, I will work towards educating our community about diabetes. By increasing awareness about diabetes, we can empower individuals to make healthy choices and take steps towards preventing and managing this chronic illness. “TOGETHER WE CAN” make a difference in the fight against Diabetes and improve the overall health and well-being of our community.

Ohio gave me a very warm welcome at their Fall SEC where I once again enjoyed my AMVETS family. I then went on to Iowa and enjoyed visiting the Veteran residents at the Iowa VA and played bingo. I saw the many areas of interest that residents can partake in. They had music, ceramics, crafts, gardens, sports and so much more. We then visited some Auxiliaries and had dinner and social hour. From there I experienced the “Spirit of America” Youth Conference, in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania at Founding Forward. The students were incredible, and the curriculum was great. Everyone learned a lot.

My most humbling, honorable experience was laying the wreath with the AMVETS family at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and viewing the ceremony our National Commander Horace was honored to partake in. I am looking forward to visiting more Auxiliary Departments across the country as well as serving with Commander Johnson and our amazing organization.

Commander Johnson, I wish you a very constructive, informative and successful NEC.

National President Cindy Rice

AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary

Report of Owen Jackson, National Sons of AMVETS Commander

Commander Johnson, National Officers, and Members
of the AMVETS NEC;

Greetings from the Sons of AMVETS! I hope that everyone is doing well and having a successful beginning to the year of Serving Our Veterans! Thank you, Commander, for appointing Jan Brown PNC as our advisor this year, she has proven herself as a leader for the AMVETS and an ally for the Sons time and time again.

The Sons have been busy so far this year. Our website is almost complete, which has been a long process. I was able to attend the Signal Fire at Muncie Sons of AMVETS, where they retired around 3,500 flags this year; it was quite an event. I was honored to be included in the ceremony at Arlington on Veterans Day. Walking with Commander Johnson during the laying of the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns was an experience that I will not forget. We had our e-board meeting in Louisville. It was very productive, and I was able to see the post in Louisville. I attended Ohio's Fall conference and was able to make it to PNC Jim King's celebration of life in Missouri.

My Commander's Project this year is the AMVETS Charities Family Service Center. The Service Center will provide transition housing, and an array of important services, to Veterans and their families who are experiencing, or in danger of, homelessness.

We will be having virtual meetings for our Fall NEC. As of the writing of this report, the date has not been set. I will let you know as soon as we lock in a date and time. Also, we are planning on having LAW Week March 18th – March 21st. I hope that your meetings go well.

I'm looking forward to continuing working with your National Leadership and cannot wait to see everyone during LAW Week and Spring NEC.

Yours in Service,

Owen Jackson
National Commander
Sons of AMVETS

Report of Paul Shipley, National First Vice Commander

As the holidays approach I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of the AMVETS, AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary, Sons of AMVETS for all you do for Veterans and their families. May your and your families have a peaceful and joyous holiday season.

I am happy to report that Membership nation wide is normalizing and we are seeing many annual members are renewing at the rates that we saw a prior to the database changes. We must keep forward facing and keep up the progress we have seen in the first few months of this membership year.

We held the first of our quarterly meetings with a meet the commander zoom a few weeks ago. While we had a few technical issues, I believe the meeting was successful. I will be having another following the holidays and look forward to seeing all the 1st Vice Commanders from across the nation. If you would like to be added to the list please send the membership department or myself an email to add you to the list.

I have three goals that I want to work toward this year.

1. Improve Recruiting and Retention:

Every resource we spend to recruit a new member must be backed up with retaining them as a member in year 2, 3, and each year following. The way to do this is engagement! When you gain a new member, you must engage with them. They are new and need to be mentored as AMVETS and made to feel welcome. You should engage them through direct contact, events, and fellowship. If we show the new member that they are appreciated and wanted they will be a member for life.

2. Update and Modernize:

I have to ask all of you to help me directly with this task. I need you to look at your Departments and Posts to ensure that any member that was added to Springly has been correctly added to the Net Forum database. You know your members

best. Only you can tell us if your members are not on your Post and Department rosters. If you find any that have not been placed correctly in the database please don't hesitate to let the membership department know.

We have produced new literature for you to place out into the community. Ask the membership department for Brochures or have them send you a digital copy so that you can print your own for quicker access. We will also have available social media formatted banners and digital images to use. More about this will be coming in the next few months.

3. Communication:

I want to be available to all people that may have questions about membership. To that goal I will be hosting at least quarterly meetings via electronic platform.

I will also make myself available via phone call (724) 963-5845 or email pshipley@amvets.org. I will never profess to know everything off the top of my head, but I will research and get you an answer or refer you to the right place to get it.

I want to thank the Membership staff Warren, Carolyn, and Linda for all they do. I want to welcome our newest employee Katie. I know with this high performing team we are making the strides to make AMVET membership great!

Yours in service,

Paul M Shipley,
National 1st Vice Commander

Report of Sandy Vorhies, National Second Vice Commander

Commander Johnson and fellow AMVETS,

I want to first thank Colondra for her dedication and hard work in the programs. Colondra has been acceptingly helpful with her knowledge and willingness to provide information along with training to our AMVETS 2nd and 3rd Vice Commanders.

The programs department is working towards having quarterly zoom meetings with the departments and national district programs vice commanders. Through the quarterly meetings we want to establish a better connection between the national programs department and those responsible for programs. However, we must come together as a team for this to be effective.

We are also in the process of setting up communications with our departments and the chairs of the program committees. We feel that through reaching out and providing the chair with whom their committee members are they can connect through out the year if they do not do so now and provide updates on how their programs are doing and if they need help. Colondra and I will be setting up the initial zoom meeting with the chairs of the programs and providing them with their committee members' contact information. We will need the assistance of our departments to send Colondra their program chair's contact information.

Colondra has put together the reporting data which you will find in her report. Please look at the percentages of the posts and the departments that are reporting.

Please keep in mind the reporting periods. There is a one-week grace period after the close of the reporting period to enter your program data. I strongly suggest that you do not wait to report the programs but report the programs in a timely fashion.

The reporting periods are:

- July 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024 – This is the second reporting period for 2024.
- January 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025 – This is the first reporting period for 2025
- July 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025 – This is the second reporting period for 2025.

I am excited to announce that the programs team is working on a new program. The program is “Behind the Walls”. Behind the walls will be a category that will be used by our incarceration posts. There will be more information on this new program in the upcoming program meetings.

With high regard,

Sandy Vorhies
National Second Vice Commander
AMVETS (American Veterans)

Report of Chris Studebaker National Third Vice Commander

The 118th Congress nears the finish line...

After a tumultuous election season, members of the 118th Congress still have a lengthy to-do list to tackle before they leave for the holidays. The government needs a budget, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) must be passed, and the stage must be set for this legislative year's close. Our team, Justin Brown and Danielle Forand were pleased to welcome a new lobbyist into their ranks over the summer. Essam Attia comes to the team after three years in the Senate, leading efforts on veterans affairs, national security, and technology. AMVETS has some heavy hitters advocating for us on Capitol Hill, and we are eager to see what they accomplish as we transition into the 119th Congress.

AMVETS is proud to have endorsed numerous key legislative priorities this Congress, working with key staff and members of Congress to move the needle forward. Our currently supported bills can be found below. Since our last report, many have garnered additional cosponsors, passed their chamber, or become law. Other priorities have been included in the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act. This omnibus bill has not yet been voted on; however, we are confident it will be considered once Congress returns after Veterans Day. We also hope some additional measures will be considered in the lame-duck session.

During the AMVETS National Convention, we were honored to be joined by three influential Hill staffers on our "Your District to DC: Insights from Capitol Hill Staff" panel. They appreciated the opportunity to connect with AMVETS members and answer their important questions. We were also pleased to hear from House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Mike Bost and Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin, who took time out of their busy schedules to speak with us and learn more about the vital work we do for veterans across the country. This Convention was one for the books; we look forward to next year in North Carolina.

In September, the VSO Equal Tax Treatment (VETT) Act unanimously passed the House. Our team and partners on the Hill are beyond energized and are hoping to finally get this bill signed into law before the end of the year. Numerous conversations are taking place behind the scenes in the Senate, but we ask everyone to engage with your Senators to support this legislation. As a reminder, this legislation would allow organizations like AMVETS to receive tax-deductible charitable donations, regardless of their wartime-era membership. We have never been more optimistic about this bill's prospects – keep your fingers crossed and keep the pressure on!

AMVETS is excited and eager to work with lawmakers and other VSOs to tackle our priorities and keep the good work going in the next Congress. Regardless of your feelings surrounding the election results, our team in DC has your back. We are incredibly excited for the year and the opportunities ahead of us.

With high regard,

Chris Studebaker,
AMVETS National Third Vice Commander

Report of Frederick L. Bates, National Judge Advocate

National Commander Johnson and members of the NEC and distinguished Guests. Thanks for the opportunity to serve as your National Judge Advocate. Since I became the Judge Advocate, I have had numerous calls for information or clarification on AMVETS policies. Be assured that I am working on all of them. We have sent out policy on Political Activities by AMVETS Members. I am currently working on a clearer policy for the Departments Service Foundation. Me and the Deputy Judge Advocate Ross Smith are currently going through all the Departments, Districts, Department Services Foundations and Non-Department Posts Constitution and Bylaws (CBL) . I will be sending out a list of all CBLs we have and approved, to the Department Commander and District Commander. All Departments and Post CBL dated before the Lifetime Membership changed need to be updated. If you need to contact me my email address is fbates3@bellsouth.net and my cell number is 808-284-0973. If I do not answer, please leave me a message and I will get back with you. Please pass this information on to your department and posts.

Commander, this concludes my report, and I move for its adoption at the proper time.

Report of Joseph Chenelly, National Executive Director

National Commander Johnson, National Officers, members of the National Executive Committee, and fellow AMVETS:

I start by wishing AMVETS a happy 80th anniversary! We must remember and honor our history:

American Veterans of World War II was first formed by those who returned from fighting history's greatest war but found services and opportunity lacking, and they knew they wanted to continue serving.

In 1943, two independent veterans clubs in Washington, D.C. – one on the campus of George Washington University, and one of veterans employed by the federal government – joined together. By September 1944, other similar veterans' clubs independent of the then existing big organizations, began forming in California, Florida, Louisiana, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Texas.

On Veterans Day 1944, an article, "12,000,000 in Search of a Leader," appeared in Collier's Magazine. This story, written by Walter Davenport, introduced the clubs and outlined their mutual aims:

- Promote world peace
- Preserve the American way of life
- Help Veterans help themselves

Eighteen leaders, representing these nine groups, met in Kansas City, Mo. There, on December 9, 1944, a national organization was formed known as the American Veterans of World War II – or AMVETS – as coined by newspaper headline writers.

In October 1945, two months after the end of World War II, the first national convention was convened in Chicago. The next year, AMVETS petitioned Congress for a federal charter. The Senate Judiciary Committee wrote, AMVETS was formed "along sound lines and for worthy purposes ... having demonstrated its strength and stability, is entitled to the stability and dignity which a national charter will afford." President Harry S. Truman signed the Charter on July 23, 1947.

I know we are all proud to be AMVETS. Over the next year, we will celebrate 80 years of **Veterans Serving Veterans** and work to ensure AMVETS continue serving for generations to come.

Your AMVETS National Headquarters' first quarter of fiscal year 2025 has been a busy, productive few months. The National Membership Department, Programs Department, Legislative Department, Service Department, and the Communications Department continue doing more with less. Please read their reports to see what they are doing for us all.

We are still in a tough but stable financial position. We shrunk our staff a bit immediately after the National Convention, but we are on track to grow again after the calendar flips over next month. The Membership Department made the first new NHQ hire last month! All new hires will be based in "Little Washington" (Pennsylvania).

The temporary NHQ office in Hyattsville, MD, is serving its purpose, but we are on track to begin moving elements of our NHQ operations to the new building in Little Washington next month, on schedule and perhaps even under budget. We expect to have the new NHQ fully functional by the end of February, ready to ceremoniously cut a ribbon on March 14 and host the Spring 2025 NEC on March 15. Details coming in January.

As the NHQ Construction Committee will report during this NEC meeting, renovations are well underway. The committee's members have done an amazing job in concert with the National Finance Committee and national staff.

Our new NHQ building's address is 267 North Ave., Washington, PA 15301. A webpage with updated information is available at amvets.org/NHQ.

Renovations are also underway a few miles away at the future AMVETS Charities Family Services Center. The latest info on this monumental project can be found at amvets.org/familyservicecenter.

Report of Joseph Chenelly, National Executive Director (*continued*)

Rocky Blier Construction Group continues to do an outstanding job for us, managing construction at both sites.

The community around our new NHQ continues to show its amazing support. A new AMVETS Post was formed there by Army Veteran Brady Brooks, a native of Southwest PA and former AMVETS Department of Indiana officer. When he heard AMVETS was moving its NHQ to the region in which he was raised, he moved from Indiana to Little Washington completely on his own to help. Through a whole lot of groundwork, AMVETS Post 72347-PA has about 50 members and continuously growing. Its unique five-digit Post identifier is the date of the AMVETS Congressional Charter was signed into federal law. Post 72347 Commander Brooks' networking has led to numerous area veterans and companies to volunteer and provide donated or deeply discounted items and services to the construction projects.

The approved construction budget for the new NHQ building's core needs and functions is \$1.5 million, as approved by the NEC in March 2024 and the National Convention body in August. Current projections, even with several surprises, show costs coming in at about \$1.3 million. If that holds up, we will be able to complete follow-on projects, such as the AMVETS National Memorial Park and the AMVETS National Museum, earlier than originally planned.

Key dates for the 2025 Membership Year:

March 14-15 – Spring NEC & NHQ grand opening (Washington, PA) May 23-25 – Rolling to Remember (Washington, DC)

July 19 – National Finance Committee Budget Meeting & National Commander Johnson's Testimonial (Orlando)

August 19-23 – AMVETS 79th National Convention (Greensboro, NC)

Lastly, I want to place in this report that I personally

miss and am grateful for the late Past National Everything Jim King. He was my very first introduction to AMVETS, hiring me to join his staff. He mentored me throughout the next 19 years. I will forever be grateful.

We at National Headquarters remain grateful for your guidance and leadership. Thank you!

This concludes my report, and I move for its acceptance at the appropriate time.

Report of Warren Cox, National Membership Director

National Commander Johnson, National Officers, NEC Members, Executive Director, AMVETS Family:

Membership welcomes National 1st Vice Commander Paul Shipley who continues to work towards the betterment of the organization

Thank you all for the privilege of serving as your National Membership Director, it is with great honor and passion that I as well as the Staff (Mrs. Carolyn and Mrs. Linda) serve you. The team is cohesive, dedicated, and motivated to assist you. We are excited to announce the recent hiring of our first employee at HQ Washington PA Katie Ford. Katie is a proud ARMY spouse who prides herself on serving veterans and her community. She will work in a dual administrative position for both Membership and Programs. Please welcome her at kford@amvets.org

Membership's Mission is unwavering and that is to provide quality service with excellence and professionalism resulting in expedited sound responses to all needs.

Great news! We have seen recent uptick in Membership with 1000 New Joins in November alone. Life Membership is currently 80%, our focus and yours is to encourage new members to enroll under Annual Membership, this in return would increase revenue and stability.

Life Dues Reminder

When converting members from Annual to Life, please let the Membership Team know the members' age. Based off the new Life Member dues increase they will be billed according to their age. See the Life Dues amount below. They are now available online.

| | |
|---------------------------|----------|
| 55 years of age and under | \$500.00 |
| 56 to 65 years of age | \$400.00 |
| 66 years of age and older | \$300.00 |

Annual Member Cards/Initiative

We are very excited that for the first time all Annual Member Cards were preprinted and available at Convention for Dept Leaders to take to home and distribute to Posts. This eliminated delays to members receiving cards and money saving due to multiple mailings. Feedback from Members (you) have been very positive, we will continue this practice moving forward.

Initiatives

Recruit 5 Membership Drive is online!!!

Recruiters will receive a Gold Challenge Coin and Certificate of recognition.

Please forward, recruiting initiatives, photos of Post events, etc. for our social media to membersupport@amvets.org. This will also be sent to Department Leadership to share with their struggling Posts. Your ideas can be adopted for one area or another.

Virtual meetings with National 1st Vice commander Paul Shipley

Thank you, Department Leaders, for your attendance to our first virtual roundtable. These meetings are to share ideas and to address your many concerns.

Please be on the look out for our next meeting scheduled early February .

National 1st Vice Paul Shipley is committed to increasing communication between Dept and National please see his report for more details

Dues Reminders

Reminders have been sent via mail and hardcopy to our members and we are happy to report dues are being paid in record numbers.

This year we've sent dues reminders to our new vendor and this has cut our costs in half

New Brochures

Brochures/Applications have been updated! We have pictures highlighting current events, conflicts and our Proud Female Veterans!

Programs Report

Please see Manager Colondra Etherege report

Revalidations

Revalidations have improved; however, we highly encourage everyone to complete the process online. The online process is a much faster and easier than the antiquated manual process.

A confirmation is sent immediately to the submitter and National when the online process has been completed. Let's continue to save the trees and cost of mailing.

Report of Warren Cox, National Membership Director (continued)



Our History

When our troops returned home at the end of WWII, many used their newly earned GI Bill benefits to attend college. Veterans found they were comfortable with other veterans on campus because of their similar experiences, leading them to form veterans' clubs. These veterans' clubs became active in shaping American policy, culminating in President Harry Truman's signing of Public Law 216 that granted a Congressional Charter to AMVETS on July 23, 1947.



Who We Are

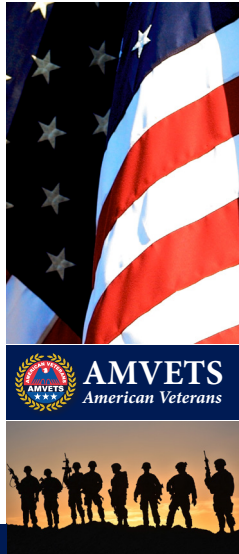
Representing 16 million veterans and their families, AMVETS is one of America's leading veterans' service organizations. Today's AMVETS is about assisting veterans in accessing their benefits, supporting their healing journey, and advocating for their well-being. Membership in AMVETS is open to anyone who is currently serving, or who has honorably served in the U.S. Armed Forces, including the National Guard & Reserves. We look forward to welcoming you to the AMVETS family.



Scan to join
AMVETS



3311 Hubbard Road
Hyattsville, Maryland 20785
(877) 726-8387
amvets/amvets.org
www.amvets.org



AMVETS Charities Family Services Center
Renovations have begun, and once open this center will provide transition housing and an array of important services to Veterans and their families who are experiencing or in danger of homelessness.

Scholarships
AMVETS proudly offers more than thirty scholarships every year to active duty service members and veterans, as well as to children, grand children and/or spouses of veterans.

By joining AMVETS, you will share a commitment with others who think like you. You'll also share the pride that comes from belonging to an organization devoted to helping veterans and improving the quality of life for this nation's citizens.

Warrior Transition Workshops

- Veterans learn how to re-establish connections with their friends and families
- Integrate a peer-to-peer approach
- Reduces the impact of combat trauma
- Demonstrates statistically significant outcomes in reduction of sleep disturbance, anger, anxiety, and social isolation

AMVETS Career Centers

- Resume writing
- Job search assistance
- Interview skills
- Claims and benefits assistance
- Training and educational options
- Interview clothing for vets in need
- Help obtain licensing and certifications

To learn more about AMVETS, the specific member benefits we offer and local posts, call us toll free: (877) 726-8387 or visit our website at www.amvets.org

Recruiting

Many Departments and Posts have stepped up their recruiting efforts and have greatly improved their membership.

***RECRUITING IS EVERYONES' (AMVETS WIDE) RESPONSIBILY!**

Post-level recruiting events should take place at least four times a year.

To receive your copy of the new brochures/applications email membersupport@amvets.org.

***Hearts and Minds - RED – don't just Remember them!**

We have addresses to some of our men and woman deployed now. Send care packages and literature so AMVETS is the first VSO they remember when they return home.

***MALs – Reach out to all of those in your zip code and invite them to join. Most states have more MAL than active post members.**

Member Owned Business

We will highlight your Veteran owned business on our website for free advertisement. Send details to membersupport@amvets.org.

Again, I am honored and fully committed to you all and the mission at hand.

Together we will continue to be the best Veterans Service

Organization in our country.

We continue to stand on **“Help One Save One.”**

God Bless America and AMVETS!

ALWAYS RED

Warren Cox

**Report of Carolyn Taylor-Harrison
Assistant to the National Membership Director**

With over twenty years of service to AMVETS National HQ I consider it a privilege to serve in this capacity.

Our mission this year is to strive even harder to educate and train you as we fully transition back into our old data base, and to work more with the Departments/Post on how important it is to apply monies to the members records ASAP.

Revalidations: We are working hard to get the officers to utilize the online revalidation. It is faster and when they are completed online, we do not need any paperwork sent to National.

When it is not completed online, we will have to enter all the information manually from the forms received.

Thank you.
Carolyn

Report of Colondra Etheredge, National Programs Report

National Commander Johnson members of the NEC and distinguished guests,

National Programs welcomes National 2nd Vice Sandy Vorhies and National Director Warren Cox, along with the new Department 2nd Vices. Thank you both for jumping into Programs with boots on the ground running. Sandy and Warren, your hard work guiding Programs is greatly appreciated.

Programs Communication

Programs held a Meeting and Greet on September 25, 2024, and 2nd Vice Sandy provided everyone with an ideal of the goals which are being set forth for this upcoming year. Details on the goals will be explained in National 2nd Vice Sandy Vorhies' NEC Report.

Next Programs Training: February 12, 2025, Topic "Submitting Reports" invite will go out.

Programs Reporting

On October 25, 2024, Programs had a training session for Airtable for Department Leadership. Many questions were, however, there are a few issues which we are working out Springly. The goal is to have them cleaned up by the start of the Reporting Period 2 January-July 2025. We appreciate your patience and encourage any concerns. Concerns will be addressed based off how it effects Reporting for the majority.

Airtable is an invitation portal which can only be accessed by logging into your account on www.airtable.com. PowerPoint training slide will be made available on the National website. However, until then you may request them by emailing programs@amvets.org. Members Reporting can be accessed by the online reporting link at <https://www.amvets.org/submit-reports>. PowerPoint training slide are available online at <https://www.amvets.org/2024materials>.

Reporting Period I July-October 2024 Department of District of Columbia (DC) has 100% of their Post Reporting from July-October. **EXCELLENT JOB!!!** Programs Goal is to have each all-Post Reporting at

100%. **Reporting statistics below of October 31, 2024, Period I s end December 31, 2024 Reports Deadline is January 7, 2025.**

| Department | Post % | Department % |
|--------------|--------|--------------|
| District I | 23% | 83% |
| District II | 52% | 100% |
| District III | 76% | 100% |
| District IV | 37% | 100% |
| District V | 16% | 100% |
| District VI | 32% | 67% |
| Unorganized | 7% | 9% |
| National | 40% | 92% |

Founding Forward Spirit of America Youth Conference

Founding Forward Spirit of America Youth Conference was held on November 7th – 10th in Valley Forge PA. Students were sponsored by AMVETS National Service Foundation and AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary. Chaperones included Warren Cox, Sandy Vorhies, Carol King, Faye Greene, and a few parents. Programs give Commander Johnson and Madem President Rice a special "Thanks" as they spoke and participated the program with the children. Founding Forward, and Boscov Travel did a wonderful job with their part in the program and travel details for the children.

AMVETS Programs is working with AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary and Founding Forward to improve this program. Please continue to run your program as normal and information for REGISTRATION the Fall "Spirit of America Youth Conference 2025" will coming soon.

VAVS

Programs welcome the AMVETS National VAVS Representative Bobby Lumpkins. Bobby and Programs will be working closely together as we continue to continue the VAVS Department Reps and Deps list and ensure that the remainder Reps and Deps certifications are updated, or the new Rep or Dep is certified. This has been a task for the last two years or more.

Report of Colondra Etheredge, National Programs Report (*continued*)

A full report will be present in the Spring NEC Report.

WD40 Scholarship

Carl Jackson has been working with WD40 on the Veteran Scholarship Programs for veterans seeking advanced education in their trade field (ie. Welding, HVC, Electricians, ect.). Visit amvets.org/scholarships for more details.

Career Center

Programs also like to recognize Ciara Singletary and the AMVETS Veteran Employment Specialists (Jolicia Ashford, Destiny Walters, Angelica Melara, and Krishanda Quinonez) powered by the Call of Duty Endowment.

These ladies have been doing an awesome job please see Ciara's report below.

AMVETS Career Center
2024 Q4 NEC Report

Progress on 2024 Objectives and Key Metrics (as of Q3 2024)

As of the end of Quarter 3, 2024, the AMVETS Career Center has made significant strides in fulfilling our strategic objectives for the year. Below is an update on our key performance indicators (KPIs) and targeted areas for improvement:

Placement Overview

- Total Veteran Placements (Q3 2024): 159 veterans placed
- Cost per Placement: \$905.44
- Full-time Placements: 100%
- Post-9/11 Veteran Placements: 88% of total placements
- Female Veteran Placements: 27% of total placements
- Top Job Titles Placed: Specialist, Analyst, Consultant
- Average Salary for Q3 2024 Placements: \$88,000

Demographics of Veterans Placed

There has been increasing demand for data regarding the ethnic diversity of veterans placed through AMVETS Career Center, particularly those supported by Endowment funding. The breakdown of ethnicities

for veterans placed in Q3 2024 is as follows:

- Black or African American: 34%
- Hispanic or Latino: 12%
- Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander: 0%
- Two or More Races: 0.05%
- White: 45%
- Did Not Disclose: 0.02%
- Data Not Available: 0.01%

This demographic data provides a clearer picture of the diversity of veterans benefiting from our services and will help inform future outreach strategies.

Gender Diversity and Inclusion

One of our key focus areas for 2024 is improving the intake and placement rates of female veterans. While female veterans currently represent 27% of all placements (up from 21% earlier in the year), the placement rate for female veterans stands at 23%. We are committed to increasing both the intake and the placement rate for women in the coming quarters.

Overall Placement Success

- Total Veterans Placed (2024 Year-to-Date): 498 veterans
- Annual Placement Goal: 650 veterans
- Forecast: The AMVETS Career Center is on track to meet or exceed its placement target for FY24, with a strong pipeline of candidates and a proven track record of success.

Conclusion

The AMVETS Career Center continues to make strong progress toward meeting its 2024 objectives. With 498 veterans placed to date and a solid plan for the remainder of the year, we are confident in achieving our goal of 650 placements for the year. We will maintain our focus on improving diversity, particularly among female veterans, and optimizing placement strategies to ensure that we continue to provide high-quality career opportunities for veterans across all backgrounds.

This report reflects the collective effort and commitment of the AMVETS Career Center team, and we look forward to achieving further success in the months ahead.

AMVETS 79th Annual Convention

**Pre Convention
National Executive Committee
(NEC) Roll Call and Meeting Minutes**



*Wednesday,
August 7, 2024*

Held at the
President Abraham Lincoln DoubleTree Hotel
Springfield, Illinois

**Morning Session
(9:00 a.m.)**

**Call to Order
by Commander Bill Clark**

CMDR. CLARK: Good morning, everyone.

(Chorus of "Good morning.")

CMDR. CLARK: We are about to open the Pre-NEC meeting of the 78th National Convention for AMVETS. Please rise for the invocation by our National Chaplain Allen. Uncover, please.

**Invocation
by Chaplain Milton Allen**

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: First Vice Commander Horace Johnson was tripping on his way up here, and you set the stage. I almost tripped just then.

So growing up as a child, I used to love watching this show, my favorite cook Justin Wilson. And he would say, I am happy for y'all to see me. Well, I am happy to see all of you today, and thank you for coming out, and thank you for getting up bright and early to come to the NEC meeting. Let us pray.

(Prayer.)

CMDR. CLARK: Provost Marshal.

**Honors to the Colors
by Provost Marshal Art Majors**

MR. MAJORS: AMVETS, attention. Hand salute.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

CMDR. CLARK: Please be seated.

**Roll Call
by National Executive Director Joe Chenelly
National Officers**

MR. CHENELLY: Good morning, AMVETS.

(Chorus of "Good morning.")

MR. CHENELLY: Roll call this morning. National Commander Clark.

CMDR. CLARK: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: National First Vice Commander Johnson?

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: National Second Vice Commander Shipley.

2ND VICE CMDR. SHIPLEY: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: National Third Vice Commander Vorhies?

3RD VICE CMDR. VORHIES: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: National Judge Advocate, PNC King.

PNC KING: Jim King here.

MR. CHENELLY: National Finance McFarlain?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: National Provost Marshal Majors?

MR. MAJORS: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: National Chaplain Allen?

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: Happy.

MR. CHENELLY: Our district commanders. District 1 Arthur Rodrigues.

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: District II Randy Ferguson.

MR. FERGUSON: I am here.

MR. CHENELLY: District III Laura McFarlain.

MS. McFARLAIN: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: District IV Christopher Studebaker.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: District V Terry Traylor?

MR. TRAYLOR: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: District VI Terri Good.

MS. GOOD: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: Let the record show I am present. National Service Director Dana Bolton?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: National Membership Director Warren Cox?

MR. COX: Here, sir.

MR. CHENELLY: National Controller Agha Hussain?

(No response.)

Past National Commanders

MR. CHENELLY: Our past national commanders. PNC Piening?

PNC PIENING: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC King again?

PNC KING: Jim King is still here.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Smith?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Taylor?

PNC TAYLOR: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Stahl?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Kilgore?

PNC KILGORE: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Boettcher?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: PNC J.P. Brown III?

PNC BROWN: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Miskulin?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Hotop?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Fry?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Via?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Pidgeon?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Chapman?

PNC CHAPMAN: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Riley?

PNC RILEY: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Jan Brown?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Heun?

PNC HEUN: PNC Heun is here.

MR. CHENELLY: And PNC McLean?

PNC McLEAN: Present.

National Executive Committee Members

MR. CHENELLY: Our NEC members. District I: Out of Connecticut, Dana Dillon?

MS. DILLON: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: Maine, James Laflin?

MR. LAFLIN: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: Massachusetts, Caroline Kenyos?

MS. KENYON: Kenyon, present.

MR. CHENELLY: Sorry, Caroline. New Jersey, Fred Vineyard?

MS. DILLON: He is excused.

MR. CHENELLY: New York, Alan Ashley.

MR. Ashley: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: Rhode Island, Ron Bennett?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: District II: Delaware, David Haines.

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: District of Columbia -- David Haines? No? District of Columbia, Aaron Smith.

MR. SMITH: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Maryland, Andy Martel?

MR. MARTEL: Here, sir.

MR. CHENELLY: North Carolina, David Wilburn.

MR. WILBURN: Here, sir.

MR. CHENELLY: Pennsylvania, Robert Bankhead.

MR. BANKHEAD: Here, sir.

MR. CHENELLY: Virginia, Kyle Blake?

MR. BLAKE: Here, sir.

MR. CHENELLY: West Virginia, Patricia Kishman?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: District Three: Alabama, Ernestine Doubek.

MS. DOUBEK: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Anyone from Arkansas?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Florida, AJ John.

MR. JOHN: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Georgia, Brett Colbert.

MR. COLBERT: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Louisiana, Gary Stuart.

MR. STUART: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: South Carolina, Janice Shelton?

MS. SHELTON: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: Tennessee, Lee Ann Adams.

MS. ADAMS: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: District Four: Illinois, Richard Shea.

MR. SHEA: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Indiana, Richard Caldwell.

MR. CALDWELL: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Iowa, Barry Remington.

MR. REMINGTON: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Kentucky, Alan Smith.

MR. SMITH: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Michigan, Jean Hall?

MR. HALL: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Anyone here from Minnesota?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Missouri, Doug Johnson?

MR. JOHNSON: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Ohio, Sara Pierce?

MS. PIERCE: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Wisconsin, Dennis Barrington.

MR. BARRINGTON: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: District V: Anyone here from Kansas?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Nebraska, Carol?

MS. WEHRLI: Deborah Wehrli, sitting in for Carol.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you, Deborah. North Dakota, Murray Strom.

MR. STROM: Here, sir.

MR. CHENELLY: Texas, Curtis Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: District VI: Alaska, Christa Foli.

MS. FOLI: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you. Arizona, Jack Isaacson.

MR. ISACCON: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: California, Sandra Durbin?

MS. DURBIN: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: Hawaii, Marcus Irons.

MR. IRONS: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Great. Washington, Steve Bird.

MR. BIRD: Present.

Alternate NECs

MR. CHENELLY: Our alternate NECs. If you have signed in, I should call your name here. After each district, if I have missed anyone, please let me know. Connecticut, Douglas Newell?

MR. NEWELL: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: New York, Les Baker.

MR. : Excused.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you. Did I miss any alternates for District I?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: District II: Delaware, Michael Savosky?

MR. SAVOSKY: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: District of Columbia, Clyde Pike?

MR. PIKE: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: Maryland, Michael Mahoney?

MR. MAHONEY: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: North Carolina, Michael --

MR. ROZMARYN: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

(Laughter.)

MR. CHENELLY: I miss anyone for District II alternates?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: District III: Florida, Eddie Bullock?

MR. BULLOCK: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Did I miss anyone for District III?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: District IV: Illinois, Jean Henning?

MS. HENNING: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Indiana, is it Anna Williams?

MS. WILLIAMS: It is Annquniek Williams, sir.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you. Kentucky, Deanna Maynard.

MS. MAYNARD: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Missouri, Robert Lee.

MR. CHENELLY: Ohio, Steve Albery.

MR. ALBERY: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: Did I miss any alternates for District IV.

MR. : ---.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you, Brian. District V: Texas, Bobby Lumpkins.

MR. LUMPKINS: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Did I miss anyone for District V alternate NECs?

(No response.)

MR. : ---.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you, Brian. You are on here. Sorry I missed it. District VI, I don't have any alternates. Any alternates for District VI?

MR. : ---.

MR. CHENELLY: Got it, thank you.

MR. : Did you get District II, under Pennsylvania, Rege Riley, PNC?

MR. CHENELLY: I did not but thank you. Commander, you have a quorum.

Adoption of Agenda

CMDR. CLARK: I will entertain a motion to adopt our agenda.

PNC HEUN: So moved, Heun.

MR. : Second.

CMDR. CLARK: We have a motion and a second to adopt the agenda as published. All those in favor, signify by saying aye?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR. CLARK: Opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: So carried.
Approval of Minutes

CMDR. CLARK: The minutes as published, do we have a motion to adopt the minutes?

MR. : So moved.

MR. : Second.

CMDR. CLARK: We have a motion and a second to adopt the minutes as published. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by saying --

MR. : Jim King.

CMDR. CLARK: Yes, sir.

PNC KING: You might ask them when making a motion and second to give their name.

CMDR. CLARK: All right. All right we have a motion to adopt the minutes as published. The motion was made by --

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: Horace Johnson.

CMDR. CLARK: Horace Johnson. The second by --

MR. BULLOCK: Eddie Bullock.

CMDR. CLARK: Can't hear you.

MR. BULLOCK: Eddie Bullock.

CMDR. CLARK: Any discussion? Did you have something? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by saying aye?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR. CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: So carried. Do we have any guests?

MR. : No.

CMDR. CLARK: All right, we will give the reports. District I, Art's not here. Dana, would you come up, please?

MR. CHENELLY: With Art Rodriques not here, the first vice for the district, Dana Dillon, will become the acting commander. And Doug Newell, as the alternate NEC, you are now the NEC for Connecticut.

NEC Reports National District I

MS. DILLON: Good morning. If all of our states from District I could line up, please? We will start with Connecticut.

MR. NEWELL: Doug Newell, alternate NEC, Connecticut. Our NEC report is on page 7 of the book from the Department of Connecticut, and I ask that we approve it at the proper time.

MS. DILLON: Thank you. James Laflin, Maine.

MR. LAFLIN: James Laflin, NEC from Maine. My report is on page 8 in the book. I move for its adoption at the proper time.

MS. DILLON: Thank you. Massachusetts,

Caroline Kenyon.

MS. KENYON: My report is on page 9 in the book. I move for it to be adopted at the proper time.

MS. DILLON: Thank you. New Jersey's report is on page 10. And I ask for it to be adopted at the proper time. New York?

MR. ASHLEY: Yes, Alan Ashley. My report is not in the book because Richard DeJesu passed away, and I took over his position. I am here to fill the shoes of past Department --- Richard DeJesu.

Our membership is maintaining at a current level. And our posts are all up to date and are ready for another year. We will try to get a better report next year. That is my report. I move for its adoption.

MS. DILLON: Thank you. Rhode Island's is on page 11. I ask for it to be adopted at the proper time. And National District I Commander Arthur Rodrigues' report is on page 6. And I ask for all reports to be accepted at this time.

CMDR. CLARK: Second District Commander Randy Ferguson. We will hold all the reports and vote at the end.

District II

MR. FERGUSON: Good morning, everybody. (Chorus of "Good morning.")

MR. FERGUSON: Randy Ferguson, in case he forgot. My report is on page 13. I move for its adoption at the proper time. And Delaware.

MR. SAVOSKY: Michael Savosky, alternate NEC for the department. Our report is on page 14 of the book, and I have nothing further to add. And I so move.

MR. SMITH: DC, Aaron Smith. Our report is on page 15. I move for adoption at the proper time.

MR. FERGUSON: Maryland, Andy Martel.

MR. MARTEL: Andy Martel, Maryland. My report is on page 16, and I move it be adopted at the proper time. Thank you.

MR. FERGUSON: Thank you. North Carolina, David Wilburn.

MR. WILBURN: David Wilburn, NEC from North Carolina. My report is on page 17. I ask for its adoption at the proper time. Thank you.

MR. FERGUSON: Pennsylvania, Mr. Bank-

head.

MR. BANKHEAD: Bob Bankhead, NEC, Department of Pennsylvania. My report is on page 18. I would like to add to it.

This past week, we had one of our Pennsylvania line officers die unexpectedly, Billy Slabinski, our provost marshal. I would ask everyone keep him, his family and AMVETS Post 59, and particularly PNC Art Stahl -- they were pretty close friends. Keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

That is my report, and I move for its adoption at the proper time. Thank you.

MR. FERGUSON: Thank you. Kyle Blake, Virginia.

MR. BLAKE: Kyle Blake, NEC, Virginia. My report is on page 19 in the book, and I move for its adoption at the proper time.

MR. FERGUSON: Thank you. And Patricia Kishman, West Virginia, is on page 20. And I move for its adoption at the appropriate time. Commander, those are our reports.

CMDR. CLARK: Thank you. Third District Commander Laura McFarlain.

District III

MS. McFARLAIN: Good morning. My report is on page 22, and I move for its adoption at the proper time. Alabama?

MS. DOUBEK: Ernestine Doubek, NEC, Alabama. My report is on page 23. It is a partial report. The full report will be submitted to National for record. I ask that it be adopted at the proper time.

MS. McFARLAIN: Florida.

MR. JOHN: Good morning. AJ John, NEC, Department of Florida. My report is on page 24 of the book, and I move for its adoption at the proper time.

MS. McFARLAIN: Georgia?

MR. COLBERT: Good morning. Brett Colbert, Georgia. My report is on page 25, and I move that it be adopted at the appropriate time.

MS. McFARLAIN: Louisiana?

MR. STUART: Gary Stuart, NEC, Louisiana. My report is on page 27. I ask for it be adopted at the proper time.

MS. McFARLAIN: South Carolina?

MS. SHELTON: Good morning. Janice

Shelton, Department of South Carolina. My report is on page 28 of the report's book, and I ask that it be adopted at the proper time.

MS. McFARLAIN: And Tennessee.

MS. ADAMS: Lee Ann Adams, NEC, Department of Tennessee. My report can be found on page 29, and I ask that it be adopted at the proper time.

MS. McFARLAIN: Commander, those are our reports, and I ask them to be adopted at the proper time.

CMDR. CLARK: District IV, Chris Studebaker.

District IV

MR. STUDEBAKER: Good morning, everyone. My report is on page 31, and I move for the adoption of it at the proper time. Out of District IV, Illinois, Mr. Shea.

MR. SHEA: Rich Shea, NEC, Department of Illinois. My report is on page 32. I move for its adoption at the proper time. Welcome to Illinois.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Indiana.

MR. CALDWELL: Richard Caldwell, Indiana. My report is on page 33. I move for its adoption at the proper time.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Iowa.

MR. REMINGTON: Barry Remington, NEC, Iowa. My report is on page 34. I move for its adoption at the proper time.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Kentucky?

MR. SMITH: Alan Smith, NEC, Kentucky. My report is on page 35. I move for its adoption at the proper time.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Michigan?

MR. HALL: Jean Hall from Michigan. My report is on page 36. I make a motion to adopt it at the proper time. Thank you.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Thank you. Missouri?

MR. JOHNSON: Doug Johnson, NEC, Missouri. My report is on page 37 through 43. And I move its adoption at the proper time.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Ohio?

MS. PIERCE: Sara Pierce, NEC, Ohio. Report's on page 44. And I would like to add that our fall conference will be October 17 through the 20th at Marriott Columbus Northwest, 5605 Blazer Pkeway, in Dublin, Ohio. I move

for my adoption at the proper time.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Thank you, and Wisconsin.

MR. BARRINGTON: Dennis Barrington, NEC, Wisconsin. My report is on page 45. I move for its adoption at the proper time.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Thank you. Commander, those are the reports out of Fourth National District, and I move for the approval at the proper time.

CMDR. CLARK: Thank you, Chris. Fifth District Commander Terry Traylor.

District V

MR. TRAYLOR: My name is Terry Traylor, District V commander out of the state of Texas. My report is on page 47, and I move for its adoption at the proper time. Nebraska?

MS. WEHRLI: Deborah Wehrli standing in for Carol Tschampl-Diesing. Her report is on page 47. I would like to add that she just had knee surgery last month, and not only that, she lost her husband last fall. So like to keep her in your prayers. I move for its adoption at the proper time.

MR. TRAYLOR: North Dakota.

MR. STROM: Murray Strom, North Dakota. My report is on page 49. I noted that we purchased three little jeeps for parades, and that is a great, great way to get our name out there. If you want to see pictures, just come see me or Brian. We will show you pictures of what we did. I move for my report to be adopted at the proper time.

MR. TRAYLOR: Thank you, sir. Texas?

MR. THOMAS: Curtis Thomas, NEC, Texas. My report is on page 50, and I move for its adoption at the proper time. Thank you.

MR. TRAYLOR: Thank you, Curtis. Commander, that concludes the reports for District V. I move for their adoption at the proper time.

CMDR. CLARK: Thank you, sir. District VI, Terri Good.

District VI

MS. GOOD: Good morning. I am Terri Good from the state of Alaska. Good morning. Alaska?

MS. FOLI: Thank you, Commander Good. Our report is on page 53, and I move that it be adopted at the proper time. Thank you. Oh, Chris Foli.

MS. GOOD: Thank you. Arizona will be presenting their report at a different time. Sandra Durbin, California.

MS. DURBIN: Sandra Durbin, California. Our report is on page 53 through 57. And I would like to add that please keep Ron Robinson in your prayers. He has lost one of his children, and that is why he is not here today. I ask for my report to be adopted at the proper time, please.

MS. GOOD: Hawaii?

MR. IRONS: Good morning. Marcus Irons, NEC, Hawaii. Our report is on page 58. We move that it be adopted at the proper time.

MS. GOODE: Thank you. Washington.

MR. BIRD: Steve Bird, Washington. My report is on page 62 and 63 of the report's book. I move for its adoption at the proper time.

MS. GOODE: Thank you. And my report is on page 52, and I move for adoption at the proper time.

CMDR. CLARK: Are there any questions on any of the reports?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Hearing none, I will entertain a motion to accept all reports as published?

MR. MARTEL: So moved, Martel, Maryland.

MS. PIERCE: Second, Sara Pierce, Ohio.

CMDR. CLARK: We have a motion and a second. All those in favor, signify by saying aye?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR. CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: So carried. Our national finance officer is tied up with some business. He is on active duty, and he is involved with some phone calls from work. We will have to take his report at a later time. Commander Brown, J.P., can you do the VAVS report?

VAVS Report by PNC J.P. Brown III

PNC BROWN: First I would like to apologize for my report not being in the book. With the moving of the headquarters and transferring of information into the warehouse and making suitable arrangements, the report wasn't put in.

I will just read a couple highlights of the report that will be turned in for inclusion in this year's convention.

First I would like to thank Commander Clark for having the confidence in me to lead this committee. The AMVETS family finally has accountability on the volunteer hours that have been put into VA assisting our veterans. In November 2023, we reported roughly 786 volunteers at 38 facilities with 608,000 total hours valued at \$940,000.

With the volunteers getting used to the new system of getting more involved, we see the numbers increasing. Currently there are over 2,400 AMVET family volunteers in facilities with over 833,000 hours, a total value of \$9,800,000 for the Fiscal Year 2022, and donated over \$996,000 in voluntary services.

I would just like to remind everyone that A through M, your certification expires in July, it expired in July 2024. If you haven't got your new reps or those who are being renewed, please get those in as soon as possible to Colondra so she can get the proper certification.

A reminder also to those who are renewing, AMVETS may have up to three deputy representatives to share the duties of the representative.

The responsibilities include attending VAVS Committee meetings in the absence of the rep, attending meetings with the VAVS representative in order to be fully knowledgeable of the work of the committee and to be able, AMVETS effectively, when they represent their attended facility.

The most important part of report I am ad libbing because as most of you know, every department in AMVETS is understaffed and overworked.

I would like to give a special thanks to our programs manager Colondra. Stand up, Colondra.

(Applause.)

PNC BROWN: For her support in making this program the success that it is. If it wasn't for her, reports wouldn't be done, numbers wouldn't be put together. Very important. She works diligently whether at home or in the office. Please show respect to her and respect to the other staff members.

And my hat's off to you. Thank you very much for making this VAVS program the success that it has been.

Thank you, Commander. This concludes my report, and I move for its adoption at the

proper time.

PNC RILEY: Second, Riley.

CMDR. CLARK: Can you give us a report on the Grievance Committee, please? We had grievance meeting yesterday afternoon.

**Grievance Committee
by Alan Smith**

MR. SMITH: We had a Grievance Committee yesterday, August 6, at 1500. We discussed one appeal. The discussion to suspend the member was upheld. It was done properly in accordance with Appendix B. And all procedures were correct.

The only thing that we changed was -- we changed the suspension from two years to one year. We thought two years was a little harsh.

And Commander, that concludes my report, and I move for its approval.

PNC KING: Second, King.

CMDR. CLARK: We have a motion and a second. Any discussion on the report?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by saying aye?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR. CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: So carried. Thank you, Alan. I will now turn the podium over to our executive director for the staff reports.

**Staff Reports
Executive Director's Report
By Joe Chenelly**

MR. CHENELLY: Please line up. And my report is on page 76. I urge you to please read the reports. My report is of course, the reports that we are about to get entered into the record here, your national headquarters is working very hard. A new facility, a much smaller facility, but getting it done. While at the same time preparing our next facility. Go ahead, Warren.

**National Membership Director's Report
by Warren Cox**

MR. COX: Warren Cox, membership national. Good morning, family. My report is on page 70 of the book. I move that it be adopted at the proper time.

At this time, I would like add that we have all the membership cards for the next year here in the facility. We want to do it in advance so we are not delayed or late as we have been in the history. So leaders, please come see me after our membership roundtable tomorrow. God bless.

**Program Manager's Report
by Colondra Etheredge**

Good morning. My name is Colondra Etheredge. I am a programs manager, and my report is on page 80. And I ask that this be adopted at the proper time.

**National Service Director's Report
by Dana Bolton**

MR. BOLTON: Good morning, AMVETS. National Service Director Dana Bolton. My report is on page 82. And I ask that it be adopted at this time.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you, Dana. Thank you.

**Communications Manager's Report
by Bumi Ayodel**

MS. AYODEL: Good morning, everyone. My name is Bumi Ayodel. I am the communications manager, and my report is on page 83. And I move for its adoption at the proper time.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you. Also I would like to add, for Dana Bolton out of the service department's report, a more in-depth report for the entire convention body will be given Friday morning during the National Service Foundation's report.

Commander, that concludes our reports, and we move for the adoption at the proper time.

PNC BROWN: Second, Brown.

CMDR. CLARK: Got a motion and a second. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by saying aye?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR. CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: So carried. Now the service foundation report. PNC Chapman?

**National Service Foundation Report
by PNC Harold Chapman**

PNC CHAPMAN: Thank you, Commander. My report is on page 73. Like I said, I wish I had more information at the time of this report.

But however, the foundation is doing very well. It is much, much more improved than it was in the past. And we will give a more detailed report on Friday. That is my report, and like I said, it is on 73.

CMDR. CLARK: Thank you. Entertain motion to approve?

MR. STUDEBAKER: So moved. Studebaker, Illinois.

MR. BULLOCK: Second. Eddie Bullock, Florida

CMDR. CLARK: We got a motion and a second. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR. CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: So carried. Chaplain Allen, your report, please?

**National Officers' Reports
Chaplain's Report
by Milton Allen**

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: Good morning. Chaplain's report will be found on page 70. I move for its adoption at the proper time.

CMDR. CLARK: Any discussion on the chaplain's report?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Entertain a motion to approve.

MR. TRAYLOR: Motion to approve. Terry Traylor, District V.

CMDR. CLARK: Second?

MR. FERGUSON: Second. Randy Ferguson, North Carolina.

CMDR. CLARK: All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR. CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: So carried. National Judge Advocate PNC King. Your report, please.

**National Judge Advocate's Report
by PNC Jim King**

PNC KING: Thank you, Commander. This will be my final report as judge advocate to this body. It is found on page 69.

I would like to say that it has been an enjoyable experience over the past several years. I would really like to. But in all seriousness, I want to thank everybody for the support that I have received over the years, and I am sure that my follow-along will receive the same support. Thank you all very much.

(Applause.)

MR. MARTEL: Motion to approve. Martel, Maryland.

MR. SHEA: Second. Shea, Illinois.

CMDR. CLARK: We have a motion and a second. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Really? All those in favor of accepting the report, say aye?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR. CLARK: Did not anticipate. Those opposed?

MR. : Aye.

(Laughter.)

CMDR. CLARK: So carried. Who's next? Our national Third Vice Commander Sandy Vorhies.

**Third Vice Commander's Report
by Sandy Vorhies**

3RD VICE CMDR. VORHIES: Good morning.

(Chorus of "Good morning.")

3RD VICE CMDR. VORHIES: You will find my report on page 68. I do just want to add a little snip to this. I know that we have veterans in AMVETS posts in correctional facilities. And it just came to my attention this year that they are not receiving copies of proposed resolutions and constitution and bylaws. And they should be receiving that.

So if your departments have a correctional facility that has an AMVETS post, I am going

to ask that you forward to that correctional facility a copy of what you receive so that they can read it and see what is going on. And have some kind of feedback to us.

And with that, I ask that my report be adopted at the proper time. Thank you.

MS. PIERCE: Second. Sara Pierce.

MR. FERGUSON: Second, Randy Ferguson.

CMDR. CLARK: You get the second by Randy Ferguson? Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: All those in favor, signify by saying aye?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR. CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: So carried. Second Vice Commander Paul Shipley.

**Second Vice Commander's Report
by Paul Shipley**

2ND VICE CMDR. SHIPLEY: Commander, my report's on page 67. I would like to add a few things.

The final total adjusted programs reporting for the first half of this year is an astounding \$201 million.

(Applause.)

2ND VICE CMDR. SHIPLEY: That is a great number, but I want to put this caveat to that. That is only 400 posts across the country reporting. Yes, we have 100 percent department reporting. Good job for the departments. But we do need to encourage our posts to be more active on programs reporting.

To the departments that got 100 percent programs reporting, great work. For the rest of us, we have some more work to do. But it is good work. And think: If we only have less than half of our posts making \$200 million in programs reporting, think what we could do if every one of us submitted programs reports.

The one final thing that I do want to say is I want to thank Carol Hebert for all of her time working as our national programs director. Through her efforts, we have seen a department get better.

She has had to struggle with some new software as we have all had to struggle with new software over the past few years. And I am

fully confident that Colondra as the programs manager will be able to keep that high level of performance out of that office that we have seen and keep us going into the future.

(Applause.)

2ND VICE CMDR. SHIPLEY: That is my report, and I move for its adoption at the proper time, Commander.

CMDR. CLARK: We have a motion.

MR. : Second.

CMDR. CLARK: Any discussion on Commander Shipley's report?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: All those in favor, signify by saying aye?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR. CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: So carried. Now our First Vice Commander Horace Johnson.

**First Vice Commander's Report
by Horace Johnson**

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: Good morning, AMVETS.

(Chorus of "Good morning.")

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: It is good seeing all of you out here this morning. My report is on page 66. And I move for its adoption at the proper time.

MS. DILLON: Second. Dillon, Connecticut.

CMDR. CLARK: We have a motion and a second. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: All those in favor, signify by saying aye?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR. CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: So carried.

**National Commander's Report
by Bill Clark**

CMDR. CLARK: My report is on page 65 as

published. I have nothing to add. It has been a great year. Thank you all for your support. Horace?

MR. MARTEL: Motion to approve the Commander's report. Martel, Maryland.

MS. DILLON: Second. Dillon, Connecticut.

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: There is a motion on the floor and a second. All in favor?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: All opposed?

(No response.)

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: Ayes have it, sir.

CMDR. CLARK: Thank you. Okay, we will move into old business. Does anyone have any old business?

Old Business

MS. DILLON: Dana Dillon, NEC.

CMDR. CLARK: Dana Dillon, Connecticut, NEC. I believe we discussed at a previous NEC that that we would get e-mailed these reports a week before the event so we have time to actually read them? Because like the minutes, the very first line, it has Rege Riley as commander.

We don't have time to go through it to accurately read it and give a motion to accept something if we don't have the time. And like I said, at the last, previous NEC, they said they would get them out to us by e-mail a week beforehand.

MR. CHENELLY: My only comment, Dana, is you are absolutely right. I will ask for help, and I will also put a caveat with that. Everyone needs to know that all reports are due in 30 days before the meeting. So I know this was a particularly challenging year because for the last several conventions, our conventions have been late August. So a lot of people thought that meant that the reports were due in late July. Obviously it is only the 7th of August here, so they were due back in July 7th.

So we really struggled getting the books together in time for print. But it is still on us. We could have -- we did have a partial book back in early July.

So just so everyone knows, it will get sent out but e-mail may be -- likely it will not be the complete product. So if you want to get it in there, please send it to us at least 30 days' prior.

I think our next NEC meeting other than the one at the end of this week, will be in mid-March. Right now we are shooting for March 15th, which would mean that all reports are due in by February 15th. Or even February 14 since February is a shorter month.

But you are right, Dana, and we will get it there. We will get it online as well. I know not everyone always receives my e-mails. We try on that one too. But it will be online 30 days' prior. I'll make sure of it.

CMDR. CLARK: Thank you, Joe. Any other old business? Anybody have anything?

New Business

CMDR. CLARK: Under new business, Jack?

MR. ISAACSON: The report from the Department of Arizona was too late to make the book. I will have a copy of that provided this afternoon for review later. Thank you.

CMDR. CLARK: Entertain a motion to approve Arizona's report?

PNC HEUN: So moved. PNC Heun.

MS. KENYON: Second. Kenyon, Massachusetts.

CMDR. CLARK: Got a motion and a second. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by saying aye?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR. CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: So carried. We will move into new business. First I would like to have our inspector general give a report on his visit. Along with our District IV commander who also accompanied him. Both of you?

MR. STUDEBAKER: Chris Studebaker, Fourth National District commander. As I put in my report in March, I was trying to get ahold of the Department of Minnesota. Just to give this body a recap of what myself and Mr. Wilburn have come across, I sent a certified letter to the department on May 4. I received a phone call from a gentleman named John Flores that I believe is either their executive director or their commander. I am not quite sure.

That he was not too happy with me basically telling them if they don't get in contact with

us, we were going to send the inspector general up there to investigate what is going on.

He, on the phone call conversation, he told me that he has been sick. He has been in the VA hospital. All these things. I asked him about reporting programs. He said he didn't understand the system. I said, well, I can help you.

Then he told me that their department headquarters, which is in a government facility, they haven't had Internet or phone service for 10 months, and I thought that was kind of strange.

But then he tells me about all this money that they are donating, and that they made a video to give to the politicians to show what Minnesota does for their veterans.

So I told him, I said, well, I would like to come up to your department convention. And he says to me, well, we might have it in May. We might have it in June. I will let you know. So I was like, okay.

I think maybe a week or two goes by, I don't hear from him. I send him an e-mail, and now all of a sudden his personal e-mail account isn't accepting e-mails.

So I ended up calling him and he actually answered. And his reason for not getting back to me was he was in the hospital again.

So he tells me when their convention is. It was the end of June. And I told him I was coming up. And he said, well, I don't know if you should. There is not going to be very many people there. And I said, it doesn't matter. I am coming up.

I said, if I can get a couple posts to report programs, that will be perfect. If we need to talk about programs, that will be great. If I need to help you do your 990s and everything, that will be whatever.

So after that, I had a conversation with the Commander. And we did some research online. Joe sent me an e-mail or a newspaper article about Post 1 in Minnesota. How they had just purchased another bingo parlor in Minnesota, and they run 13 of them.

And it was kind of funny how we have never -- nobody hears about this. But they are talking about all this money they donate. Like \$50,000 here, \$10,000 there. \$20,000 there but nothing about AMVETS being in there.

So I did some research myself and got onto their department Website, and they call themselves on their department Website the American Veterans Association, AMVETS. Not just American Veterans. Not just AMVETS. It says American Veterans Association, which I

thought was a little strange.

And also when I was going through their Website, they have all their posts still listed, even though half of them are closed.

So I thought, okay. But in the meantime I was talking to the Commander and the executive director, and they decided, we decided that I should probably not go by myself just because we are not sure what we are walking into. So Mr. Wilburn came up there with me.

But we went to -- we got up there on a Friday night. And we went to this bingo parlor that is next to a Menards. The parking lot was full when we got there because they were having bingo. There is no AMVETS logos on the building outside. So we walked in. We had our AMVETS shirts on. We walked in, walked around, looked at things.

Looked at the amount of people that were there. No AMVETS logos inside. The only way that you would have known that it was an AMVETS function, is the gaming license. It says AMVETS Post 1 on it.

So the gaming license is run through them. So we left there and then on Saturday, we went to their department convention. We showed up at the government building. The door was locked. So we were a little hesitant. So finally this man, his name was Thomas Eubride comes out. He was the past department commander.

And I asked him if he was John Flores. He tells me no. John is in the hospital again. I was like, okay.

So we walk in and it is him, a guy named Dennis from Post 151, and another gentleman named Lou that is out of Post 24, that I find out later is actually closed.

It is just those three, and they are going to have a department convention.

So when we get there, they have already got, they have already got the revow filled out that Thomas is going to be the commander and the NEC. They somehow approved a budget without anybody having a budget.

And they really didn't do much, which -- we weren't trying to be mean to them I guess you will say because we weren't sure what was going to happen. But I did get some programs reporting done.

So this Dennis up in Post 151, he is telling us while we are sitting there that he is trying to start a post in North Dakota. And we think that is kind of odd. While their department is failing, he is trying to start a post up in North Dakota that I don't even know if North Dakota

knows they are trying to start a post.

And then just on a side note, when I was at Wisconsin's convention earlier, winter break, they were telling me that they are trying to start a post in Minnesota that they are right next door to. And I am thinking, I don't know if Minnesota even knows this.

But long story short: So we leave there after probably 2 1/2 hours, and we go to a post that is 50 miles south. It is in a VFW. We walk in. There are no AMVETS logos anywhere. No mention of AMVETS. No nothing.

We sat there for, I don't know, an hour, hour and a half. I mean, it was a nice post and everything. People were cordial. But no mention of AMVETS.

We leave there, drive back up to St. Paul, go to Post 5, which is in a community center. No mention of AMVETS anywhere around that building.

So we leave there, go to Post 1. When we showed up there, the parking lot is completely full of full of people. They do have an AMVETS logo right below the VFW on their sign.

We walk in, and they are doing meat raffle and stuff for a fund raiser. We order some beverages. Sit down. And Dave starts talking to the bartender, just asking questions. And she is like, well, my father is here. He is an AMVET. So she brings him over and introduces us to him.

You could tell he didn't really want to talk to us once we started asking questions. Like we asked him who the post commander was, and he didn't know, which I thought was strange.

But he tells us that in that VFW, Post 1 controls all the gambling. They take care of all the gambling. So while we are there, like in that back corner over there, they have four or five pull-tab machines. That they have a full-time person selling pull-tabs.

And he told us that he doesn't really like to go to their meetings because all they do is bicker and fight over how they are going to give their money away. And they have already decided that before they even come to the meeting.

So we were probably there, I don't know, an hour, hour and a half. And then we left. And that was as far as we traveled because the posts were just so far away. But when I got back home, I was talking to the Commander and Mr. Chenelly, and I got a copy of their 990 I believe, I think maybe Warren sent that to me or Joe sent it to me.

And reading through their 990, they run \$36 million a year through that post. And they

spend \$36 million a year through that post.

As of right now today, talking to Warren the other day, the Department of Minnesota has not revalidated. So they are not in compliance with us. Before I even went up there, I think four or five of the posts that were still supposedly active had not revalidated, so were not in compliance.

Two of the posts had less than ten members, so they were not in compliance. So it is a mess. It is a mess up there. But they are using the AMVETS name to make a lot of money. So I will let Dave --

MR. WILBURN: So some of this Chris just talked about. I met with Chris Studebaker, national Fourth District commander, Friday, 21 June, in St. Paul, Minnesota.

So like Chris said, we discussed about going to the bingo hall. We went to the bingo hall. Everything Chris said was correct.

So Saturday morning I met with Chris. We discussed how to handle the next meeting. So Saturday morning, Chris and I talked about what we were going to find out about the next meeting Saturday morning.

So we arrived at the building. Noticed three vehicles parked in the parking lot. Walked up to the entrance. We had no clue of what to expect. And we were greeted by the Minnesota state commander.

So we talked with the guy on our way to the meeting room. Two other guys sitting there, just like Chris said.

So I am not an old-timer at doing this by any means but I don't know if, I don't know if the AMVET part of it, I am not talking about the gaming or the gambling part but the AMVET part of it, since Mike Cook has not been around for a few years, I don't know if they know what to do or how to go about it.

The guy Dennis from two and a half hours away, he was department commander ten or twelve years ago. He was very knowledgeable about the AMVETS stuff, but it seemed like what Chris just said, he is more interested in trying to get a new post in North Dakota.

So the people in St. Paul, I really don't think they have a clue of what is going on as far as the AMVETS, the chain of command or any of that stuff.

So, and while we went to post -- was it Post 1 that had the meat raffle?

MR. STUDEBAKER: Yes, that was Post 1.

MR. WILBURN: Post 1, we went there. And

like Chris said, in that back corner there is a lady like in a cage, and it was -- it wasn't a hundred people in line but there was 25 people in line buying pull-tabs. And we were lucky to get a place to sit down there.

But the guy that started talked to about AMVETS, just asking questions about AMVETS, because we never seen any AMVETS signs or any AMVETS anything.

And he was nice enough but like Chris said, he really didn't want to talk about anything, about AMVETS, so I will get down here. So my recommendation is for the Department of Minnesota to be in trusteeship. Need to get a small committee and/or the national four commander to make a trip but I would not send anyone by himself. No, really, I would not because you don't know -- I really don't believe the people doing the AMVETS stuff are the people in charge of the gambling.

MR. STUDEBAKER: We don't know.

MR. WILBURN: We don't know. And if they have been really meeting for three years, you can't just go up and start pointing fingers and saying -- well, I guess you could but you might get, you might not like what you are going to get so --

We are all grown. We are not really scared but at the same time, it is hard to go up in someone's own neighborhood and start accusing stuff.

So I would recommend, at least send a couple people but that is my report. I ask for it to be adopted at the proper time.

MR. STUDEBAKER: I will second Mr. Wilburn's statement about we need to form a committee --

PNC KING: Question: To accept the report, you are including the trusteeship portion in the report?

MR. WILBURN: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. I mean, we talked about it. I feel like they need some, I feel like they really do need, I am not saying the people we talked to or hung out with for a couple days are mean or rough kind of type people. I just, unless they are really, really good actors, I don't really think they have a clue of the AMVET part of it.

Now the gaming people, heck, they got it going on. If they are making \$27 million, and they are giving it away, hey, but I don't know. It is a mess up there for sure.

MR. STUDEBAKER: My personal opinion on all this after all the phone calls and the e-mails and talking to people, I believe this John Flores is running the show in Minnesota. I

believe he is out of Post 1. And he is in control of this gaming that is going on.

And I tell you, his voice mail to me was not kind at all. And his tone about us accusing them of stuff. But I believe he doesn't want us to know what is going on up there.

So like I said, I agree with Dave, however he said it. I am afraid if only two or three people go up there, I don't know what is going to happen when, like you said, you start poking the bear.

It should be a committee of at least -- I know we are tight on a budget but four, maybe five people need to go up there. Just to be safe. I would hate to see the upcoming Fourth National District commander go up there and start asking questions about all this money and what is going on with it, and something happen.

CMDR. CLARK: I don't mean this to be disrespectful but the reports they both just gave, especially Chris Studebaker, what they gave me, that was condensed. I got a lot of additional information and they put a lot of effort into it.

It is my opinion, and or executive director's opinion, that we should put that department in trusteeship. I also talked to our --

PNC KING: What you said supports the motion.

CMDR. CLARK: I am just making some statements. So I have currently three trustees in mind. And it is possible we will add one or two to them but it is my opinion we go into a trusteeship up there. So Horace will take over.

PNC KING: Call the question.

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: I accept the motion. What is the motion?

MR. STUDEBAKER: He made the motion and I seconded.

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: There is a motion and a second. Any more discussion?

(No response.)

PNC KING: Call the question.

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: All in favor?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: Any opposed?

(No response.)

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: The ayes have

it.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Thank you, Commander.

CMDR. CLARK: Thank you for your efforts. Currently for the trustee appointees, I have for the lead trustee, Clay Roundtree out of Texas. Second trustee would be Richard Shea out of Illinois. And thirdly Bobby Lumpkins out of Texas. Those are the three who have committed.

Clay Roundtree will be able to stay there one or two weeks as required. And I am thinking of one to two more to go up, but I have not contacted anybody or verified them yet.

I am hoping to do that this weekend while we are all together and have that for the post-NEC meeting for approval. Thank you.

PNC KING: Move that these trustees be approved.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Second. Studebaker, Illinois.

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: There is a motion and a second on the floor. Is there any more discussion?

(No response.)

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: Hearing none, all in favor, indicate by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: Opposed, a like sign.

(No response.)

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: Ayes have it.

CMDR. CLARK: Thank you. Our finance officer just came in.

Finance Officer's Report by National Finance Officer Kelly McFarlain

MR. McFARLAIN: Apologize for my lateness. I had a -- some of you may not know I am still active duty. So we are closing out the FY. So it is starting up the next FY. So that is kind of where I was.

So for my report, been a busy year right, to say the least. So the three things I want to highlight is one thing yesterday, we approved a balanced budget. For publish, I think you guys, we get copies, you got copies of it today.

We sold the building, as we discussed with you guys last NEC. We sold the building, bought a new building. We still have some work to do

on renovations and things like that.

We did appoint a committee to oversee the construction. I don't want to say construction but it is construction work. Not constructing, but the renovations of the new building.

Chris Studebaker, PNC McLean and Vice Commander Shipley are overseeing the construction, the budget and all that kind of stuff. That side of it for the Finance Committee.

The other thing is the -- we went into the MOA with the Department of Florida for this year alone for the quarter master you haven't seen. We encourage your comments, complaints, anything like that, that we can -- whether we are moving forward or moving in a different direction. Moving forward with Florida or a different direction with someone else, please, we encourage your comments.

And the last thing we want to discuss is -- we went and put a contract with Alleghany. And it is -- this company is going to help us work with our grants. They are strategy partners if you will. And helping us raise money within Pennsylvania and getting things going with the new building and national headquarters and things like that.

So that is my report. I will be around. I am done with the Army for the week. I just had to get this one meeting out the way. So I will be back in the saddle for the rest of the week. That is my report, Commander.

PNC BROWN: Second, Brown.

CMDR. CLARK: Any discussion? Any questions?

PNC KING: Did his motion include adopting the budget?

CMDR. CLARK: Yes, that will include adopting the budget.

PNC KING: Call the question.

CMDR. CLARK: Any questions?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by saying aye?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR. CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: So carried. Before entertaining a motion to adjourn, anyone have anything for the good of the order? Any announcements?

Good and Welfare

MS. FOLEY: Christa Foley, Department of Alaska. As many of you know, Don Oliver has been our NEC in Alaska forever. I would like to ask you to keep him in your prayers. Don couldn't make it this year because he is having some health issues. So I just wanted to let you all know. And it was his last year as our NEC, and he is retiring.

So please keep him in your prayers, and reach out to him if you want to say hi because he loves you all. Thank you.

3RD VICE CMDR. VORHIES: Commander, may I inform the general body of my request now or would you recommend a different procedure for me to bring that to AMVETS attention? What you and I had discussed about the women. I need some guidelines. I just need some guidelines.

CMDR. CLARK: Not at this time. Anyone else have anything?

PNC KING: Move to adjourn.

PNC HEUN: Second. PNC Heun.

CMDR. CLARK: I have a motion and a second to adjourn. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by saying aye?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR. CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Please stand for the benediction.

Benediction by Chaplain Milton Allen

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: Well, one meeting down. Okay.

(Prayer.)

Honors to the Colors by Provost Marshal Art Majors

MR. MAJORS: AMVETS, attention. Hand salute.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.)

AMVETS 79th Annual Convention

First Business Session
Meeting Minutes



Wednesday,
August 7, 2024

Held at the
President Abraham Lincoln DoubleTree Hotel
Springfield, Illinois

**Afternoon Session
(4:01 p.m.)**

**Call to Order
by Commander Bill Clark**

CMDR CLARK: Please take your seats. Chaplain Allen, we are ready for the invocation.

**Invocation
by Chaplain Milton Allen**

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: Hello again. Chaplains, join me on the dais, please. Chaplains in the building, please come forward. Come on you all before the Commander gets me. You all need to take you all something.

In your hearing, I will be reading the AM-VETS' official prayer.

(Prayer)

(Chorus of "amen.")

CMDR CLARK: Provost Marshal, Honors to the Colors.

**Honors to the Colors
by Provost Marshal Art Majors**

PROVOST MARSHAL MAJORS: AMVETS, attention. Hand salute.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

CMDR CLARK: Please be seated.

PNC Brown, are you here with the Credentials Report?

(Long pause.)

CMDR CLARK: She is being held up for about five minutes.

**Motion
Adoption of Rules**

CMDR CLARK: We can move ahead and entertain a motion to adopt the rules as published in the Convention Journal.

MR. ROWLEY: So moved, Rowley.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Second. Studebaker, Illinois.

CMDR CLARK: The motion is seconded. Any discussion on the rules as published?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried.

(Pause)

**Motion
Adoption of Agenda**

CMDR CLARK: I will entertain a motion to adopt the agenda as published in the journal. If you are going to make a second motion to that, please go to a microphone.

MS. DILLON: Dana Dillon, Connecticut, makes that motion.

PNC HEUN: PNC Heun seconds that.

CMDR CLARK: Thank you. Any discussion on the agenda as published?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried.

Committee Reports. Anybody who would like to give a report on the committee action?

**Veterans Suicide Prevention Awareness
Program/22 Every Day
by Kevin Matteson**

MR. MADISON: Good afternoon, Commander, Executive Committee and AMVETS. By the way, Happy Birthday, Kelly.

All right. My name is Kevin Matteson. I am your National Chairman for the Veterans Suicide Prevention Awareness Program, known as 22 Every Day.

I have been approached a couple of times about our name. I want to emphasize across the nation and to all departments we are 22 every day. We are not 22 a day, we are not Mission 22 or any of the other 22's.

So to clarify what the difference is for those other programs, they are awareness programs. We have evolved since 2017 when we became a national program here with the AMVETS. We started off as awareness. Again, with the evolving we have become a suicide prevention

and awareness. That is what the difference is.

So to clarify, we, as a committee, have partnered with a lot of large organizations, as well as small local, state, regional organizations. To name a few, we are partnered with the VA 988 Crisis Line; Face to Fight, which is headed up by USAA and Humana and several large organizations.

Our number one mission is 22 to zero. We would like to see that number go down. If anybody pays attention to the VA statistics, it is down to 16. I feel that this program with the AMVETS is a very important part of that happening.

Let me get my thoughts together. So the other part of our mission is finding non-pharmaceutical ways and resources to treat our veterans with PTSD, TBI, drug and alcohol and suicidal tendencies. And in doing so, we travel around the United States to find those resources, and it could be K-9, equine; I mean, as little as pottery.

I have lived this life since I retired from the Army in 1999. I know what it is like when they shove pills down your throat. I took two months of that and I said, no, I will find other measures.

Granted, I took my experience and I have been able to implement that into our program, and I am proud that the Commander at the time appointed me as the National Chair. I am a go-getter. I am retired military. I am also a retired corporate engineer. I have got the time. I have got the time, and I can put 100 percent into this program.

So I would like to say, as long as you will have me, I will continue to do this. If not and you appoint someone else, I will be right there to be their right hand man no matter what.

So I go around and I find these resources. I vet these resources. And the number one thing I do is I get with the VA National and I let them know about these resources so then they can have it implemented into their veterans' health administration. 988 also gets contacted so then they know, when they press one, they can identify what the issue is when they are speaking to that veteran and get them the help they need geographically. So they find out where they live and they can get them to the closest VA hospital or clinic to be able to take care of that counseling.

We have also partnered up with several civilian -- so I say, non-veteran. The Alliance for Suicide Prevention, Suicide Prevention Alliance, The Gambling Coalition and many others. I am on many, many boards. I am in meetings almost every day, and we talk about all these different ways that we can sit here and

help our veterans. And free of charge. That is one of the things that I try to do, is to be able to offer these resources.

So my report is our meeting went very well. We discussed these different things. We are going to have brochures made up so we can go ahead and be able to pass this information out. We are selling t-shirts and keychains. That is what I have been able to do.

I am asking the AMVETS and the Service Foundation, and, yes, I understand the financial situation; whatever type of financial help you can do. We are a 100 percent fundraising program, and 100 percent of those funds goes right back into this program.

I am able to get those t-shirts because of fundraising, and right now at this time I have several states that do the fundraising and send me the money. And then we go ahead and put it into an account and keep very good books on it, and then I am able to get that product. Or swag, as I like to say.

And for a donation, we ask for a donation of \$20 for a shirt. A donation of five. If you want to pay more, I love you guys. Do it. Do it. This is the way we keep working.

We will have representation at Rolling to Remember this coming year. I am going to make sure of it. The last two years didn't turn out as well as I would like it. Sorry, Joe. And we are going to make that happen, and it is going to be a tent at the Pentagon parking lot.

And hopefully, we successfully get Thunder Alley, and I will have a tent there with our swag asking for donations.

So that is my report, and I ask for its adoption. Thank you.
Motion

2ND VICE CMDR SHIPLEY: Second, Shipley.

MR.
: I will second that for ----.

CMDR CLARK: We have a motion and a second by 2nd Vice Shipley.

Any questions? Any comments?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried.

Gary.

Americanism by Gary Maddock

MR. MADDOCK: The Americanism Committee met in BOSB7E, called to order at 10:34 a.m., with two committee members there and 18 guests. I am Gary Maddock. I am Vice Chairman of the Committee.

We adjourned at 11:10. We had one resolution to support the statehood for Puerto Rico. We had a very good discussion on the phoning forward. We would like to ask anyone here also who wants to judge posters that they come to the Ottawa Room at 3:45 tomorrow.

This concludes my report, and I move that it be adopted at the proper time.
Motion

CMDR CLARK: Thank you, Gary.

1st VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Second, Horace Johnson.

CMDR CLARK: We have a motion and a second by our 1st Vice Commander Horace Johnson. Any discussion? Questions?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried.

Before we go any further, Jan Brown is back in. I would like to jump back up and do the Credentials Report at this time, because I am sure she has a lot of other things to do.

While we are waiting for her to come up, are there any Purple Heart recipients in the house? Would you please stand.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: This is Purple Heart Remembrance Day. That is why I asked for that. Thank you for your service. Thank you for your sacrifice.

PNC BROWN: Sorry, but it has been kind of hectic. Every time the phone rings I have to go outside to answer it because we are in a dead space in that cage. I can hear the phone ring, and nobody can hear me. And Jody will

attest to that.

Credential Report by PNC Jan Brown

PNC BROWN: All right. So today I have just a total of people checked in of 319, and tomorrow afternoon -- do we have a business session tomorrow afternoon?

CMDR CLARK: Yes.

PNC BROWN: I will have a second Credentials Report broken down by department. Don't ask for one in the morning. It ain't going to happen. I am just saying.

We need to draw for -- so that was 319. And we need to draw for who is going to start the election on Saturday. So, Commander.

CMDR CLARK: It is Thursday at 10:30.

PNC BROWN: Oh, so there is not one in the afternoon?

CMDR CLARK: Yes.

PNC BROWN: Okay. I will see what I can do. So if you will draw one of those.

(Draw for Election.)

PNC BROWN: Well, they are not here. Anybody from Kansas here?

(No response.)

PNC BROWN: Huh? They are no longer a department? Okay.

PNC HEUN: I think I saw Toto out in the hallway.

(Laughter)

PNC BROWN: Illinois. How about that?

(Applause)

PNC BROWN: Commander, that concludes my report, and I move for its adoption.
Motion

OHIO or MR. BROWN: Second. Brown, Ohio.

CMDR CLARK: Do we have any questions on the Credentials Report?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none, those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried.

We will move back into the committee reports. Anyone else? PNC Brown.

VAVS and Hospital, Medical Services and Rehabilitation Benefits by PNC J.P. Brown, III

PNC J.P. BROWN: Commander, the National VAVS and Hospital Medical Services Rehabilitation Benefits Committee met yesterday, August 6th, at 2:00 p.m., in Room BOSB6E. The meeting was called to order at 2:02, an invocation by Ms. Caroline Taylor-Harris, from the Headquarters staff.

Myself as Chair was there. Voting members were Dana Dillon, Staff Liaison Callandra Ethridge, and National 2nd Vice Commander Paul Shipley. Absent were Vice Chairman Sarah Langley, National Deputy VAVS Rep Ted Ganda, the Ladies Auxiliary Rep Marie Rorrio, and Sons Rep Joe Kirkpatrick.

Since we didn't have a quorum, we couldn't vote on anything. But we did discuss with great detail the resolutions that were brought to us, and they were the Constitution and Bylaws Amendments 25-01, 2, 4 and 6. Please look at those in your book and make a decision on how you feel you would like them at the proper time.

Old business, letters and cards; working on a way to ensure National is caught up with the certification. Programs asked -- wants appointment to send documents to programs@amvets.org. Then contact your CDCE program rep to request a letter of good standing.

The committee asked for a volunteer handbook. A booklet will be emailed to each. New business were none. The meeting adjourned and colors retired at 14:38.

Commander, this concludes my report, and I move for its adoption.

Motion

PNC RILEY: Second, Riley.

CMDR CLARK: A motion and a second. Any discussion? Questions?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried. Sheldon.

Diversity and Honor Guard by Sheldon Hartsfield

MR. HARTSFIELD: Sheldon Hartsfield, Chairman of the Diversity Committee and the Honor Guard Committee.

The Diversity Committee met yesterday. We had some issues on our table. It seems like Headquarters was contacted by some AMVET members out west questioning the diversity stance of this organization and the committee. Our Executive Director had responded to those emails, sending our Diversity Statement, which corrected the situation.

However, in looking at it further, we felt that they wanted us to make some sort of political statement coming from the Diversity Committee, and we are not allowed to do that. Although statements have to come from Headquarters. So we declined to make the statement. They asked for one of us to come to their state to speak at a program.

We have members from that state that are also on the Diversity Committee, and the advice was that we did not attend the program in November. But we asked if a letter or something from the National Commander could be sent in its stead, because we just don't feel that a personal appearance would satisfy these individuals. It looks like they are looking to make a political statement. So we choose not to participate in that.

The Honor Guard Committee met this morning, and unfortunately, due to logistical problems, we were not able to have the Honor Guard competition this year as was scheduled. So it is the plan to move forward.

I spoke with Callandra, and she wants some additional information from us. And I will be providing that information to her so we can try to get this on the schedule for next year.

That concludes my report, and I move for its adoption.

Motion

PNC KING: Second, King.

CMDR CLARK: A motion and a second. Any questions or comments?

MS. : They are separate reports.

CMDR CLARK: Okay. Well, the Diversity

Report first, I guess.

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried.

And the Honor Guard Report?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: We did that. Yes. I moved for its adoption. Yes.

MR. : You can't do them both at the same time.

CMDR CLARK: No. I can't do them both at the same time. Any questions?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried.

MR. HARTSFIELD: Thank you, Commander.

CMDR CLARK: Thank you.

Community Service by Loretta DiBrino

MS. DiBRINO: Commander, hi. My name is Loretta DiBrino. I am with the Department of New York. I was very honored to be appointed Chair of the Community Service Committee. And may I add Dave Feary, from also the Department of New York, was nominated to be -- appointed to be Vice Chair of the Community Service Committee.

Community Service Committee attendees were in the single digits. So we formed a roundtable to format and brainstorm ideas. The topics shared were successful donation programs and charitable activities for veterans and non-veterans. We had 100 percent participation within the roundtable format, so that when the participants left the session, everyone got ideas to take back to their posts to improve community engagement and ele-

vate their post profile to increase membership, hopefully.

One great idea from the Department of Tennessee is to host a turkey shoot fundraiser to purchase and deliver Christmas gifts to children with special needs. Another post sells \$20 tickets to raffle boxes of meats, such as filet mignon or chicken, et cetera.

One post contacted the Department of Health and Human Services to get the addresses of needy families to bring donations to them directly and to donate clothing to women and men in shelters for their job interviews. Some posts host a monthly free lunch or dinner for any veteran to attend. It is a great way to encourage membership.

The Department of Alaska and other states participate in a campaign called Eyes of Freedom Dot-Com where they perform public rituals to memorialize those who served. This campaign can involve the media where members carry the deceased veteran's or fallen soldier's dog tags to the end of a parade or to the top of a mountain, such as Gold Star Peak, where the theme constantly changes. One time its gold star members families that placed the dog tags of their family member on the mountain and other it is another group.

So this committee meeting was well worth attending. Everyone shared and took away ideas. This my report. I move for its adoption.

Motion

PNC KING: Second, King.

CMDR CLARK: We have a motion and a second to accept the report. Any questions? Comments?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried. Jack.

National Civil Service and Veterans by Jack Isaacson

MR. ISAACSON: I am Jack Isaacson, National Civil Service and Veterans Employment Committee. We met in Room BOSB7E on August 6th. Although we did not have a quorum, we had a discussion, and we covered the -- we did not have any direct resolutions or CBLs to discuss.

The business that we had, we have a project with the Employer of the Year Award. It has had some glitches in the application process, along with a related software kind of issue, which we are familiar with.

Anyway, we had some reviews and people decided that we should promote the program better and make the form easier to complete to get more people to participate. That is most of what was covered in the program.

Is there any questions about that program? That is my report, and I am waiting for its adoption.

CMDR CLARK: Thank you, Jack.

MR. ISAACSON: Approval.
Motion

CMDR CLARK: Please go to a microphone. We can't hear you.

MR. ASHLEY: Second, Ashley.

CMDR CLARK: We have a motion and second. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes".)

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried.

Do you see anyone else for any reports?

MR. MARTEL: I have one, Commander.

CMDR CLARK: Andy.

National Armed Services and Military Liaison by Andy Martel

MR. MARTEL: Good morning. Andy Martel, Department of Maryland. I chaired the National Armed Service and Military Liaison Committee. There were four members in that committee. Three of the members were in attendance. So we did have a quorum. How about that.

Unfortunately, there were no resolutions or constitutional bylaws or changes referred to my committee. Nonetheless we took a look at all of the resolutions that were in the book and we discussed and recommended for five of the seven that are back there. And having done all that, we managed to adjourn at 10:50 this

morning.

Thank you very much. That is my report, and I move for its adoption.
Motion

VOICE: Second, Florida. ----.

CMDR CLARK: All right. We have a motion and a second. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes".)

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried.

Any announcements? I know we have Dr. Fisher here who wanted to make a few comments. Are you still here?

DR. FISHER: I am still here. Commander, I am here. Thank you, Commander, for having me here.

Comments by Dr. Joann Fisher

DR. FISHER: Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Dr. Joann Fisher, and I am a member of the Department of Maryland. I am also the CEO of the Women's Veterans Committee.

What I came here for today is that my organization has put together a plan to take 25 women to France. To France. And the reason is because -- I brought it here because I wanted AMVETS to support this so we could focus on women. Women in my private organization. We have already brought it to my department. I didn't ask them for money. I asked them to support us, and they said they would.

But what this is telling you is that the chair of my organization led 300. She was married and she and her husband were in the military, but she went to war. And she had children and her mother that she cared for when she went there.

My oldest daughter went to war three times, and she is in my organization. My youngest daughter sailed on three ships. And we have a young woman from Washington D.C. She is the first Purple Heart recipient. And when she delivered a truckload of military to the airport, her face was shot up. Okay?

These are the women that we deal with. Why do we want to go to France? We want to honor all of those from when we were established

in 1948. We want to honor all of those who served who were women. Women!

We would like for all of you to look at this. We would like for the department to support us, to make a donation, but I also want to ask the chapters to get involved; to increase your membership by focusing on family. Our children aren't patriotic. By doing this, by showing that their mothers and grandmothers served, we can ask them to be patriotic. This is about patriotism and loyalty.

My name is Dr. Joann Fisher, and I am very serious and I accomplished my mission. And, Commander, I want to thank you for supporting us. For supporting women! This is about women! We served. Come on, women. Say something out here. Our Purple Heart! We served!

(Applause)

DR. FISHER: Thank you. Thank you.

MR. CHENELLY: It is tough to come up after that one.

I want to remind everyone for Silver Helmet tonight it is a ticketed event. There are no more tickets on sale, and we had to guarantee the number to the hotel a few days ago. I know some of you and some of the other members of the AMVETS family still have some tickets that are extra that might be willing to sell, for those who are still looking for tickets.

It is in the Grand Ballroom in the Lincoln Hotel. The first level there.

VOICE: It is hard to hear you back here, sir.

MR. CHENELLY: Move a little closer?

(Laughter)

MR. CHENELLY: Silver Helmet tonight in the Grand Ballroom at 7:00. The tickets are not for sale from us anymore. We have sold all the ones we can sell. If you need to pick your tickets up in advance, they are up in the Horner's Suite, which is the National Headquarters office up on the second level of the Lincoln. There will be a table tonight, of course, outside of the ballroom tonight to pick up tickets as you are coming in.

Also, the Women's Veterans Committee. This is the actual time and place. It is still in the same place on the agenda, but it will be 5:00 p.m. on Thursday evening; 5:00 p.m. in the room that is listed in the agenda.

We do have a business meeting in here, of course, tomorrow morning. It will be a legislative panel. So it is going to look a little bit

different when you come in. You will be in the right room. I promise you it will be interesting. Thank you, Commander.

So there are no more tickets left for the banquet either. We did very well on sales. But again, we had to -- that is obviously a full meal. We had to let them know back on Monday what the head count was on that.

Again, I would encourage you -- if you do need more tickets, there have been people who are stopping by the office that are selling tickets. There are people over on the Facebook group as well who are selling tickets, if you need more tickets, but we cannot sell anymore.

And those tickets are also in the Horner's Suite. They will also be available at registration and, of course, there will be a table outside the banquet hall that night.

(Pause)

CMDR CLARK: Any other announcements from anyone?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Please rise for the Benediction.

Benediction by Chaplain Milton Allen

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: Please do me a huge favor. Back there in the back there is a chaplain's table. I don't want to take anything home with me. So please take as much as you like. We are down to our last what, Leanne? We have got half a box left. We came with six and a half boxes. So, please take it. Please. I don't want to take it back with me.

I want to ask you a huge favor. You all know each other that belong to different departments. This week I want to ask you to meet five people. One person a day. A new person that you don't already know. All right? Do some networking. All right? Please.

(Prayer)

(Chorus of "amen.")

Honors to the Colors by Provost Marshal Art Majors

PROVOST MARSHAL MAJORS: AMVETS, attention. Hand salute.

(Honors to the Colors.)

CMDR CLARK: We will recess until 10:30 tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 4:36

AMVETS 79th Annual Convention

Second Business Session
Meeting Minutes



Thursday,
August 8, 2024

Held at the
President Abraham Lincoln DoubleTree Hotel
Springfield, Illinois

**Morning Session
(10:30 a.m.)**

**Call to Order
by Commander Bill Clark**

CMDR CLARK: I call the 2nd Business Session to order. Please take your seats.

Provost Marshal, check the hallway, and we will call the session to order.

Please rise for the Invocation.

**Invocation
by Chaplain Milton Allen**

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: Good morning, family.

(Chorus of "good morning.")

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: As the Chaplains come to the dais, I want to thank all of you for coming out yesterday to the memorial service. As I read the names, I forgot someone. So I would like to ask you to join me in a moment of silence before I do the Invocation.

I forgot to mention PNC Kenneth Wolford yesterday. I forgot that. So, please, forgive me. And I would just like to have a moment for him.

(Moment of silence.)

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: Let us pray.

(Prayer)

(Chorus of "amen.")

**Honors to the Colors
by Provost Marshal Art Majors**

PROVOST MARSHAL MAJORS: AMVETS, attention. Hand salute.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

CMDR CLARK: I have one announcement to make. As you know, my project this year is to raise funds for the conversion and upfit of the program at the charities board for our veterans and families support facility, and last night we had an idea for a fundraiser.

Our Past National Commander Greg Heun is going to get a big boy haircut, and he is going to do that for donations.

(Laughter)

CMDR CLARK: The minimum for him to get the haircut is \$500; to raise 500. We have a \$20 donation so far. And secondly, we have a lady from Illinois, whose name I did not, but she has beautiful, long, dark hair. If she is

here, would you please stand up. There she is.

(Jean Henning standing.)

CMDR CLARK: And she will shave her head for a minimum of \$500. Give the monies to our Financial Officer, Kelly McFarland, and make sure you say which way it is going here. I have 20 for each one. Thank you for your participation.

(Pause)

CMDR CLARK: All right. So now, I would like to introduce our 3rd Vice Commander Sandy Vorhies.

(Applause)

Congressional Staffers Panel Discussion

3RD VICE CMDR VORHIES: Good morning family. I am so glad you joined us this morning because I think you are going to get a real good pleasure of legislation.

So with us this morning I would like to introduce the gentleman who leads the team on the Hill on our behalf, Justin Brown. If you can come forward. And then Justin is going to introduce the individuals who are going to be before you this morning.

But please remember the work that they do. When we are not there, they are continuously in those halls for us. They are the ones that are helping us make the difference for our veterans. So just keep that in mind. Justin.

(Applause)

**Congressional Staffers Panel Discussion
Introductions by Justin Brown**

MR. BROWN: Good morning. How is everyone doing? All right. Is everybody having a real good convention so far? Did everybody make it over to Lincoln's house?

All right. Well, this is a very political place by nature. You obviously have a number of presidents who have spent a fair amount of time. Certainly Lincoln and Obama come to mind. There are probably others.

For the House Veterans Affairs Committee we actually have two members who represent the districts right here. Ted Zinski* and then Chairman Bost, who is going to be joining us tomorrow.

I couldn't be more proud to have spent many years advocating and working for AMVETS since I last left the House Veterans Affairs Committee. We have gotten a lot of good work done. We have done a lot of work on mental health. We have gotten a lot of money

for non-profits who are trying to bring down the numbers related to mental health and suicide issues that I know you all feel so strongly about.

We are going to continue that fight on the Hill. We have continued to have conversations, and we are trying to get new legislation introduced. We are, obviously, ending kind of the end of this congress, but we are trying to get some new bills introduced so that we can really hit the ground running as we move into this next new congress.

But we have continued to fight on mental health, suicide, women veteran issues. Of course, we have a tax bill that we have been working on for a number of years that got passed out of the Ways and Means Committee. I got passed 52 to nothing. Forty-two. I am off by 10. Forty-two to nothing. And that is a tax bill. And if you know anything about politics in America, the two parties don't really agree on taxes.

But we have received word that our tax bill, which will allow all of our posts to receive tax deductible charitable gifts, is going to be considered when we come back from recess, hopefully in September, to be voted out of the House, and that is a big deal.

(Applause)

MR. BROWN: Joe was up there on the Hill with us as we watched that get passed out of committee, and we have even had conversations with Senator Chuck Schumer's staff with regards to how we are going to try get this done, you know, in the closing minutes of the Senate. It is going to be tough, but we are doing everything we can to make that happen.

Commander Clark, Paul Shipley, Horace, Sandy, it is a real honor to work with all of you guys. You know, we have got a fun choice this November. You know, you are basically voting for an enlisted Marine or an enlisted Army guy. So that is what the election comes down to. I am kind of kidding.

We also have three Marines joining us today. We didn't really plan it like that. We probably should have been a little more diverse. I know, I know. But you have got Navy and me and Danielle is an Air Force brat. So ...

Well, without further ado, I would like to get into this conversation. We are super excited to have three very senior and incredible long-time advocates for veterans on the Hill. I have known all of them for an number of years, and we are super lucky to have them and have this conversation.

First, I would like to recognize and invite to join us, Jon VanderPlas. He is General Coun-

sel on Senator Jerry Moran's staff for the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. He joined the team in April '23, and I am proud to leverage his prior experience in the Marine Corps, on Capitol Hill and the Executive Branch in the benefit of our nation's veterans. He has done a ton of work with dear old vets in a number of different capacities.

Please welcome to the stage Jon VanderPlas.

(Applause)

MR. BROWN: Second I would like to invite someone I have known for a long, long time and used to play softball with on our Hill Vets Softball team. He is a Senior Policy Advisor for the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, has served six years in the Marine Corps, is a Civil Affairs NCO, a former Lead Government Strategist for --- Corporation, a former National Legislative Service Director for the VFW.

He focuses on disability compensation, pension benefits, Board of Veterans Appeals, Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. Please welcome to the stage Mr. Carlos Fuentes.

(Applause)

MR. BROWN: I have known this guy and also played softball with this young gentleman for quite a number of years. Deputy Staff Director for the House Veterans Affairs Committee, former Senior VP of Government Relations for Career Education Colleges and Universities. He also worked on the Budget Committee for a number of years, a former Senior Policy Advisor on Defense Veterans Affairs, Foreign Affairs to several members of Congress portfolio. He focuses on the VA's annual budget and acts as a liaison for Chairman Bost between other committees. He does a ton of things.

Please welcome to the stage Mr. Steve Gonzalez.

(Applause)

MR. BROWN: Last but not least, I am excited to have our rockstar moderating this panel. Danielle is moving on her second year of working with me and the AMVETS family. She has been working with AMVETS on fundraising and legislative roles for the past year and a half.

She is an Air Force brat and a proud supporter of vet community. She interned on Capitol Hill before completing her BA and MA programs, returning to the world of policy with the Nimitz Group. And she works hand-in-hand with Sandy making sure everybody is up to date on what is happening. If you are not on Sandy's legislative list -- if you are on

Sandy's legislative list, are you guys getting the emails? All right. We have got a lot of people to get on those emails. So let's connect with Sandy and Danielle and make sure you are getting those updates.

Danielle has also started doing our notifications with regards to any bills that we need; phone calls and letters put to members of Congress. Or action alerts. So if you are not on those lists, please get with me or Danielle or Sandy. We are going to make that happen.

But, a true rockstar. Please welcome to the stage, Ms. Danielle Forand.

(Applause)

MR. BROWN: All right guys. I am going to turn it over to Danielle. Give her a warm round of applause.

(Applause)

Congressional Staffers Panel Discussion by Danielle Forand

MS. FORAND: Good morning everyone. Can you hear me?

(Chorus of "no.")

MS. FORAND: How about now? Can we hear me now?

(Chorus of "no.")

MS. FORAND: Good morning. Can we hear me?

(Chorus of "yes.")

MS. FORAND: Thank you. Thank you all for being here today. This is going to be a great panel. We hope we can offer some insights. This panel is officially called Your District D.C., Insights from Capitol Hill Staff.

We are joined by AMVETS members and supporters across the country who want to learn more about the work that each of you do and how you are trying to solve the problems that they see veterans facing on a daily basis.

Now you all also started somewhere before eventually deciding to come to Washington, D.C. Whether that was working for a specific member of Congress, tackling a certain issue area or just trying to get your foot in the door, what about working on Capitol Hill first appealed to you when you first started out?

MR. GONZALEZ: Can you hear me? Barely? Keep it close. Fair enough.

My name is Steve Gonzalez. Let me first make sure I make something very clear too. Justin

is an advocate for all of you. So I want to say thank you to him for always engaging with us and being very helpful. I will say also being a voice and advocate for all of you who don't have a voice, who don't live in D.C., that is something that is very critical for us to know, to watch, to see, to hear and to understand, which helps us as policy advisors to our respective members of Congress. And I work directly for Jim Bost, which all of you will see tomorrow.

That being said, thank you, Justin and Danielle, for always engaging with us. It is very helpful.

As far as for me, I think -- after coming from Afghanistan I went to college. I saw a lot of basically bullshit ideas on paper that everyone thought is great because it looks awesome; somebody in a think tank wrote the paper. But when you try to operationalize those papers into actual policies, into areas that just didn't work, I wanted to understand who were the people in the room making those decisions and coming up with ideas.

That led to me to coming to D.C. My first job actually was with the American Legion. So I worked for the Legion for roughly three years to get me in the room, and then after that I was basically recruited by -- I think some of you might know a gentleman by the name of Paul Ryan. He recruited me to be his advisor and then, of course, later some of the other members of the House Budget Committee to oversee the VA's budget and the Defense budget.

That allowed me to be in the room and have those conversations and advise people to have a better sense of what actually works. Not just for when you are in-service, but when you leave service. Right? We owe a debt, and we owe a debt.

And I think the World War II generation, who created the GI Bill, as you read their testimony, you read how they presented the idea that that would never happen to the World War II veterans and beyond, what occurred to the World War I veterans; is if you serve your country, how do we make you whole again for something that maybe you could have become had you not served your country? And how do we do that?

And being in the room, I've always been taught if you are not in the room, you're going to -- if you don't create the menu, you're going to be on the menu. That's just the bottom line.

So for me that's what led me to where I am today. I've been fortunate enough to make a name for myself and be that veteran, but also be usually the veteran in the room. At least on the House side. I don't want to speak for the

Senate. I do have my counterparts who are veterans in the same committee.

But I think that they will attest to that when you get out of the Veterans Affairs Committee, you rarely, rarely see people at our levels in the room helping understand what is best for or advocating for policies that do and should be helping the masses of veterans who are seeking care within the VA, making sure you get the benefits you've earned and try to make sure we hold the VA accountable where they're not screwing you over because they're too busy thinking that everything -- they're the smartest people in the room and not doing what they're supposed to be doing at VA hospitals or delivering the benefits and taking care of themselves sometimes at the cost of all of you. So that's what led me to where I am today.

(Applause)

MR. VANDERPLAS: That's a tough one to follow up. A little background on me. I'm Jon VanderPlas. I'm from the Midwest. From Michigan. I went to law school here in Illinois, and then it was the Marine Corps that brought me to D.C. I served at the Pentagon. I met my wife while I was working there. She's from Northern Virginia, and we knew, when I got out, that we wanted to settle down in the area.

I wanted to find more meaningful work. I continued to serve and looked to the Hill for that and found a Marine in former Congressman Mike Kaufman, of the Denver, Colorado area.

At the time he was the Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Oversight and Investigation Subcommittee. It was 2014 and we were in the middle of breaking the patient waitlist crisis. Very meaningful work there.

I have then had the opportunity to represent and work for the State of Illinois through Senator Mark Kirk's office. I'm an Illinois attorney and going to his office seemed like a great career step for me and opened the door to more policy work. I worked for him for a couple of years.

When he lost his reelection bid, I had the honor and privilege to join the Trump Administration and work at the Veterans Employment and Training Service at DOL as Chief of Staff. It was a great perspective to come in and serve in the executive branch and get to know what it's like to run an agency, to go through the budget process, to make policy changes that then you can see through the implementation of.

One of the things we did there that I'm most proud is create this employment navigator program so that through the transition

assistance program transitioning service members at a growing number of bases now have employment counselors that they can go and work with any day of the week. They can schedule office hours and go in and meet with a counselor rather than just having that transition assistance program crash course, check the box one-week program.

And that's continued through the Biden Administration. They may be taking a little more credit for it than I'd like to see, but that's okay. I just wanted to see it carry forward. And so when President Biden included it in his State of the Union remarks at his first State of the Union, I was blown away. So it's been fun to see that grow.

I then went and lobbied for a while for a company called ID-Me, which you might be familiar with. When you're logging in to VA.gov, you can go through ID-Me, an identity verification service. They went through a bit of turmoil on the Hill as they grew as a company, and I got to establish their government affairs shop.

And then I had a buddy call me who I worked with in Senator Kirk's office. He was serving as General Counsel for Ranking Member Moran of Kansas on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. And he said, hey, Jon, I'm going to the personnel office for a new gig. Do you have any interest in my job?

And at first I said no. I'm finally making some really good money to support my family. I would love to do that, but I don't think I could convince my wife of it right now, and I don't think I should.

And then I hung up the phone. We finished that conversation, and the thought just kept brewing in my mind of how meaningful that work would be, how good it would be to go back in that role and be able to dig in on oversight and investigations again of the Department of Veterans Affairs where we all know a bureaucracy so large has a number of issues. So many issues that one could never really tackle them all, which is fantastic work.

So after a few weeks I gave him a call back and said, hey, Mark, is that job still open, because I would love it. My wife was supportive at that point as well. And he said it is, come in and interview with a couple of folks and the Senator, and I did that and joined the team last April and it has been great work ever since.

The number of issues I could get into are too many to count. Most recently with this budget shortfall where VA, for months, knew that they were blowing through the amount of money that Congress provided that they asked for, but they chose to wait to tell Congress about it until an hour after the gavel hit on the

Senate Appropriations Committee's work on the Mil-Con-VA Budget.

Senator Moran is livid about it. He is going to make sure that Congress does provide that funding and veterans don't miss out on their benefits or have them delayed. But that kind of behavior can't be tolerated, and I might be able to get into that more a little bit as we progress through some more questions here. Thanks.

(Applause)

MR. FUENTES: So, Jon, are you taking all of the VA login complaints? Because I've got a couple for you if you want.

MR. VANDERPLAS: Those are probably coming through that login.gov service. I wouldn't use that one.

MR. FUENTES: All right.

Thank you all for the kind introduction and for allowing me to be here. Again, my name is Carlos Fuentes. I could tell you the story of how I got here, but in short, I'm just a dumb Marine that got lucky.

Steve and Jon kind of went into some of the examples that we are able to have working with you as our eyes and ears out on the ground. Telling us what is important to veterans, what we need to be focused on, what bills we should be pushing is invaluable.

I had the pleasure of working on many bills that have later on made a huge impact. Do we have any Blue Water Navy vets in the room? Do you remember how hard that was, right, trying to get that passed? Sometimes there are some knuckleheads over in Congress that just can't get out of the way to make that happen. Right?

I might be, you know, some type of masochist because enjoy that. Right? Specifically the after effect of seeing our brothers and sisters getting those benefits they deserve. With your help I think we can continue to do that. Right?

Senator Tester has put me in charge of spearheading his efforts on the Richard Star Act. Do we have any medical retirees here? Chapter 61 retirees?

(No response.)

MR. FUENTES: I'm surprised. I'm very surprised. Any retirees in general? All right, all right. We have got some retirees.

But, you know, the whole issue of having your retirement pay deducted, right? That has been around forever, and hopefully, we can make

some progress. But that is what keeps me going. That is the reason I'm here, is to ensure that we continue to make a difference for you all. For my brother and sisters that I served with. So thank you for having me.

(Applause.)

MS. FORAND: You all kind of touched on this, but I kind of want to go a little deeper. The past few years have certainly been eventful, and the challenges in American politics and governance have only increased.

Question 1

Reflecting on why you first got involved, what motivates you to keep engaging with constituents and on the Hill and to stay in this line of work? Do you have anything to add to any of your previous comments?

MR. GONZALEZ: I think for me it's more of a kid from Brooklyn being in D.C. It is more of a -- I look at it more as we are the voices for folks who don't have a voice. Right?

Everybody talks about, yes, we can all petition our government. That is your constitutional right. But let's not kid ourselves. You have powerful D.C. lobbyist, you have big corporations, you have different people with different voices.

However, when you have one individual that you can help and make a difference and impact, that's what it's about, and I think Carlos and Jon talked about; is what can we do in our current roles to help those who have no voice, needs the help and not realize that we're trying to make a positive impact?

And this is not about politics. This is about what D.C. is supposed to be about. It's helping our fellow citizens, our fellow neighbors, our fellow -- you know, in this case brothers and sisters and arms.

And I think in my role, and I won't speak for Jon and Carlos, but I think they would also agree, is we do not take our roles for granted. We are given a privilege. We represent awesome bosses. And, yes, they don't always agree on policy, but what they do all agree about is they all do love their country and they all want to do what's best for folks in their respective congressional districts, or in this case their states.

But at the end of the day I think they want to do what's best for the country and for the masses and in continuing to help provide and have a positive impact for as many people as they can. And that's why I continue to do this, because I am privileged and I am honored to be able to be in that role and have those conversations and hopefully make a positive

impact that I can leave a better world when I do decide to have a family.

MR. VANDERPLAS: I fully agree with Steve and echo on that. It's about how meaningful the work is, being able to drive change that's to the benefit of all Americans and to American veterans. I've always been drawn to the work of the Veterans Affairs Committee because I enjoy how bipartisan it is. Sure we run into some issues, but compared to some other committees on the Hill, we work across the aisle very well, which enables us to get things done.

Going to serve in the Trump Administration, as volatile as that was in the beginning, it was -- I was going to serve at the Veterans Employment and Training Service. I didn't need to worry about the noise in D.C. and the noise around the White House, whichever perspective you're taking to those things, because I was able to focus on the mission. And I've always been missioned focused and really enjoy the work.

There's always more to do. That's the hardest thing, is figuring out when and how to set down the pen or stop typing at the keyboard and go home, because there is just always more to do and it's very rewarding.

MR. FUENTES: The only thing I'll add is sign up for Sandy's list. I saw the hands that weren't up. You know, my boss likes to say we take our cues -- or he takes his cues from veterans, and that cannot be more true. Specifically on the Veterans Affairs Committee.

So I urge you all to be active. You know, tell us what we're doing right and what we're doing wrong. Right? With your team, Justin and Joe, you know, in D.C. we continue to have a strong relationship to ensure that we're doing right by you all. But please, you know, we need to hear directly from you as well. Make sure that you attend those townhalls that you attend, that you attend -- that you send, you know, those action alerts to your members of Congress. So thank you.

MS. FORAND: Great. Thanks you guys so much.

Question 2

MS. FORAND: Over the past several years AMVETS has consistently testified on our top legislative priorities to the Veterans Affairs Committees. These include preventing veteran suicide, exploring innovative mental health treatments, advocating for women veterans, supporting survivors and ensuring that the VA delivers timely benefits and quality care.

What actions have you seen Congress take on these issues during your time on the Hill

and can you mention what ongoing efforts are being made?

MR. VANDERPLAS: So I'll jump in here on some of the work that Senator Moran has done in the mental health space with the Veterans Crisis Line. So late last year we heard from a whistleblower who wanted to share some information learned while working at the Veterans Crisis Line in a very high level position, and our jaws dropped when we learned when we learned what that whistleblower had to share.

We learned about a subunit that they created within the Veterans Crisis Line called the Caller with Complex Needs Unit where the responder staff would send crisis callers. If they didn't know how to help or they weren't sure they could help that veteran or the veteran was too difficult for any reason, they would forward that caller to the Caller with Complex Needs Unit.

We learned from that whistleblower and then another seven more that that Caller with Complex Needs Unit, when a veteran arrived there, they would sit on hold for minutes. And if they dropped off, they wouldn't be called back. So who knows how many veterans tried to seek help through the Veterans Crisis Line but ended up receiving no help at all.

This issue was so large as it came to us and corroborated by so many whistleblowers that we knew we could do one of two things. Try to take on an investigation completely ourselves with a small number of staff or call in the Government Accountability Office where a full cadre of federal investigators and auditors could look into the Caller with Complex Needs Unit and meet with staff from across that agency and get to the root cause through the data and technology that they have.

And Senator Moran initiated that investigation by the Government Accountability Office late last year. The Comptroller General of the United States, the head of the GAO, came in to meet with him about a week later and said that he'd make sure that his team pushes their other work to the side enough to be able to launch that investigation right away.

We've been getting updates from GAO on a bimonthly basis, and they expect to be able to wrap up and publish a report early next year that we're eagerly awaiting and looking forward to having hearings on and working alongside them to make sure we can address those issues and make sure that the Veterans Crisis Line runs the way that it should.

MR. FUENTES: I'll add, you know, we are thankful for you all when you do come to D.C. Right? Commander Clark was right next to Senator Tester when we had a press conference

on the Rich Star Act. Right?

You know, I could name so many pieces of legislation that you all have been instrumental in pushing. You know, Scott Hannon in addressing mental health care. I know that suicide prevention continues to be a top priority for AMVETS, and it is for us as well. It is a complex problem, but I think together we can certainly find some type of solutions to ensure that veterans aren't dying by suicide.

Other things like the Careers Act, which I know is bolstering VA recruitment, is a priority for AMVETS and a number of others. So again, that's why I'm here and that's why I continue to do the work that I do, because of that impact. You know, I'm happy to get into any specific ones, but thank you.

MR. VANDERPLAS: I would say a couple of things. One thing I would say right off the jump is Justin has been very -- I don't want to say aggressive. I think that's the wrong word. But he's been very much an individual who has pushed us to think outside the box.

So I know, for instance, we're working with him on your behalf to discuss how are we spending the money? Is the money being spent correctly? Is the programs and policies that VA currently employs, is it working?

So to give you an example, it would be the Fox Grants. Right? That's a particular issue area. I think it would pass before my time. So I couldn't get into all the details of how that came about.

But where we are today is we're looking at do you need to reauthorize it. That's within our respective jurisdictions of committees. Senate and House. Do we need to reauthorize it? And if we do, are we just going to rubberstamp it and do the same shit over and over again? Or are we going to look at it and really looking at these things and say, okay, what is not working and what needs to work?

So something like that I know my health subcommittee team has been working heavily with Justin to figure out, with your priorities in mind, what are some of the things that do need to change.

And then, of course, working with our counterparts within the Veterans Affairs Committee to try to make it bipartisan and bicameral and have those discussions. But also, Chairman Bost has tasked his subcommittee chairman and chairwoman, for whether it's health, whether it's DAMA, whether it's even economic opportunities.

So Representative Van Orden, Latrell, Mary Miller Meeks. I know, for instance, Representative Jack Bergman, who is also a senior

member of the committee.

Are there alternatives, right, a one size fits all that might have worked 20 or 30 years ago? We live in a different era, a different environment. What works for you might not work for me. What works for Carlos doesn't work for you. What is the VA doing?

And if a one size doesn't fit all, then is the VA deploying and employing every opportunity and every resource available to ensure that we can save another life of an individual before they commit suicide?

So those are things that I know Chairman Bost -- and you're going to hear him speak about this. He'll go more into detail. So I don't want to take his thunder either. He's my boss. That never works out well. I want to make sure that, you know, he has tasked everything from staff to even his fellow members, and I will say his top lieutenants of the subcommittees to look into these things. To work together.

And then also, to work across the aisle and to see what is out there. How do we work together?

But I think the biggest thing too is something Chairman Bost has tasked the committee to do from our end is if something is not working, why is it not working? Why are we spending hundreds or millions of dollars on something that's not working? And instead, how can we make something work for those that it's supposed to work for?

How do we ensure that the veteran doesn't come to a hospital and feel so despaired, feels so -- he has or she has no other more outlets that the only option they have is to take their lives. That is what Chairman Bost has tasked us to do from up and down.

And I will say it's not just from a committee perspective, but again, like Jon and Carlos has mentioned, is how do we work with all of you as advocates and also through Justin, who advocates, again, heavily for you guys, letting us know what's working and not working?

The other thing I would add to a comment Carlos said. Numbers matter. If you have not signed on to your newsletter, I hate to break it to you, what we don't know, is what you don't know. So you can have 10,000 members. But if we only see 200 members send us newsletter, guess what? We don't see the other 8,000 or 9,000 of you and you voicing your opinion on why we should do something, advocating and petition your government.

So I would say also, and Carlos is correct, if you haven't signed up, sign up. I'll just leave it there, Danielle.

MS. FORAND: Yeah. I'll reiterate about the newsletter and the recently launched AMVETS Legislative Action Center. If you have had not had the chance to check those out, those are great resources.

And all the bills that Carlos and all the other panelists are mentioning about, the Richard Star Act, the Careers Act, the Fox Grants, if those are unfamiliar terms to you, the newsletter and the action Center are great places to go to learn more about the bills that AMVETS supports on the national level and to see how those might impact you on the local level.

We do have one campaign active right now, and that's for the Vet Act, which we've mentioned. It's the tax bill. And we've had an amazing rate of success with contacting senators and reaching out to them via letters and phone calls, and those things matter. And we've had new cosponsors sign on because of the work that you all did filling those out.

So this is where it really matters, and I just want to emphasize that. We're here for you, but you all -- it's a reciprocal relationship, and we can't do the work we do and have the context that we need to be successful on the Hill without all of you. Yeah. And I'll stop that plug there. I'm happy to talk about it at a later point if any of you feel the desire. All right. Well, thank you.

We are getting close to wrapping up. We have two more questions left.

Question 3

MS. FORAND: Each of you have priorities that you work on in your offices, whether that's your bosses' priorities or personal priorities that you have a passion for. What are some of these and how have you seen them evolve during your time on the Hill?

MR. VANDERPLAS: I will say I don't have a personal priority. My priorities are I advise. The Chairman sets the priorities based on what he wants to accomplish. Now we do adjust. He's given us the authority, as the deputy for the committee, on how to execute that. He has three very simple rules. Right? As long as it's not illegal, immoral or unethical, make it happen and help veterans at all costs.

I will say though the top priority for the Chairman and the committee is the Dole Act. It's something that I will say my two counterparts here and their respective principals kind of negotiated. It is bipartisan. It is bicameral. It is something that has a swat of things.

Everything from taking care of homeless veterans, readjusting them back into society and higher education. So making sure you're having upper mobility and socioeconomic;

mental health. So there's different aspects of the Dole Act that I think is priority that I know that the Chairman himself has spoken to Leader Scalise about, and they are having discussions. So it's gotten to that level of what is the best pathway forward, how do we get it accomplished?

And, of course, Leader Scalise is equally supportive in trying to figure out sequencing and how do we get that on the floor at some point down the road and hopefully before the Congress ends.

In addition to that, I think another priority for Chairman Bost is to Jon's point; was I'm a budget guy. So what the hell went wrong? How do you have a shortfall of \$3 billion on the mandatory side, which is our earned benefits, and potentially another 11 or 12 billion in health care costs?

And to Jon's point, I will also say we've had the Secretary testify before the committee. We've had their CFO or their -- the top accounting person. We've had multiple people testify not just to us, but to our appropriators, and they dropped the ball. It's a failure. They can say whatever they want to say. Someone screwed up.

And to Jon's point, we agree, and the Chairman has written a letter to the Secretary, is where was the screw-up? And it's not about -- and this is not saying that they're not going to get their money. There are questions to be asked. This is taxpayer dollars.

We want to make sure that going into a next Congress, regardless of who takes the administration and regardless of who takes the House and the Senate, and we can talk about politics down the road, is this can never happen again. The agency had several different opportunities to talk before the House and the Senate on several committees, markups, legislative, even in their presidential budget request to Congress, and they somehow still screwed this up.

It is a failure. They can say whatever they want. So accountability. So his priority is making sure that the VA is taken care of so they can take care of you, but we can't have this happen again. It's just unacceptable in general, and I'll leave it there.

MR. VANDERPLAS: I will just quickly add that it doesn't help at all that it came right on the heel of these executives trying to give themselves bonuses out of the PACT Act Critical Care Incentive Program.

Senator Moran introduced a bill late last week that you might not have seen yet called the Stop Greed Act, the Stop Government Rewards Enriching Executives in the District Act, to make sure that the VA cannot, again,

award senior executives out of the PACT Act Critical Skill Incentives.

We think it makes sense to attach something like that to a budget supplemental. We'll see if we're able to get there.

But back to the question, Carlos, do you want to take it on priorities before I go?

MR. FUENTES: I'm happy to. How many of you have heard about this budget shortfall issue?

(Show of hands.)

MR. FUENTES: All right. Are any of you concerned that you're not going to get your benefits?

VOICE: All the time.

MR. FUENTES: And what I can tell you, guarantee you, is that our two counterparts there and our bosses are going to fight like hell to make sure that you don't see the impact of this mismanagement. We'll hold them accountable and make sure that this doesn't happen again, but our priority is to make sure that you're not impacted. Right? Because it's not your fault. Right?

I know that many of you are relying on that, those benefits, to feed your families and to take of your folks. So just be assured that is our number one priority at the moment, to make sure that you get your benefits on October 1st.

VOICE: Who got fired?

MR. FUENTES: What's that?

VOICE: Who got fired?

MR. FUENTES: We did fire them? Is that what you're saying?

VOICE: Who got fired?

MR. FUENTES: Somebody's got to get fired.

MR. GONZALEZ: I think someone will get moved around. No one is going to get fired. That's the VA's way.

MR. FUENTES: We'll see. So I also have another ask. Where is Kentucky? Anyone from Kentucky in the room?

(Show of hands.)

MR. FUENTES: All right. Anyone from New York in the room?

(Show of hands.)

MR. FUENTES: All right. I need your help. Right? because Richard Star is a priority for you all. The Richard Star Act is a priority for us. It hasn't gotten a vote. It's got 72 co-sponsors. Right? Getting 72 senators -- 73 I think it is. Getting 73 senators to agree on one thing is very, very difficult in this climate.

We need Senator Schumer and Senator McConnell to agree to vote. And if you all can go back, all of you all, go back to your Senators and tell them, hey, Richard Star needs a vote, I would greatly appreciate it. Because that is one of our priorities. Right?

And like I said before, you all are the ones that hold the power, and you guys are the ones that set the priority. If you all let them know that that's a priority, hopefully it will get a vote. I mean, more than a guarantee that it will pass if it gets a vote.

VOICE: (Away from microphone.)

MR. FUENTES: So sorry. The Richard Star Act. Military retirees, right, if you -- well, if you are -- if you did over 20 years and have a VA disability of 50 percent or more, you can get both your military retiree pay and your VA disability. Everyone else out of luck. Right?

Getting everyone included, unfortunately, is going to cost way too much. So we're taking this piecemeal approach of knocking at it as much as we can, and we're a five or six -- depending on who you believe, a \$6 billion bite out of a \$40 billion problem with the Richard Star Act, which is for folks who were injured in combat and were forced to retire because of disabilities. So the disabled retirees, the Chapter 61 retirees, would be covered under Richard Star.

Senator Tester has the larger one, the Retirement Restoration Act, as well, and we're going to continue pushing that. But acknowledging just the climate and what is feasible. You know, we want to push for Richard Star first and then come back and continue to push for the others. But I hope that makes sense, and I hope I didn't confuse folks.

MR. GONZALEZ: One other thing I would say for Chairman Bost, another priority too is -- and I know someone mentioned about the firing; joking on that. But Chairman Bost does have a bill, the Accountability Act, for when employees -- and this is just not this screw up. But any screw ups. Right?

And I have to say this, but for all of you. If you screw up to a point where you're harming someone, I'm pretty sure you won't have a job. Right? You're held accountable. It is what it is. You were held accountable in the military.

In the VA unfortunately, unless you're political, you just get moved around, and it's a one massive carousel and you see the same people over and over again doing the same exact shit over and over again.

So Chairman Bost is kind of fed up with that, and he wants to hold people accountable. Now this is not a broad brush approach where everyone -- you know, you need to get fired automatically. We are humans. We make mistakes. But someone who is making 10 mistakes, 20 mistakes? It's no longer a mistake. That's intentional. You're making a conscientious decision on how you're going to operate, how you're going to treat people.

Are you going to create hostile work environments? Are you going to allow scandals to go under your damn radar and not do anything about it and think, hey, I'm a bureaucrat, I'll be taken care of?

Chairman Bost wants to make sure that he holds those people accountable because they answer to you and they answer to the American taxpayer, and this game of D.C. politics bullshit has to go.

(Applause)

MS. FORAND: Well, thank you all. We are a little over time. So we're just going to wrap this up just with like one quick sentence from each of you.

Question 4

If there's a message that you could deliver to all veterans across the country and to the AMVETS members present, something that in your experience you wish more people knew about the work you do and the work Congress does, just real quick what is like your one sentence disclaimer for your role?

MR. GONZALEZ: Do you want to go first, Carlos? You haven't gone first yet.

(Laughter)

MR. FUENTES: Increase membership. Right? And sign up for Sandy's list.

MS. FORAND: There you go. All right. Jon.

MR. VANDERPLAS: Veterans should get care where and when they need it. Full stop.

MR. GONZALEZ: I agree with that. Choice is not something that should be ever taken away from you.

MS. FORAND: All right. Well, thank you all so much.

MR. GONZALEZ: And be engaged.

MS. FORAND: Yes. Be engaged. Thank you so much for listening. We will be around. Justin and I are here until Saturday. And if you see these people around, feel free to ask them more questions as well. But thank you all for listening and let us know how we can be helpful.

MR. JONES: Is the shortfall affecting the funding for our VA ----.

MR. FUENTES: It is. He asked is the shortfall impacting the VA centers, and it is. I think there's two aspects of it, right? The benefits side and the health care side.

I think the impact on the benefit side is more immediate. The VA has, you know, their shell game that they play for the health care side, but it is impacting their ability to hire folks to meet that need. And again, our goal is to make sure that you're not the ones who suffer the consequences for those types of issues. Right?

And I'll just add I have to do a mandatory plug for the PACT Act, which is my boss's -- one of his key priorities and key legislative wins. That was one of the things that we did there, is provide that funding, right, to ensure that we're not into these -- we don't have these problems. But, you know, it didn't work out the way it should, and that's what we're looking into to see how we can ensure that we're fixing it and that it doesn't happen again.

MR. GONZALEZ: I am going to sort of agree and disagree with my colleague, Carlos. The VA still has to answer questions. The shell game that they're playing just doesn't add up. And again, I will agree with Carlos. My boss, Chairman Bost, will continue to fight and make sure VA gets the resources they need.

But the shell game, as the VA gets very much larger in size and scope -- I mean, it has 400,000 employees. It's the largest health care system in the country. I will also say some of the accounting mechanics that they currently operate on just doesn't make sense, it doesn't add up and someone has to answer for that, and someone should be held accountable for the shell game that they're playing because you can't be cooking the books.

You've got to be honest with Congress to ensure Congress has the power of the purse in making sure that they get what they need, but don't play games with us either. You answer to Congress. That's the way the Constitution was built out. We are co-equal branches of government, and playing this game is not something that should be tolerated or acceptable.

MR. PIENING: I have a question. I am 82 years old, and I'm old school and it bothers me each and every day. I would like to see the

word entitlements put back into the language instead of benefits. I know we got comingled into the welfare system and so forth.

The American veteran is not on welfare. He or she is entitled to the benefits that they receive, and I --

(Applause)

MR. PIENING: And I would like to see the word entitlements put back into the language each and every day in Congress. Thank you.

3RD VICE CMDR VORHIES: JP.

PNC JP BROWN: JP Brown, Past National Commander. I'd just like to ask one question, and I don't care who answers it. I think I already know the answer, which I find a lot of BS in, but that's okay.

I got to the VA for 100 percent of my health care. I have good doctors. Most of us have good doctors. Very reliable. When we file for a disability claim, all of a sudden they're wasting money sending it to hundreds of doctors somewhere else out in the system to reevaluate. If the doctors at the VA are the caliber that they say they are, why the hell do they have to spend money for some outside doctor that sees you for four minutes and then sends you back?

That's a lot of malarkey, that's a lot of waste of money and a lot of waste time for the veteran. Thank you.

(Applause)

MS. FORAND: Thank you all for all of your questions. We will be around afterwards, and we don't want to cut into your business meeting time at all. A couple of us do have to get to the airport, but the rest of us will be around. So please feel free to come to us with your questions.

This is also a great opportunity for you to reach out to your individual congress people, if you do have specific concerns. But in the meantime, we will let everything resume as planned and thank you.

3RD VICE CMDR VORHIES: Please join me in thanking Danielle and the panel.

(Applause)

3RD VICE CMDR VORHIES: Just give us a second to get our officers up here, and we will resume our business session. Thank you.

(Pause)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Hello. Do you all want to take a few minutes for the restroom

and then come on back? Ten minutes. Pro-
vost, close the doors.

(Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: So I spoke
to the building engineer a few moments ago
and told him it was warm in this room. He
didn't know it. So he is turning it down, but it
probably won't be cool enough in here like it is
out in the hallway. Probably not until after we
come back from lunch. But it is in the works.
All right?

VOICE: Open those doors and let the air in.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Right.

All right. Can we start off by having -- we
need to have some committee meetings? Have
we got any committee meeting reports?

(No response.)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Didn't we have
some committees this morning? Do we have
some that was completed this morning?

VOICE: No.

VOICE: We should have some from yesterday,
Horace.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: From yester-
day?

(Pause)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: We have no
reports?

VOICE: The reports were yesterday.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Okay, okay.

(Pause)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Let's move
right along then. Let's do the awards. Pro-
grams. I mean, membership, come on up.

(Pause)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: On our agenda
we have awards for this afternoon. But since
we don't have any reports, we're going to do
the awards since they're all lined up. So we're
ahead a ways so we can get out of here early
this afternoon.

MR. COX: I think we're okay on getting out of
here a little early today, huh?

(Pause)

Membership Awards by 1st national Vice Commander Johnson and Warren Cox

MR. COX: Good morning family.

(Chorus of "good morning.")

MR. COX: This happens to be the best time
for me during the week when we get out some
acknowledgments and appreciations. The first
folks I want to thank -- we all know this has
been a challenging 2023/24 year, and I person-
ally want to thank Ms. Carol, my staff, Linda
and Callandra.

(Applause)

MR. COX: This is over 23 years of work-
ing, and Linda is over 24 and Callandra has
recently taken over as manager. She's doing an
outstanding job. I couldn't do it without you
all, and I really thank you.

(Applause)

MR. COX: With the challenging year that we
had with the spring thing, I want to personally
publicly acknowledge if Dana Dillon is here.
Is Dana Dillon in the house? Please stand.
Laura McFarlain? Is she in the house? Don
McCauley? Is he here? Please stand. Laura
Britton? Please stand. Karla Lathroum? Dean
Richards? And Bill Zellner? Please stand.

These are the folks I reached out to early on
when this thing was in its infant stages, and we
leaned on them to assist, to reach back out to
this company demanding answers and ques-
tions, and I'm sorry, guys. I know they haven't
emailed you and they're not going to email
you now. So it's a done deal. I just want to
publicly say thank you. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

MR. COX: So let's jump into the awards. We
only have a few this year. The finances are
what they are, guys. So we have some certifi-
cates, gold coins and we have our new expert
recruiter pins down here.

So, Commander Johnson, right there. Bumi,
we are going to take pictures of the awards.

The first one that we have is the Department
Growth Award, and that's going to Florida.

(Applause)

MR. COX: If Dean and Doug can step up to
accept, please, and take your picture. Just so
folks know, despite it all you still have 2011
new joins this past year. Thank you. Out-
standing.

(Applause)

MR. COX: Get in there, Ms. Carol. You
printed them up.

(Laughter)

MR. COX: The next one we have, I love her
dearly. From the okay State of North Carolina.
She did an outstanding job this year. She calls
quite often. She takes care of darn near the
entire state on her own. Laura Birton. Is she
in the house?

(Applause)

MR. COX: The next one we have, again from
the State of Florida, is Steve Como in the
house? Dean, can you accept? Doug. Sorry.
Thank God for Steve for just south of 100
members on his own.

(Applause)

MR. COX: Outstanding. We have a few more.
The last certificate that we have, I don't know
if she's in the house. She calls every day and
emails us every day. And she says, Warren, I
don't mean to be a pain in the butt. I'm like,
yeah, all right. But God bless her because she
really busts her tail, and she works hard. It is
Gayla Laufenberg out of Oklahoma. Is she in
the house? Gayla? There she is right there.

(Applause)

MR. COX: And she averages 10 new members
per month. God bless you, Gayla.

(Applause)

MR. COX: And because Gayla is -- you have
the prison post as well down there, right?

MS. LAUFENBERG: Yeah.

MR. COX: Okay. And I know the struggles
with that. So for this year we have a brand
new laptop donated to assist our brothers and
sisters that are behind the wall.

(Applause)

MR. COX: Gayla, please tell those brothers
and sisters up on the wall we support them
fully and we love them.

MS. LAUFENBERG: I will. They are stuck in
incarceration.

MR. COX: Outstanding.

(Applause)

MR. COX: So this is really important as well.
Is there anyone from Missouri in the house?
Missouri? Missouri, please stand.

In particular, is there anybody from Missouri

Post 60?

VOICE: No.

MR. COX: Okay. I want you to know we have -- these are the newest posts in the AMVETS family. It is Missouri Post 60. We have your charter here that the Commander and that Executive Chenelly will sign, and we'll get that to you today. Okay? God bless you. Thank you for what you do.

(Applause)

MR. COX: And lastly, Brady Brooks. Is he here? Brady Brooks?

(No response.)

MR. COX: I don't know why because he calls me every day as well. Can the great Department of PA please stand? Are they in the house? There they go.

(Applause)

MR. COX: I wish Brady was here. Brady came from Indiana. He moved to Washington, PA working with the Department of PA. He said, Warren, I want to do something where the new Headquarters building is going to be. I said, fine, what do you want to do? He said I want to create a post.

Within three months he put in 50 members and created a new post with the help of Commander Shipley and the department. So do you want to give him an applaud? When you see him, pat him on the back.

(Applause)

MR. COX: And this key will be signed by our Executive Director and our National Commander.

And that's for me. We have the Programs Awards coming up. We're trying to make it fast. Where is I've Got Your Six at? Is she in here? There's somebody that wanted to speak. Callandra, come on up. Let's welcome Callandra. Or Mr. Shipley, Commander. God bless you all.

(Applause)

MR. COX: Oh. Before I get to this one, where are my proud life members at? Hands up.

(Show of hands.)

MR. COX: Okay. Where are my proud annual members at?

(Show of hands.)

MR. COX: Let's get some annual members in

the building, people. We need some annual money. Thank you. We are currently at 87 percent life members. We're living off of 13 percent annuals. God bless you.

**Presentation of the Blank Check Award to
Warren Cox
by Donna McKale**

MS. McKale: Good morning everyone.

(Chorus of "good morning.")

MS. McKALE: Donna McKale, Tennessee. I'm an avid pin swapper, and in the process of that I came across a gentleman from Ohio that for two days I stalked him basically until he got me his Ohio pin. And then he gifted me another pin. It's actually more like a challenge coin, but it's in the shape of a check.

So I'm creating right at this very moment something that I'm going to refer to as the blank check award, and as veterans at one time or another we should have heard about the blank check that veterans write.

Because our leadership changes every year we sometimes need a steady Eddie, that person that has your six, and the person that I'm talking about is Warren Cox.

(Applause)

MS. McKALE: He's steadfast and often unappreciated. So I sent images to -- I don't know if she has them up on there. So I am going to go ahead and go through it, and then if she gets the images up for you guys to see, then it will help you to know more of what I'm talking about.

I cannot assign worth to what Warren does for us. Thus, the check is blank, and we all know what it signifies as a veteran. But for me, with this challenge check, it's made out to the people of the United States and it's signed by veteran. The routing number represents 06141775, which is when the military was established.

The account number represents the number of veterans killed in action to date in the making of the check, and the check number represents the number of Medal of Honor recipients.

On the back of the check we have the symbol of AMVETS in the center, as well as the branches, including the Space Force. So this is a balanced check. All right. We are in balance. All right.

(Applause)

MS. McKALE: Now this is important for me to give to Warren because of all that he does for us, and if any of you are interested in

obtaining these checks, you can see Banger* from Ohio. Banger, will you stand up so they see what you look like.

(Applause)

MS. McKALE: When he gave this to me and explained the front had back, when he got to the significance of the routing number, the account number and the check number, I got a knot in my throat, and I thought I've got to give some to people that have significantly touched my life. So I did acquire some from him. And Warren is actually one of those people.

So, Warren, I want to present you with this blank check.

(Applause)

MR. COX: Thank you so much, Sis. She has my six. I have hers. I do this for you all's. I do this for the love of veterans. I came to AMVETS because I was --

(Emotional; applause.)

MR. COX: AMVETS family, I will share with you because we're family. AMVETS personally saved me. I've lost two close friends to suicide. I was one of those guys as well at one time. So I do this because I love you. Thank you guys.

(Applause)

**Programs Awards
by 2nd Vice National Commander Shipley
and Callandra Ethridge**

MS. ETHRIDGE: All right everyone. Are you ready? Okay. Every year -- well, everyone has asked me time and time again what is the purpose of reporting? Well, I am getting ready to show you.

We are trying to honor the individuals who -- well, each post department that has put in their reporting. And I know the programs reporting system has not been your best friend for the last couple of years, but we are getting ready to show you how we are honoring those who are actually putting in their reporting by awarding you guys the program end of the year awards.

For 100 Percent Reporting we have the Department of Pennsylvania.

(Applause)

MS. ETHRIDGE: They have reported both -- they have shown -- I don't have the figures with me, but we can talk about that at -- during our -- it's on our -- I am sorry. I am not a good speaker. But I am just going to call

out these awards.

We also have -- for Americanism we have the Department of Wisconsin.

(Applause)

MS. ETHRIDGE: Wisconsin also have -- I am sorry. The Post 13 for Americanism as well.

(Applause)

MS. ETHRIDGE: We have Community Service for the Department of Kentucky.

(Applause)

MS. ETHRIDGE: Also for the Community Service we have Delaware Post II.

(Applause)

2nd VICE CMDR SHIPLEY: District II Commander? Is Randy in the room?

(No response.)

MS. ETHRIDGE: We have National ROTC, Department of Hawaii.

(Applause)

VOICE: These guys are too busy doing programs. They don't have time for all of this.

MS. ETHRIDGE: And for ROTC, the Department of Massachusetts Post 25. What is that number? Seventy-two. I am sorry. Seventy-seven.

VOICE: He's from Post 2577 too.

(Applause)

MS. ETHRIDGE: And then we have for AADDA, the Department of Maryland.

(Applause)

MS. ETHRIDGE: We have one more Community Service. Department of Kentucky.

(Applause)

MS. ETHRIDGE: These next two awards the 2nd Vice will discuss and tell you what it's all about.

2ND VICE CMDR SHIPLEY: As many of you were at the NEC meeting the other day you heard me say we've had 400 posts across the United States file programs reports. Almost half of them come from two states, and as all like to say, you've got to give credit where credit is due.

Our top two reporting states are Department

of Florida, with 66 posts reporting.

(Applause)

2ND VICE CMDR SHIPLEY: And with 101 posts submitting program reports, Department of Ohio.

(Applause)

2ND VICE CMDR SHIPLEY: Could both of your departments send a representative up here, please. So I have decided to give them a special award for really going out there.

Now these are both big departments and their second vices are engaging and doing their best to make sure that all their posts are reporting. So when we are sharing ideas, get together and talk with these guys. Thank you for your efforts, gentlemen and ladies.

(Applause)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Bumi Ayodele.

MR. COX: Just a correction administratively. We are now at 2:00. The membership roundtable is actually at 3:45 this afternoon. Ms. Carol doesn't know this yet, but after lunch at 1:00 we'll be upstairs to issue out your department cards for your entire post. God bless you.

MS. AYODELE: Hello everyone. My name is Bumi Ayodele. I'm the Communications Manager, for those of you who don't know. I'm sure you all have seen me running around here taking pictures and putting up your slides and stuff.

Just everybody does know, since four people have asked me, I'm not Jasmine. Okay? When you see Jasmine, you'll look at her at eye level. For me you've got a little bit down. Okay? So, just to let you know.

But last year we were supposed to have, but we did not have, the awards for the newsletters. And so thank you to the gentleman who was from New York who was keeping me on my toes. I was new in this role last year. So this year we will have it. I do have a plaque for the person I am giving it to this year. Please see me in the office on the second floor afterwards.

But the Newsletter Award for this year is going to go to Post 61, Robert Smith, Sr.

VOICE: What state?

MS. AYODELE: Kentucky.

(Applause)

MS. AYODELE: So please see me in the

office on the second floor, and I'll get you that plaque. Thank you.

PNC HEUN: Just for the record, that's who the post is named after.

MS. AYODELE: Oh, really?

PNC HEUN: He is deceased.

MS. AYODELE: Thank you. I didn't know that. The emails comes through as his name. That's why. But thank you.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Okay. Listen up. The Americanism poster judgment will be in the Lincoln Building at 3:45. In the Ottawa on the second floor. Okay?

Any other thing that we have to talk about right now? Chaplain?

MR.

: We had a hand up right here.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Well, come on down. Come on down.

MS.

: I'm just wondering about if a bus was going to be available to take people to the park this afternoon at 6:00.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Thank you for that. That was on the schedule. They tried to get it done, but they didn't get must participation. So that trip is not going to be happening this afternoon. The bus that we had. Right? that bus that was -- we was trying to get done. It was canceled because we did not have enough participation in time to schedule it. You've got to have it scheduled for them to get here, and we didn't get no feedback on it.

MR. FERGUSON: Good morning, Commander. Doug Ferguson, Department of Florida.

Commander, we have here from the Department of Florida for the National Commander's Project, \$500.

(Applause)

MR. McFARLAIN: Are you sure you don't want to put that towards a haircut? I'm just saying. I'm just saying we could say haircut. The money is going to the same place.

MS. LAUFENBERG: I'd like to issue a challenge to everybody. Because of the committee, the POW/MIA --

(Chorus of "microphone".)

MS. LAUFENBERG: Can you hear me now? Because of the POW/MIA that was -- met

yesterday or the day before, I don't know. Anyway, there is a Facebook page, National AMVETS POW/MIA Committee. Join the group. I'm issuing a challenge right now. There are only 11 members.

Let's get all the district people to go ahead and add this and get it to your departments. Get it down to where everyone is aware of the same information on the POW/MIA. That way everybody is on the same page, as well as the National Newsletter. So let's see how many members we can get before the end of the Convention on that page.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Thank you. Inetta.

MS. BULLOCK: I just wanted to remind everyone the Women's Veterans Committee meeting has been moved to 5:00 p.m. today. It's going to be in BOS Room B7E, which is across the hall.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Okay. Chaplain. Oh, we are going to recess. So be back here, here in this room, at 13:00 hours. Oh, I'm sorry. Go ahead.

MR. : I just want to throw something on a lighter note. I'm also a standup comedian. I know that everybody in here, or most everybody in here, is going to go to the dinner tomorrow evening. I, on the other hand, am driving 30 miles north of here to Mason City, Illinois to the Mason City Comedy Club. I will be performing if anyone would like to come. The show starts at 7:00.

(Applause and laughter.)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Okay. Respect to colors.

PROVOST MARSHAL ART MAJORS: AM-VETS, attention. Hand salute.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Okay. Now we can leave. 13:00 hours, please.

(Whereupon, at 12:07 p.m., a lunch recess was taken.)

AFTERNOON SESSION (1:26 p.m.)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: We are back in session. Provost Marshal, will you honor the colors.

PROVOST MARSHAL ART MAJORS: AM-VETS, attention. Hand salute.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Jan Brown, are

you here for Credentials?

Credential Report by PNC Jan Brown

PNC BROWN: Okay. This is the numbers at close of business yesterday. So don't freak out if you don't have enough numbers in your report, because I didn't count what we did this morning. I haven't had time to put them in yet.

So right now I have three for Alaska. I just want you to know those are all women.

1, Alabama; 1, Arizona; 15, California; Connecticut, 3; District of Columbia, 10; Delaware, 3; Florida, 18; Georgia, 8; Hawaii, 1; Iowa, 4; Illinois, 19; Indiana, 10; Kentucky, 12; Louisiana 4; Massachusetts 8; Maryland, 6; Maine, 2; Michigan, 5; Missouri, 12; North Carolina, 9; North Dakota, 5; Nebraska, 1, New Mexico, 1; both women; New York, 17; Ohio, 17; Oklahoma, 1; also a female; Pennsylvania, 9; Rhode Island, 2; South Carolina, 3; Tennessee has 21; Texas, 6; Virginia, 9; Washington, 4; and Wisconsin, 10; and West Virginia, 2. For a total of 352.

I'll be honest. Yesterday I kind of gave you a wag because I was under the gun. But I'd rather go low than over. So 352 at the end of business yesterday.

Does anybody have any questions? Keep in mind, through business yesterday. If you have not signed -- if you're here and you don't have a badge, go pick it up. I'm not waiting to run them now. We're running them now with a minimum of three on them. So if you don't have one, make sure you have one.

If you haven't signed in, you have been here for a couple of days and you just don't want to stand in line, there's no line right now. I'm just saying.

We will be open today until 4:00. Or 4:30? 4:00. Tomorrow we're open 8:30 to 11:30. Or 8:30 to 11:30/12:00. I'll say 11:30 in case I'm wrong. That way you're there in time in case we close at 11:30. But make sure you're in there because we're only open for two hours on Saturday.

Tomorrow, if you need to check your delegate count, there's a lot of people -- and this count also does not have any pre-registers who have not check in yet. So if you think you're short, that's probably why.

Motion

PNC BROWN: Commander, that concludes my report, and b move for its adoption.

PNC KING: Second.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: All right. Anyhow, there is a motion on the floor and a second. Is there any discussion?

VOICE: Second, ----.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Who?

VOICE: It was already seconded by King.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Okay. Any motions or anything you need, just bring up to the front here. Please go to the mic, please.

Okay. All in favor, indicate by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes".)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Any opposed?

(No response.)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Okay. This is what we came here for. A lot of us. So we're now going to First Nominations.

First Nomination Officers by Joe Chenelly

MR. CHENELLY: Good afternoon, AMVETS.

(Chorus of "good afternoon".)

MR. CHENELLY: Nominations for the membership 2025 membership year are now open. At this time you are reminded that those making and seconding nominations are limited to two minutes each. There is only one second for these first officers.

And please, make sure you move to a microphone to make a nomination or a second. It needs to be there so it can be properly recorded. Please start by stating your name and your department.

The first office for nominations is National Service Foundation Trustee. For the sake of the elections we have two positions open this year. Both are three-year terms. We will identify or differentiate them by Trustee A and Trustee B. So the highest vote getter in Trustee A will be elected, and the highest vote getter in Trustee B will be elected.

Nomination for National Service Foundation Trustee A

MR. CHENELLY: The nominations are now open for Trustee A. Do we have any nominations for Trustee A?

PNC JP BROWN: JP Brown, III, Past National Commander.

It's my pleasure and honor to nominate Andy McElrath. He has a master's degree in busi-

ness administration, and he runs a multi-million dollar business in five states that oversees operations and the budget.

He's a past Department Commander of Ohio, Department Commander of the Year, Ohio JA. He is also -- and this part really bothers me, Joe, Jim. He's a Marine Corps veteran. I've known Andy a good number of years, and he's come up to chairs in Ohio, and he's currently our NEC and he does a great.

But what he's done is he's helped Ohio become even better than what they normally are.

Motion

PNC JP BROWN: But it's my pleasure and honor to put the name of Andy McElrath in for Position A under National Service Foundation.

MR. CHENELLY: Is there a second?

MS. PIERCE: Sara Pierce, Ohio. I second that nomination. Andy is a great guy. He's easy to work with, and you can go to him and ask him anything and he pretty much knows.

Not like Mr. King here, but most of it. Thank you.

MR. CHENELLY: Let the record show that National Headquarters is in receipt of a letter from Mr. McElrath accepting the nominations.

Are there any other nominations for Trustee A?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominations for Trustee A?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: The nominations will remain open through Saturday morning.

Nomination for National Service Foundation Trustee B

Are there any nominations for Trustee B? Trustee B.

MR. BANKHEAD: Mr. Executive Director, I stand before this body to nominate an individual who has been the Executive Commander of his post. He's held all line officers within the department; all line officers within the National all the way up to and including the National Commander. He is currently on the National Service Foundation.

Motion

MR. BANKHEAD: And it gives me great

pleasure to place the name of PNC Rege Riley in nomination for Position B. Bob Bankhead, NEC, Department of Pennsylvania.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you, Bob. Is there a second for that nomination?

MR. FORESMAN: Second. Paul Horsman, Commander, Pennsylvania.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

PNC Riley, do you accept this nomination?

PNC RILEY: Yes, sir. I do.

MR. CHENELLY: Let the record will show he answered in the affirmative.

Are there any other nominations for Trustee B?

MR. DAVITT: Yes. Tom Davitt, Department of Massachusetts. At this time I stand before the body to nominate -- he's a Past Department Commander from the State of Massachusetts, he is a member of our Convention Corporation for many years; active Service Foundation President of the Department of Mass. He works tirelessly on veterans' legislation and housing initiatives for veterans. He's a Past National Commander.

Motion

MR. DAVITT: Don McLean for Position B.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

Is there a second for this nomination?

MS. ROGER: KJ Roger, from Massachusetts. I second that nomination.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

PNC McLean, do you accept this nomination?

PNC McLEAN: I do, sir.

MR. CHENELLY: Let the record show he answered in the affirmative. Are there any other nominations for Trustee B?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominees for Trustee B?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Again, nominations will remain open through Saturday morning.

Nomination for National Judge Advocate

MR. CHENELLY: The next office is National

Judge Advocate. Do we have any nominations for National Judge Advocate?

PNC HEUN: Gregory S. Heun, from the great state of Kentucky, PNC. For the position of Judge Advocate -- I guess I probably ought to put my glasses on, huh?

I'd like to put into nomination a guy we all know. He always has a smile on his face. A guy that spent 32 years in uniform serving us as a Chief Master Sergeant in the United States Air Force. He joined the AMVETS in '97 while still serving and has been for the past 27 years as an AMVET.

During his time he worked the post department and district seats all the way to their highest position of Commander.

Motion

PNC HEUN: At this time I would like to enter into the position of JA one of the outstanding and dedicated AMVETS and a brother, Frederick Bates. Everybody knows him as Freddy.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you. Is there a second for this nomination?

MS. McKALE: Donna McKale, Tennessee. I second that.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

Mr. Bates, do you accept this nomination?

MR. BATES: Yes, sir. I accept.

MR. CHENELLY: Let the record show he answered in the affirmative.

Are there any other nominations for National Judge Advocate?

(No response.)

MR. BYRUM: PDC Byrum, State of California, Post 56. I'm honored and privileged to recommend this young man. He does apologize that he can't be part of getting a haircut to get money. And if you don't know him, you'll realize, when he stands up, why he can't do it.

But I've known him for a few years. A lot of you here know him. He's active. He's all over the place. He's been through the chairs. He's been on the foundation board. He's District Commander. He's District JA. He's co-founder of AMVETS One. Very passionate, and I mean very passionate.

And I'm going to tell you the same, as I've got someone else as a nomination later, I'm not going to stand up here and brag about what they've done. Because if you can ever get an elevator, you can take a picture of it and read it

at night while you're waiting for an elevator.

But Ross Smith I've known quite a while. I know what he's been through. If you've seen him make his talk on AMVETS 1, and if you haven't, go to AMVETS1.COM, and you can see him speak and the passion. You'll understand. If he is your JA, what he's going to fight for is you. That's his passion.

There's no doubt how strong he's going to be. People can say this and this. I'm just telling you what the person is all about. And to me, a lot of this, let's think about what the person is going to do for this organization.

Motion

MR. BYRUM: So I would like to, with honor, nominate Ross Smith from the Great State of California.

(Applause)

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

Is there a second for this nomination?

PNC McLEAN: Yes. Good afternoon, Delegates. Don McLean, Past National Commander. I will second the nomination of Mr. Ross Smith for JA, the National JA. I've known Ross for over seven years, and I had the pleasure of meeting him a number of times as I went out to California on different missions.

And as National Commander, I did have the use of his services when he was National District VI Commander, and I employed him as my IG for two cases out in District VI and I felt that he handled them superbly. So I gladly second his nomination.

MR. CHENELLY: Mr. Smith, do you accept the nomination?

MR. SMITH: With a sense of passion and purpose, humility and respect, I accept the nomination to be your next National Judge Advocate.

MR. CHENELLY: Let the record show Mr. Smith accepted the nomination.

Are there any other nominations for National Judge Advocate?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominations for National Judge Advocate?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: The nominations will remain open through Saturday.

Nomination of National Provost Marshal

National Provost Marshal. Are there any nominations for National Provost Marshal?

MR. HARTSFIELD: Sheldon Hartsfield, PDC, Department of Missouri, National Deputy Provost Marshal. I'd like to offer into nomination a man who has a few years of experience being a provost marshal. I believe 14 in all. He's a good leader. He knows the system. The team respects him. We work for him tirelessly without complaints because we respect him for the man that he is.

Motion

And I will not say for one more year, but I will offer into nomination the name of Mr. Art Majors.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

Is there a second for this nomination?

MR. DAVIS: Mike Davis, PDC, Indiana. I second the nomination.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

Mr. Majors, do you accept this nomination?

PROVOST MARSHAL ART MAJORS: Yes, I do.

MR. CHENELLY: Let the record show Mr. Majors accepted the nomination.

Are there any other nominations for National Provost Marshal?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominations for National Provost Marshal?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: The nominations will remain open through Saturday morning.

Nomination of National Finance Officer

MR. CHENELLY: National Finance Officer. Any nominations for National Finance Officer?

MS. McFARLAIN: Good afternoon. I nominate Kelly McFarlain, our current finance officer, our current National Finance Officer. He has also worked his way through the chairs, but for some reason finance is his passion.

Motion

MS. McFARLAIN: And I'm honored to nominate my husband, Kelly McFarlain.

MR. CHENELLY: Would you state your name and department, please.

MS. McFARLAIN: Oh. Laura McFarlain, Louisiana.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

Is there a second for this nomination?

MR. WOODY: Tim Woody, Department of Tennessee, seconds the nomination.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

Mr. McFarlain, do you accept this nomination?

MR. McFARLAIN: Absolutely I accept that nomination.

MR. CHENELLY: Let the record show he accepted the nomination.

Are there any other nominations for National Finance Officer?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominations for National Finance Officer?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: The nominations will remain open through Saturday morning.

Nomination of National Third Vice Commander

MR. CHENELLY: National Third Vice Commander.

PNC KING: Jim King, past everything. Mr. Chairman, I would like to place a nomination for the Officer of Third Vice Commander the name of a very dedicated, hardworking AM-VET from Post 115 in Pontiac, Illinois, Chris Studebaker.

Chris is a six-year Army -- excuse me. Damn. Spit that out. Chris is a six-year Navy, also known as Marine Corps Uber, veteran. He has served as, of course, Department Commander in Illinois. I worked for him for a year while he was Department Commander, and he showed me that he was intelligent, decisive, made good decisions and stuck with them.

He also exhibited a dedication for helping his fellow veterans. Chris has also served as our National Executive Committee man, and he served on the National Finance Committee.

Motion

PNC KING: I would ask for your support and

your vote for Chris Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

Is there a second for this nomination?

PNC PIENING: PNC Joe Piening, Department of Florida. Chris has the ability, the knowledge and the expertise to lead this organization at any and all levels. Some of his qualities are he listens, he asks questions, and when he speaks, he speaks with authority. I'm honored to second the nomination of Chris Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

Mr. Studebaker, do you accept this nomination?

MR. STUDEBAKER: Yes, sir. I do.

MR. CHENELLY: Let the record show Mr. Studebaker said yes; accepted.

Are there any other nominations for the Office of National Third Vice Commander?

MR. BYRUM: PDC Byrum, Post 56, California. I'd like this opportunity to nominate a young lady, a Navy vet. And if you look, and look at history, she was the first black female working in the towers in the United States trained through the Navy. She is in the Museum of Aviation in D.C. The FAA has cleared that she is in fact the first female to work as an air traffic controller.

Getting on to the other, some of you know her well. Some of you may have bumped heads with her. So have I. And I told her I'll stand here openly saying it, but we bumped heads trying to get something for the veteran. She has a passion. She worked strongly on Stand Down.

She has been a Department Commander. She sat on the Foundation Board. The education is there. The passion is there. She comes to their DEC's when they Storm the Hill, and she doesn't just do Storm the Hill for California. And some of you in here probably now she went with you to your states. She went to learn what the other states were doing. So she's here from the beginning to the end storming the hill.

That, to me, is what it takes. Someone that's not afraid to ask the question, push the issue; is what I think would make a good legislative person. She has not offered any haircuts, even though she's got those beautiful white, long dreadlocks. I don't know. Maybe they should ask.

Motion

MR. BYRUM: But I am honored to nominate Sandra Durbin for Third Vice.

(Applause)

MR. CHENELLY: Is there a second to this nomination?

MS. WONG: Yes. Commander Helen Wong, Department of California. I do second that nomination.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

Ms. Durbin, do you accept the nomination?

MS. DURBIN: Yes, sir. I do. Thank you.

MR. CHENELLY: Let the record show Ms. Durbin accepted the nomination.

Are there any other nominations for National Third Vice Commander?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominations for National Third Vice Commander?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: The nominations will remain open through Saturday morning.

Nomination of National Second Vice Commander

MR. CHENELLY: National Second Vice Commander. Any nominations?

PNC HEUN: Gregory S. Heun, PNC from the Department of Kentucky. I'm here to put in the nomination for Second Vice Commander. A veteran who served our country in the United States Army, was honorably discharged, a woman veteran, has been a member of the AMVETS for 30 years, held all of the offices, from the post, the department, the district and our current Third Vice Commander.

She was also at the displeasure of serving in the highest level of the sad sacks; climbing through all of those seats as well.

Motion

PNC HEUN: It is with great pleasure and a great honor that I nominate Sandy Vorhies as our Next Second Vice Commander of our great AMVETS family.

MR. CHENELLY: Is there a second for this nomination?

MR. WILBURN: David Wilburn, NEC from North Carolina. I second the motion.

MR. CHENELLY: Commander Vorhies, do you accept the nomination?

MR. WILBURN: The Nomination. Excuse me.

MS. VORHIES: Yes, I do.

MR. CHENELLY: Let the record show she accepted the nomination.

Are there any other nominations for National Second Vice Commander?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominations for National Second Vice Commander?

MR. CHENELLY: The nominations will remain open through Saturday morning.

Nomination of National First Vice Commander

MR. CHENELLY: National First Vice Commander. Are they any nominations?

PNC LEE: Robert Lee, Department of Missouri, past everything. I'd like to place a nomination in the name of Paul Shipley for First Vice Commander.

I think we've seen what he can do in the past two positions. He served us very well. Paul is an Army veteran, having served in Iraq. He joined the AMVETS in 2012; Pennsylvania Department Commander 2019 to '21. Having known Paul for just a few short years, he's got a heart as big as he is.

Motion

PNC LEE: So I place a nomination for Paul Shipley for First Vice.

MR. CHENELLY: Is there a second to this nomination?

MS. McFARLAIN: Laura McFarlain, Louisiana. I second the nomination for Paul Shipley.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

Commander Shipley, do you accept this nomination?

SECOND VICE CMDR SHIPLEY: Yes, sir.

CHENELLY: Let the record show Mr. Shipley accepted the nomination.

Are there any other nominations for National First Vice Commander?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: National First Vice Commander?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: The nominations will remain open until Saturday morning.

Nomination of National Commander

The final position for nomination is going to be National Commander. The nominating speech is limited to five minutes, and we're limiting it to two seconding speeches.

Any nominations for National Commander?

PNC PIENING: Mr. Chairman, Joe Piening, PNC, Department of Florida.

I nominate an individual who is well-rounded in any phase as you may encounter. He is brave and has full support of his family. In private life he achieved Postmaster in the Postal system. In his military background he achieved the rank of Sergeant Major in the Army Reserves.

At AMVETS he's worked through the chairs in the Department of Florida, serving as its Commander for two years and presently has just retired as our Executive Director for a year.

On the national level, he has served on the National Service Foundation. He served as our vice commander with professionalism and excellence, and now is the time.

Motion

PNC PIENING: It is time for me to put the name of Horace Johnson in nomination for the highest office this organization can bestow. I put in the nomination in the name of Horace Johnson. Thank you.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

Is there a second to this nomination?

MR. JOHN: Yes, sir, Mr. Chenelly. I'd like to second Horace Johnson for the position of National Commander. Oh, I'm AJ John. Excuse me. From the Department of Florida.

MR. CHENELLY: Commander Johnson, do you accept this nomination?

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: I accept this nomination with honor, and I know. I know.

MR. CHENELLY: Let the record show Commander Johnson accepted the nomination.

Are there any other nominations for the Office of National Commander?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: For National Commander?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: The nominations will remain open through Saturday. The next round of nominations will take place around Saturday at 10:00 a.m. The doors will be locked at that time. So if you plan to vote in the elections, ensure you're in the convention floor, which is not going to be here on Saturday. It's over in the grand ballroom at the Lincoln.

So make sure every knows where the election is going to be. The doors will be locked at 10:00. Registration closes at 10:00. If you're in line for registration at 10:00, stay in line. Of course, you're all registered. So that doesn't really matter. But...

Commander Johnson, that concludes the nominations for today.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: So this is the reward of me giving out the awards earlier today. We're about to get out of here. Is there any more announcements for the good of this order?

(No response.)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Any announcements?

Announcements

MS. DILLON: Dana Dillon, NEC, Connecticut. I'd like to announce that Albert Duff has been elected as our State Commander for the ninth time. I think? Ninth time.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Congratulations.

(Applause)

MS. PIERCE: Sara Pierce, Ohio. I just want to let everybody know the Junior's drew their first 50/50. It was a peach-ish color, and it's already been won. You will see them running around this evening with hot pink tickets. So please purchase. Please. Thank you.

MR. JOHN: Mr. John, AJ John, NEC from Florida. Sorry. I'm out of breath a little bit.

I would like to recognize Doug Ferguson as being elected as the Commander for the State of Florida.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Congratulations.

(Applause)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Sandra.

MS. DURBIN: Sandra Durbin, Department of California. I'd like to announce our new Commander, Ms. Helen Wong. Stand up, Helen. They didn't see you.

(Applause)

MR. SHEA: Commander?

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Yes.

MR. SHEA: Commander, Rich Shea, Illinois NEC. I'd like to introduce our Illinois Department Commander, Laura Doss.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Yes.

(Applause)

MR. THOMAS: Commander, Curtis Thomas, NEC, Texas. I would like to introduce our new Commander. His name is Bobby George.

(Applause)

MR. BARRINGTON: Dennis Barrington, NEC, Wisconsin. I'd like to introduce our New State Commander, Dennis Burdick.

(Applause)

MS. DILLON: Dana Dillon, NEC, Connecticut. I'd like to let everyone know that I'll be selling Suicide Prevention and Awareness t-shirts outside to help raise money for our program. So please see me and help support this cause.

(Applause)

MR. ASHMAN: My name is Joe Ashman, outgoing Commander for New York. I'd like to introduce our new Commander John Whiskers Foster.

(Applause)

Kyle Blake, NEC, Virginia. I'd like to introduce our new Commander, Sherwood Brown, from Virginia.

(Applause)

MR. BATES: Fred Bass, Department of Georgia. I'd like to introduce our new Commander, Stephon Banks.

(Applause)

PNC RILEY: Pat Riley, Department of Ohio, Past Commander. I'd like to introduce our new Commander, Steve Alberry.

(Applause)

MR. MAHONEY: Mark Mahoney, Department of Maryland. I'd like to introduce our returning Commander from last year. And also, this is his fifth time around over the years, Mr. Bruce Rice.

(Applause)

MR. BANKHEAD: Bob Bankhead, NEC, Department of Pennsylvania, and I'd like to introduce our new Commander one more year, Paul Foresman.

(Applause)

MR. WALLACE: Tim Wallace, Post 905, North Carolina. I'd like to introduce our new Department Commander, Harry Brower.

(Applause)

MS. McFARLAIN: Laura McFarlain, National District III Commander. I'd like to introduce our Commander for the second year, Mr. Emmett Bailey, for the Department of Louisiana.

(Applause)

MR. CALLOWAY: Commander, I'm Gonzalez Calloway, from the Department of Indiana. I'd like to introduce our new Commander, Mr. Steven Reader*.

(Applause)

MR. HARTSFIELD: Sheldon Hartsfield, from the Department of Missouri. I'd like to introduce our new Commander, Mr. Jack Downs.

(Applause)

PNC HEUN: Gregory S. Heun, from the Department of Kentucky. The S stands for shhh. Our third elected, third year elected, Dale Clark, from the great State of Kentucky.

(Applause)

MR. SMITH: My name is Aaron Smith, Department of Washington, D.C. I'd like to introduce our Commander for the third time, Commander Clyde E. Pike, Jr.

(Applause)

MS. KENYON: Carolina Kenyon, NEC from Massachusetts. I'd like to introduce our newly elected State Commander, Ed Wyzik.

(Applause)

MS. GOOD: Commander Terri Goods, Department of Alaska. I'd like to reintroduce Christa Foli on her second year as our new State Commander.

(Applause)

MR. HALL: Jean Hall, Department of Michigan, NEC. I'd like to introduce a second term Kerri Witte as our Commander again. Thank you.

(Applause)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Any more announcements?

(No response.)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Terry, got a hat.

TERRY: Yes. And a shirt.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: And a shirt. Okay. Go ahead.

MR. CHENELLY: I've got a few quick schedule changes or agenda changes. Again, one of them was announced yesterday. The Women's Veterans Committee meets at 5:00 p.m. tonight in the room that is printed on the agenda. So 5:00 p.m. tonight, the Women's Veterans Committee.

For Friday, tomorrow, the district meetings are going to be moved up. They'll be held at 1:00 p.m. tomorrow. In the same rooms that are listed on the agenda, but 1:00 p.m. All six districts will have their caucuses.

And the change is because we have the House Special Affairs Chairman, Mike Bost, a Congressman from Illinois and one of the -- probably the second most influential member of Congress for veterans issues. Maybe right now the number one.

He will be here with us at 3:00 p.m. in what will become the convention floor at the grand ballroom at the Lincoln. So 3:00 p.m. tomorrow afternoon in grand ballroom, Chairman Bost.

And then one announcement. The banquet tickets, they're available and they're right outside the door.

PNC PIENING: Mr. Chairman, if possible, can you move the honors and awards schedule to tomorrow morning rather than in the afternoon?

MR. CHENELLY: Absolutely. I'll get with the chair and we'll get that done.

PNC PIENING: Okay. Is he behind me?

MR. CHENELLY: I believe it's PNC McLean. Is that correct? PNC Heun?

(Pause)

MR. CHENELLY: I shouldn't have announced

the banquet tickets. We'll get it taken care of for sure. Absolutely.

MR. PIENING: 9:30 would be great.

MR. CHENELLY: 9:30 it is.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Did everybody hear that that is involved in that? It's a closed meeting, but I just wanted to make sure that the people -- they know who they are. I just wanted to make sure they heard it.

Is there anything else for the good of this order?

(No response.)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Okay. Let's get out of here. Chaplain.

Benediction by Chaplain Milton Allen

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: Hats? Please uncover. Covers in the Marine Corps.

I'd like to ask you, if you would, please. If you have noticed, did you see me running around here with like a chicken with my head cut off? It's because I don't have Wanda here. And Wanda's sister has seen in the hospital since Friday. So she's not coming. We canceled her flight. So I'm asking you to keep her in prayer.

(Prayer.)

(Chorus of "amen.")

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: And, Mr. Chaplain, I've seen people running around doing just that too.

Provost Marshal, can you lead us in respecting the colors.

Honors to the Colors by Provost Marshal Art Majors

PROVOST MARSHAL MAJORS: AMVETS, attention. Hand salute.

(Honors to the Colors.)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Have a good afternoon folks.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.)

AMVETS 79th Annual Convention

Third Business Session

Meeting Minutes



Friday,
August 9, 2024

Held at the
President Abraham Lincoln DoubleTree Hotel
Springfield, Illinois

**Morning Session
(9:00 a.m.)**

**Call to Order
by Commander Bill Clark**

CMDR CLARK: Call this third business session of the 78th National Convention to order. Please rise for the invocation. National Chaplain Allen.

**Invocation
by Chaplain Milton Allen**

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: Good morning, AMVETS family. Chaplains, would you please join me please.

(Prayer.)

(Chorus of "amen.")

CMDR CLARK: Provost Marshal.

**Honor to the Colors
by Provost Marshal Art Majors**

PROVOST MARSHAL MAJORS: AMVETS, attention. Hand salute.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

CMDR CLARK: Please be seated. It is now my honor to introduce our first guest this morning. United States Senator Dick Durbin. The 47th U.S. Senator from the state of Illinois. The State Senior Senator and the Senate Majority Whip, the second highest ranking position among the U.S. Senate majority.

Senator Durbin has been elected to this leadership post by his Democratic colleagues every two years since 2005. Senator Durbin serves as chair of the Senate judiciary committee and cite on the appropriations and agricultural committees. Elected to the U.S. Senate in November of 1996 and re-elected in 2002, 2008, 2014 and 2020.

Senator Durbin makes about 50 round trips a year between Washington, D.C. and Illinois. He is married to Loretta Schaeffer Durbin. Their family consists of three children and six grandchildren. They reside right here in Springfield. Fellow AMVETS, please give a warm welcome to Senator Dick Durbin.

(Applause)

**Special Guest
Senator Dick Durbin**

SENATOR DURBIN: Well, welcome to Mr. Lincoln's hometown and my hometown, Springfield, Illinois. It is an honor to be with you. I was listening to the Commander's introduction as I walked up here. You never

quite know in my business what that introduction is going to turn out to be. It was a good one. I thank you for it.

But I was at a meeting once, a press conference up in Chicago at one of the schools trying to get the kids during the summer to come back to school for a good nutritious meal -- school lunch. So we had a bunch of kids there eating breakfast -- eating lunch I guess it was and I was over there on the microphones doing my thing. And I thought to myself, this is a photo opportunity, Durbin, you know better. Get on over there and sit down with those kids and those television cameras will follow you.

So I walked over to the table and I sat down and TV cameras all came over. And one little girl looked up at me and said, who are you?

(Laughter)

SENATOR DURBIN: And I said I am Dick Durbin. And she said what do you do? I said I am a United States Senator. She said well good for you.

(Laughter)

SENATOR DURBIN: Kids can humble you that is for sure. I don't want to go any further without thanking each and every one of you who served our country. Some of who continue to serve. And a Salute to the AMVETS was created the year I was born, they just gave away my birth date and has been serving so many millions of veterans across the United States for so many years.

Your advocacy and good work on Capitol Hill make a difference, a serious difference. So understand what you are doing here is doing more than socializing. You are pushing an agenda which affects literally millions of people. Your comrades in arms and others who are depending on the AMVETS for their future.

I want to tell you just a short story, I don't have a long speech today. I was not in a senate mode so much. I am in the hometown mode. But I want to tell you about a meeting that I had this week. It was in Chicago and it was a warrior program that tries to encourage members of the military today, to go to college -- to finish college. And so the meeting at the campus at the University of Chicago.

There were about 20 of them. Some were active duty, some of them just had been discharged. And they were trying to decide their future. Well, it was a great experience for them. It really opened our eyes to possibilities. Many of them had had a bad life experience in school before they enlisted and they finally just said I want to go in the Army or go in the Navy or Marine Corps or whatever it happens

to be, Air Force. And see if that is a little different thing for me and my life.

And they enlisted and decided over a period of time that they underestimated what they could do with their lives. Then, came the rub -- then came the problem. Because they had the GI Bill benefits and they could be exploited by schools that were phony colleges. For profit colleges and universities. I am not going to put this on the final, so you can just hear me as I tell you the facts.

Eight percent -- eight percent of American high school students graduating go on to for profit colleges and university. University of Phoenix for example. You have heard so much about all these colleges like that. Eight percent go from high school to those schools. Thirty person -- thirty percent, almost one out of three of all student loan defaults are students coming out of for profit colleges.

Why? They charge to damn much on tuition. They offer too little when it comes to training and education. And these folks end up exhausting their Pell Grants and borrowing vast sums of money. For the veterans, it is even worse. These schools end up taking your GI Bill benefits. Benefits that you earned by risking your life to save this country if needed and that to me, just is an outrage that we let that go on.

I had spent a lot of my time going after these schools. These schools that treat these students fraudulently. Make promises that are not true. Promises that they are going to have qualified faculty and teachers and turns out it isn't the case at all. And that is a -- that reality is what we face today. So this has been going on for more than 10 years, we have been fighting them.

It just seems to me as nothing short of outrageous that we would take GI Bill benefits and give them to these schools that offer little or no education. They are phonies. There are some good schools. Some of you may remember when you served University of Maryland. They are a good school. They have been in business for 85 years. It is an incredible investment of your time and a good investment. But some of these other schools where they are making up names, I am telling you it is a rip off of the soldiers and the veterans and their families.

So I want to tell you that I am going to keep that battle going as long as I can. Because I believe it is the right thing to do. I hope you agree with me.

(Applause)

SENATOR DURBIN: Let me tell you, we face a challenge. I am going to be very blunt with

you. This is not good news, it is challenging news. We are not meeting our recruitment goals in the military in the United States today. We have vacancies each year. There are two exceptions. The Marine Corps is meeting their goals by a couple of hundred people and the Space Force is meeting its goals.

But the other major agencies are not of the Government. And we have got to find out a way to appeal to them with the right kind of GI Bill benefits and the right kind of package of service, to continue to protect our country. We count on our military so much, but recruitment is critical. Think of your own experience in recruitment and I am sure there were many different experiences in this room.

But if you are -- get the opportunity to serve in our military, it can be life changing in a positive way. We have got to make that case and make it very effectively. That is all I have to say this morning and I want to welcome you again to Springfield, Illinois. Home of Abraham Lincoln. I hope you get a chance to get over to the Lincoln Home which is only a few blocks away and the weather is pretty nice today if you get a break to go outside.

If not, maybe make it out to the State Fair and see the number one attraction, the butter cow.

(Laughter and applause.)

SENATOR DURBIN: That is right, the butter cow deserves a round of applause. I enjoy going out there each year. Thanks for coming to Springfield, we are honored to have you here. Thank you.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: Is Jan Brown in the room?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: All right. Now we are going to have the convention bids. The first company up is the Rosen Center from Orlando, Florida. Ice Machines, elevators, ADA approach, they have a lot of nice things there. Automatic doors. Well, there is a correction. We are going to do the Nugget first? All right. First presentation -- you can't get good help. It just doesn't matter how much you pay. This is the Rosen Center rep, here we go. While he is on his way up, you might wonder what this is. It is a new microphone that works. It is a hair cutting set because the challenge was met for both.

(Laughter and applause.)

CMDR CLARK: We have over 1,600 and climbing. So we are going to do both haircuts today. The National Commander is cutting the hair.

(Laughter)

CMDR CLARK: Afterwards, the clippers will be for sale and the hair from the young lady who is going to shave our head, I think is as valuable as a hair piece. It is natural hair. So we will see what we are going to do with that. Thank you all that contributed and the coffers are still open to receive money.

Good morning, good to see you.

MR. GILSTRAP: Hope you didn't have to wait for me.

**2027 Convention Bid Presentation
The Rosen Center, Orlando, Florida
by Doug Gilstrap**

MR. GILSTRAP: Good morning, how are you this morning?

(Chorus of "Good morning.")

MR. GILSTRAP: My name is Doug Gilstrap and I am with Rosen Hotels in Orlando, Florida.

(Applause)

MR. GILSTRAP: I guess this is Florida Department right here. How are you all doing? So, I have the distinct pleasure of hopefully welcoming AMVETS back to Rosen Center. You guys were there in 2003 and 2008. And we are currently booked to have you there back in the future. So hopefully we can make this a long standing partnership like we had with the Department of Florida, who has been with us for little over 20 years. So.

I would like to get started and give you little video presentation to welcome you to beautiful Orlando, Florida.

(Video Presentation)

MR. GILSTRAP: In Orlando, we have the distinct pleasure of welcoming more than 70 million guests a year to the city. That gives us the opportunity to have a fantastic airport with direct flights all over America. In fact, I flew direct to Springfield this week from Orlando and I am taking a direct flight home. So, there is direct flights first and second tier cities all over America.

Rosen Center, our founder and CEO Harris Rosen is a U.S. Army Veteran. He was a member of the Airborne. Because of that we have a special relationship with our brother in the military and our veterans. We have welcomed everyone from AMVETS National Convention like we have talked about. U.S. Air Force. U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. Vietnam Veterans of America. 82nd Airborne. AMVETS Department of Florida, more than 20 years strong.

(Applause)

MR. GILSTRAP: The 11th Armored and the U.S. Army Yellow Ribbon Program bringing our folks home from various theaters throughout the world.

(Slide)

MR. GILSTRAP: We are located, for those who don't know on International Drive in Orlando. International Drive is a special place. It is either the home of or near to most of the things that we can do in Orlando. Everything from Sea World, Universal Studios, water parks, world's busiest Bass Shops, the world's largest McDonald's. More than 100 restaurants in the area. Two entertainment districts, Icon Park and the Pointe Orlando. Also nearby is City Walk and Downtown Disney.

(Slide)

MR. GILSTRAP: Things to do include Top Golf, which is about five minutes away. Mario Andretti's indoor racetrack where you can actually race all your friends and other departments in golf carts indoor -- or go-karts indoors. Restaurants, shops, two shopping malls in the area, Mall of Millennia as well as Florida Mall. Two premium outlets in the area. One at the top of International Drive and then one right down by Disney. There is literally something for everyone. So next slide.

(Slide)

MR. GILSTRAP: Rosen Center itself has seven restaurants on property. Includes everything from Harry's which we call Floribbean* cuisine which is Florida and Caribbean cuisine. Everglades which is our steak and seafood fine dining restaurant. You can also get gator tail there. Reds Deli, our 24-hour next year deli grab and go. 9840 Tapas and Tequilas. Sam and Bubby's is our lobby bar. You can get every restaurant menu in the hotel in that one place.

We also have Café Gogan, which is our casual dining and Banshu which is our sushi bar. Next slide.

(Slide)

MR. GILSTRAP: Rosen Center has been open since 1996. And like I said, I think Department of Florida has been there almost all of those years but the first couple. We have renovated all the sleeping rooms and meeting space in the past five years. This year we are working on some suites and we will work on some food and beverage areas this year and next as well. So. Next slide.

(Slide)

MR. GILSTRAP: All of your meetings, hospitalities will take place under one roof. We have the ability to host your convention. We have the ability to grow your convention. You are not even using all of our rooms and meeting space with what you have right now. We have three ballrooms. You guys have two of them right now. We have 26 salons and break outs and special meeting rooms. And what's fun -- I think on the next slide --

(Slide)

MR. GILSTRAP: Yeah, right there. So on the lobby level, we got the three ballrooms and then on the second level we got about 26 meeting rooms. But if you look down at the bottom on that slide there, on your right, all of the hospitality suites, we got 14 of them are on the same floor as the meeting space.

It makes a really nice flow okay. We are offering you guys hospitalities as part of our offer for you for the various departments. Right outside the hospitalities and the meeting space there is also a smoking balcony. So I don't know if you are aware but Florida is not smoking. Can't smoke inside the building but there are several areas outside the building where you can smoke if you choose. So. Next slide.

(Slide)

MR. GILSTRAP: What you are looking at right there is the pool area and some of our suites. We have over 69 suites in the hotel for those that want to use them for various sundry things, we can make that part of the deal. Next slide.

(Slide)

MR. GILSTRAP: So we can offer August 13th through 23rd of '27. I know you guys are kind of working on the different dates that you have. We also have dates available in other years. So if you would like to talk to us about what you would like to do, we are happy to do, so. Next slide.

(Slide.)

MR. GILSTRAP: So, we are at 139 for 2027. That is the same thing we did for 2026. We do not have resort fees. Mr. Rosen does not believe in them. There are no resort fees. The only thing we have is county and state tax on sleeping rooms. \$75,000 is our food and beverage minimum, same thing we did for 2026. So like I said, we do have future years available as well. Next slide.

(Slide)

MR. GILSTRAP: This is the best slide of all right here. So, Harris Rosen, that is him in 1961 getting his commission in the U.S. Army.

That is also him with all of his dogs right there next to him. But the most important thing here is Mr. Rosen is very proud to have been the recipient of the Silver Helmet Award from AMVETS in 1997. That trophy right there, that Silver Helmet actually sits outside our offices in the executive lobby.

So he thanks you. He sends his blessings to you and on behalf of Mr. Rosen, we welcome you back to Florida. We welcome back to Orlando. May God bless America and may God bless our troops.

(Applause)

MR. CHENELLY: Does anyone have any questions for us?

Questions and Answers

MR. : Parking.

MR. GILSTRAP: Parking okay. So parking, we are offering you guys \$15 self-parking. Valet is \$40 I believe. If you have a handicapable placard or a plate, you can valet park for \$15 as well. And we are also offering which is what we do for the Department of Florida, those with handicapable placards or plates who wish to park themselves in our valet area, there will be no charge for that. Does that answer your question?

MR. : Yes.

MR. GILSTRAP: All right.

MR. : How many elevators and do you --

(Laughter)

MR. : How many elevators and do you include the microwave and refrigerators in the room?

MR. GILSTRAP: So, you know I am trying to lose weight so I have been taking the stairs. And that has been a good thing. But we actually have 10 guest room elevators at the Rosen Center. Six serve the lower floors, four serve the upper floors. Staff takes a different set of elevators. There are three serving staff on all floors.

Meeting space has an elevator and escalators and then there is also staircases between the first and second meeting floors, two of them in the meeting space. Did I get that right? Okay. Good. So, a lot of ways to get around. But yes, 10 high speed elevators.

MR. : Okay and the rooms, refrigerators and microwaves?

MR. GILSTRAP: We do not have microwaves in the rooms. That is an insurance thing in

Florida. They don't let us do it anymore. We do have refrigerators in every room in the hotel.

MR. : ----

MR. GILSTRAP: In Red's Deli. Yeah it is open 24 hours that you can use the microwave down there. You are absolutely right. Sir?

MR. : I need also to point out that all of the elevators work.

(Laughter)

MR. GILSTRAP: Oh, oh and you know that is a funny thing about the ice machine. Because I keep hearing in the hallway, folks are coming up and taking the ice on the floor and you know, and cap is 2 to 3 times a day. One of the things that we learned in working with the Department of Florida that is part of the National deal, we actually -- I think it is 500 -- let me get this right. For your hospitalities, we are offering I believe it is 500 pounds of ice a day directly to AMVETS for your various uses and those big ice carts that we have.

So you don't have to go and raid the floors. So, yep 500 pounds a day out of our kitchens.

MR. : While we were discussing your handicapped parking, some of those people will be in need for mobility scooters. What are the availability for our members that would need to obtain them while they are down there?

MR. GILSTRAP: So we are blessed in Orlando because we have so many -- so many guests. There are three major companies in Orlando that will deliver mobility scooters, wheel chairs, carts, you name it. They are delivered straight to the hotel. You just reserve them. You pick them up at the bell stand. And when you are finished with them at the end of your stay, you just leave them at the bell stand and the company comes to get them. It is easy peasy. That is all you need to do.

MR. : Thank you.

MR. GILSTRAP: Oh, ma'am, sorry.

MS. BECK: No, you are fine. Shellie Beck, Tennessee. What do you have for parking for trailers?

MR. GILSTRAP: So, the property actually has space for 2200 vehicles. We have a multi-story parking garage and then surface parking surrounding the hotel. I don't know what we are going to look like in '27 or '28 or wherever, but we have probably space for 20 or 30 trucks and trailers on the property. We also own a property next door to the hotel that we have -- we tour the property down to expand the hotel

and then COVID happened.

So, we own this property and we do allow people to put their trailers and large vehicles on that property next door.

MR. : Do you have any shuttle service at the hotel?

MR. GILSTRAP: So, we do have shuttles to the theme parks. Shuttles to and from the airport since COVID is not the way it used to be. We do have shuttles. Most people are using Rideshare these days. Uber and Lyft. It is 20 minutes to the airport. So it is not terribly expensive. Sir?

MR. : How much are the taxes and stuff on the hotel?

MR. GILSTRAP: So, food and beverage is six and a half percent. Sleeping room is twelve and a half percent. Plus a one percent -- it is basically a county marketing fee. So it works out to thirteen and a half percent.

MR. : Thank you.

MR. GILSTRAP: You are welcome.

MR. : Yes, I was curious. Like right now you guys are kind of getting pummeled out there. How do you guys think the weather is going to be -- is it going to be the same --

(Laughter)

MR. : -- but how are you affected -- I guess that is the way -- where you are located, how are you affected by that whole weather thing?

MR. GILSTRAP: So funny enough, I was supposed to be here on Monday. I got here yesterday because apparently American Airlines is not brave enough to fly through some bad weather. So, generally speaking, August is not a month we worry about. The -- you guys in Florida can probably check me on this.

I think the last time we had an event in August was 2016 I believe. And then it didn't hit us then. It actually turned and hit South Carolina, I believe. So last time we had an event in August, it was 2016. This event didn't cause problems for Orlando. It only caused problems for aircraft trying to get down into Florida or leave Florida.

And like I said, it was cleared up in a couple of days. So. I can't promise you anything but it is rare.

MR. : We are probably going to have some riders that are going to be riding their bikes and stuff ---- so we have to think about that.

MR. GILSTRAP: Well, in August, you are going to have rain regardless, that is just the way it is. So, you know -- bring your rain suit. But generally in Florida it doesn't rain all day. It is 20 to 30 minutes and then it clears. And you catch another band maybe 4 or 5 hours later. Because it is basically just crossing over from the Gulf, the Atlantic.

On your way down though, yeah you are going to hit some rain probably in Georgia into Florida but it shouldn't be too bad.

MR. : Sir, you are pet friendly?

MR. GILSTRAP: Of course. I showed you that -- Mr. Rosen has like 9 dogs. Yeah, we have -- we -- service animals are always free. If it is your companion animal, we welcome it. There is a cleaning fee I think it is \$50 length of stay. For a companion animal. We also look the other way for cats. We are not real fond of snakes or reptiles unless it is your service animal because some of them are. So.

DR. DISSELURNS: This is Dr. Disselturns, Department of Florida. I do not believe that you mentioned a food and beverage minimum for the prices you offer?

MR. GILSTRAP: Oh we did -- okay, \$75,000 for any of the deals we have on the table. Which is the same deal we made for '26. You also get a discount as an AMVETS member at any of the hotels/retail/food and beverage outlets. So I believe it is 15 percent but let me double check. 15 percent. So 15 percent discount on all of our retail outlets.

MR. BEANEISE: Tom Beaneise, Department of Ohio. Do you have any renovations planned during this time?

MR. GILSTRAP: So we are fortunate that we did a sleeping renovation 2018 into early '20. We did our meeting space 2019 into '20. We did our guest hallways in '22. So unlike some hotels that kind of let the whole thing go at one time and then redo the whole hotel, we are consistently renovating different areas of the hotel. In that time period, I would suspect that we may do like retail outlets or what have you.

Sleeping rooms probably not quite to a full renovation that year. Meeting space would most probably not be -- we do have plans to expand the hotel but the way the plans are done, we bought the property next door. So we are going to build a separate building and that the very last thing we do is tie the two buildings together. So it won't impact the operations within the current hotel.

MR. BEANEISE: Okay. Thank you.

MR. GILSTRAP: You are welcome. All right.

Thank you very much. Oh, sir?

MR. : Just a minor thing ---- cigar places ----

MR. GILSTRAP: So funny thing. You can't smoke in hotels in Florida. Right. And if you work for Rosen, you can't smoke. It is part of our healthcare thing. It kind of runs like Tri-care at Rosen, I mean, they pay for everything for us. But there are cigar lounges in the area. And we actually sell really top shelf cigars, particularly if you go over to Rosen Shingle Creek which is about two miles away. Oh by the way, any of you golf?

So Shingle Creek Golf Club is about two miles away from us and we own it. So if you play golf -- not as a tournament but if a foursome or whoever want to go over and play golf, free transportation from the hotel over to Shingle Creek Golf Club. And at the club house, they got some really good cigars. So yes.

MR. : Discount on golf ----

MR. GILSTRAP: We do discount our guests there as well, yes. And August is a good time to play, so. Oh not too hot at all. Is that it? All right. Thank you.

MR. : What is the rate to play golf?

MR. GILSTRAP: It varies. Currently in the summertime -- I am just going to give you what we are currently doing. I think afternoon, I think it is like 65, I think. You are here in February and it is going to 180 but August it is 65, I believe. All right.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: Provost Marshal, bring in our other presenter.

2027 Convention Bid Presentation The Nugget, Sparks, Nevada by Forrest Hill

MR. HILL: First of all, I would like to say what a week? Huh? Yeah. I have met a lot of people here and Bootleggin' Bill from Tennessee, that is some -- that was some white lightning I was drinking yesterday. And here is the thing, I thought oh God, I am going to go home and go to bed and not a problem. No, I was all fired up and ready to steal a fast car and get a dirt road. Do a little bootlegging myself.

All right, so I am going to tell a little bit of jokes here once in a while but I will need participation. So when I ask the question, I want to say -- I want to say no, it is your face. Okay.

(Joke)

MR. HILL: Thank you. Okay. We are going to go with one more joke and don't be offended by this one. Hopefully.

(Joke)

MR. HILL: Okay. Here we go.

(Slide)

MR. HILL: Welcome everybody. Welcome to the Nugget. We have done over \$100 million worth of renovations since the last time you were there in 2016. So, it is a brand new hotel. It is -- we painted it. We have -- oh there it is right in front of me. Okay. We have painted it. We have redid all of the rooms, all the meeting space.

It is going to be under one roof. Let me -- what else can I -- go ahead and hit the next slide.

(Slide)

MR. HILL: Well, we are pleased to invite you the American Vets for the 82nd National Convention to return to Reno. And then it just repeated everything I just said. We invested \$100 million in improvements in new rooms, new restaurants and new decor. We are going to go ahead and hit the next one.

(Slide)

MR. HILL: Accessibility. We have free self-parking and we do have valet but it is \$10.

(Slide)

MR. HILL: We also -- the resort tower rooms. We have the resort tower rooms and the casino tower rooms. We are going to find out which -- where your registration is with Joe and Jasmine at pre-planning and see exactly which tower -- you want to be in the closest tower probably close to registration. Some people might be in the casino tower. And that brings me to the hospitality suites.

I went and visited -- well you know I was at Tennessee's but New York and thank you for the -- the Buffalo New York gentleman said hey you better wear red. So I passed the red shit, ten times. Looking for a tie. I find a tie and then I am told no you better wear a red shirt. All right. So here I am.

Hospitality suites. We have -- we will be in the casino tower. We have up to 14 to 18 suites. And I will have a bedroom, a parlor and then there is another bedroom next to it and another bedroom and if you open the captain's doors, it all can be one big row of rooms all put together.

We are going to come with a great price for the

hospitality suites and we hope that 119 and we are going to waive the resort fee of \$35. Yeah, --

(Laughter)

MR. HILL: Blame it on Bootlegging Bill. By the way, I love Bootlegging Bill and that was some good moonshine. You drink it right out of the jar. About three or four times. Let's see, we have the space. We can make sure that everybody is in all 175 square -- thousand square feet of meeting space with lots of break outs. Hospitalitys on the casino tower.

Scooters. We can get up to -- we have 10 there but we will try to get a count of how many people might need them but we can get up to 50 to 60 scooters to be there for your convenience. There will be a cost. So just get prepared for that. What are they charging here? Oh you can't get them here? All right. I am going to put that as a notch in my -- there we go. All right. Is there any other questions or is there anything I can answer?

We really love to have you. We want it to be a win/win situation. We know the American vets and God bless you guys and thank you. But we wanted to make it a win/win situation for everybody. For Joe, Jasmine and all of you. So it is affordable luxury is what you are going to have at The Nugget. And sign up for those gaming cards whether you game or not. Because our biggest competitor is ourselves.

So if you guys come back or you will be invited to concerts, free rooms, it all works out for you. Go ahead.

MS. : I have a couple of questions. Do you have refrigerators, microwaves and what is your ice?

MR. HILL: For hospitality suites, we are going to comp --

MR. : In the sleeping rooms.

MR. HILL: In sleeping rooms, we have refrigerators and coffee makers. We do not have microwaves.

MS. : Okay. And what is the parking for trailers?

MR. HILL: There is no charge for trailers. We just have you park in the west lot. And the west lot is well, it is west.

(Laughter)

MR. HILL: It is west of the entry but there is no cost. There is no charge. But there is no hook ups either. So you got to --

MS. : --- ice in the hospitality rooms.

MR. HILL: We are going to comp -- yes, for the hospitalities we are going to comp the ice. It is in a cambro -- hope I said that right and it is about 100 pounds of ice. So you get one of those free a day. And then we will go through and see what times you want us to come back and pull your trash. And we will have tables. There can be bed removal. There is a cost for that. But if you have a hospitality and you need some rooms, let's make it big.

MS. : Now --- room, we need a big room.

MR. HILL: Oh the Tennessee room. Okay. We are going to get you a whole row of rooms.

(Laughter)

MR. HILL: And we are going to leave a couple of beds in there too.

DR. : I have a question for you, hello. I would like to see the rest of your slides. You have 14 up there. Can we see the rest of your slides?

MR. HILL: You most certainly can.

(Slide)

MR. HILL: Two of them we are going to skip but you can see 12 of them. Luxury dining in the Chop House. We -- this can hold -- one of those rooms can hold up to 34 people. We can go up to 50 but we just opened some air wall type stuff there. But it is reasonably priced. It is our tablecloth restaurant. It is down below of the casino floor. You will take an elevator or an escalator down to it. It is one of the top steakhouses in Reno.

And then there is more dining options with the Island Grill, which is kind of a grab and go. You can go from Asian to pizza to hamburgers. It is a grab and go type thing. The Asian food is really good. And then we have Rosy's Café, that is our 24 hour. That is our coffee shop. You can have breakfast, lunch and dinner.

We also have room service. You take a picture of the code and then you can order -- you can either have it delivered or go down to Rosy's and pick it up. It is up to you. It is cheaper if you go down to Rosy's and pick it up.

And then we have the world's famous oyster bar. And it is not just oysters. It is pan roast, it is linguini, it is raviolis. Mushroom raviolis, lobster raviolis. Not that I have eaten there once a week for my life. Anyway, a little bit about me. My name is Forrest Hill and I am the Director of Sales at The Nugget. And I want to welcome you here and I hope got a -- pretty much some people -- some beers.

I do have to go home and explain some bar

bills. I tell you that. But it was fun. It was a lot of fun.

(Slide)

MR. HILL: The Victorian Square is adjacent to the hotel and that has local night life and neighborhood restaurants. And some of them are quite large, so you might to even have a party over there if you can talk to the people. We also have a movie theater across the street. We have Italian, Irish, a brewery, In and Out Burger and a pizza.

And it is all walkable. It is very easy. It is safe. You walk out there, you go eat and you can get out of the hotel for a minute while you are here. And enjoy the atmosphere. And the beautiful big sky. It is 45 minutes from the historic Virginia City. I noticed there was some -- a lot of cycles, Harleys, bikes, choppers. They are all out there.

But we -- in Reno, you can rent if you don't bring your cycle, you can rent one. And Virginia City, going up to Virginia City, it is winding and you go up to, I would have to say 5,000 -- a little over 5,000 feet but it is a fun town. And it is very historic.

(Slide)

MR. HILL: And then we have beautiful Lake Tahoe. And that is 45 minutes and that is a beautiful ride as well.

(Slide)

MR. HILL: Well, we hope to see you back in '27. And I really hope that the vote goes to Reno Sparks. I am a third generation Reno-ite Sparks -- basically sparks. My grandfathers worked on the railroad on B Street, Victorian on the other side of The Nugget. And my dad was chief of police and the police department was on the other side. So the southern wind kind of blew me in and here I am, third generation on the B Street.

So I have a lot of passion for it. A lot of passion for Sparks. And I just hope we get your vote and you come on to Reno and you will have a good time and a win/win situation where it is affordable and you win a big jack pot. And I am going to tell the new general -- oh question.

Questions and Answers

MS. : Quick question. With regards to the smoking areas, is it still smoking in the casinos? Because I remember going through to get to the restaurants and it was a lot of smoke. Is there anything that has been done about that?

MR. HILL: Yes and no. Smoke, drink and

gambling kind of go together. So the casino is smoking. But we do have a non-smoking area and that is in the lobby bar where they have slot machines by the Starbucks area. So as you come from the resort towers, you won't see any smoke until you get into the casino. If you are going to smoke, you usually go to the casino, some people go right outside.

But we do have new air filters, I can't say it because of that Bill -- Bill's moonshine. But that is -- you are -- there is going to be smoke. I am sorry.

MS. : Okay.

MR. : I have one question. The elevators at the hotel. Do they all work and will they work if we are there in '27? This is a continuous issue. We have had it for the last two years. Three years, I am sorry.

MR. HILL: Well, yes.

MR. : And I know you don't have control over mechanics, I realize that. But can you get them fixed while we are there?

MR. HILL: We will get them fixed before you get there. We --

MR. : That is a good answer.

MR. HILL: Right. We are going to get them fixed before you get there. And then we are going to show you like they did over at Lincoln, some service elevators. Because when the crowd also breaks and they all have to go up at once, it is a wait. You won't have to go and see the casino or be down in the casino because the second floor will drop you guys off on the second floor, when you go back up, you will have 6 for the casino tower and 6 for the resort tower. And they are quite speedy, so. You will have 12 elevators.

And then we can show you the service elevators as well.

MR. : Thank you.

MR. HILL: We will have a shoe shine person as well. Because I noticed that not everybody wears tennis shoes here. Anymore questions?

MR. : Service animals?

MR. HILL: Service animals are okay.

MR. : How about non?

MR. HILL: Non-service -- no. So, go online get that jacket and put it on your dog.

(Laughter)

MR. HILL: Or cat. And I just want to say

thank you -- thank you for the time. Thank you for week. I have had a lot of fun. I know a couple of you. I see a couple of you out here. Kyle, he is here. He rocks, scissors, papers for drinks. So. It is rock, scissors, paper, shoe. And that is when you got to show it. And I won. So he bought me a drink. All right. Sir?

2ND VICE COMDR SHIPLEY: Could you tell us -- over here, Paul Shipley, National 2nd Vice to your right.

MR. HILL: Oh right here.

2ND VICE COMDR SHIPLEY: I have been a victim of Bill's moonshine before too. I understand where you are. Could you tell us the room rate and taxes for the hotel please?

MR. HILL: The room rate will be 119, taxes will be 13.5. And that is the city tax. We can't do anything about that. And then I think there is the \$2 -- no there is a \$2 RSCVA charge as well. So it is going to round up to -- about a buck thirty five out of pocket. The food and beverage number is waived. We -- you are all here, we know you are going to eat. And probably gamble and smoke and drink Bill's moonshine.

So we want to have -- any other costs that you need to know? We can -- we are working this out with Joe and we are going to make this affordable and winnable and so we can see you guys -- we want you to make your money so you come back to Reno several times and get your money and then you can go to San Diego. You know. Orlando. Wherever.

MR. BANKS: ---- Banks, Department of Georgia. Is there going to be shuttle transportation?

MR. HILL: There is. There is shuttle transportation. I am glad you brought that up. Our shuttle leaves at 6:00 in the morning but with your crowd coming from the east coast, Midwest, we will put shuttles earlier as 5:00 in the morning. And we will run it until midnight. And we can -- if we know the majority of the people that are coming in, we have certain dates. I can see Sunday, Monday, Tuesday. That is when the majority of the people are starting to come in.

And we will have extra shuttles if we need. We can rent two.

MR. : Any costs for your shuttles?

MR. HILL: No cost.

MR. : One more question over here.

MR. : ---- Department of Tennessee, will they have a tour bus that would take us to Lake Tahoe?

MR. HILL: Well, we have destination groups that we can get together and finance, you know, take it out of Joe's pocket.

(Laughter)

MR. HILL: All right. I guess that is a no. But there -- we do have destinations that maybe everybody or some states can get together and gather up their money and get a bus and go up there. And his name is Todd. And he will tell you the history of Lake Tahoe. Why it was named Lake Tahoe, Chief Tahoe. And he was Shoshone but he took over as the Chief of the Paiutes as well.

CMDR CLARK: And for the record, ---- will not be funding that trip. We will not be funding -- not coming out of our budget. If you get Todd to pay for that, find Todd out.

MR. HILL: Yeah, tell Bill to sell some of that moonshine. Step it up a little bit. Any other questions?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Thank you, sir. I appreciate you coming out.

MR. HILL: Thank you. Thank you, everybody. It was great meeting you.

(Applause)

MR. : Somebody asked what dates do we have available.

MR. HILL: The dates for '27 is August 6th, August 7th and it ends the 15th. August 7th and 8th, you are going to run into Hot August Nights and normally we -- normally we sell about \$200 a night or more for Hot August Nights and we have you on Friday and Saturday at \$119 as well.

We are going to try to keep you coming back. So we are going to try to keep the rate as long as we can. You are going to have fun at Hot August Nights. It is a wide -- city wide event. Thank you. And any other questions?

(No response.)

MR. HILL: No? Okay. You are going to have a fun time in Reno. It is a good time. Flights, you might have to probably catch two planes to get there. Vegas, Salt Lake City, Denver, Vegas, Phoenix, L.A., San Francisco, Oakland, those might be the hubs that you go into. Sacramento even. Sometimes -- some people fly to Sacramento and drive to Reno. It is a beautiful drive.

But it is -- airfare is what it is. Food prices as you know are 40 percent higher everywhere in the nation. Let's see, what else is -- what

else you want to talk about? Is that good? All right. Vote for Reno. We want your business. We want you to enjoy. Thank you.

(Applause)

Bid Discussions

MR. McFARLAIN: All right. I think he is gone. Tennessee ought to be ashamed of themselves. The good thing is, everything that we just renegotiated is on record. It is in the minutes, so we are good. So to kind of give you all -- the Finance Committee did meet and we kind of -- as you all know, we go through this stuff throughout the year. Jasmine does a great job on working on trying to get all those RFPs and -- so it is not easy to get these conventions up and going. I hope you all know that.

I want to talk a little bit about that. You know, we are talking about money drives everything. Everybody understands that and I will be the first one to tell you that you know, these conventions are not cheap. So I don't want -- I was joking but what I wasn't joking when I said hey we are not paying for that. We can't -- there is -- look, we are not broke but if your finance officer ever tells you, yeah we got money, we are good, fire that dude right now.

(Laughter)

MR. McFARLAIN: Finance officers should always tell you that you are broke. And you can't buy it and you should have to convince him why you need to buy it. So I said all that to say that we need to change in they way we are doing some business. We need to change the way we are doing some business. We have to change -- our conventions are expensive. I understand the travel that goes along with it. I see all these white hats and gold braids. Who pays for your travel?

Majority of your travel -- I said majority. Hey listen, we are not going to debate. I am telling you -- I know what comes out of this budget. You don't make money to travel. You should be reimbursed for your travel. You shouldn't profit off of travel. All right. So saying all of that to say, we try to work out something where we get into a partnership with Orlando, where we alternate with Orlando and Reno.

So you think about that. We can actually -- we told them to have a presentation ready. And if you all are willing to entertain that, they may renegotiate those rights where we go from -- next year -- we already know next year we are going to Greensboro. They year after that, we are already set -- scheduled to go to Roseland in Orlando. The year after that we are going to -- possibly go to Reno. Let's be very politically correct, possibly go to Reno and then go back to Roseland, back to Reno.

They are willing to -- the hotels -- some of them are willing to hold the rates. When you are talking zero F&B. Do half of you all even know what that means? Probably not. But I am telling you that saves me a lot of money. Hundreds of thousands of dollars. So before you vote on what you think you know, come talk to me about it. I will explain it all to you. All right, I promise you I will. If you have been around me long enough, you know I will break it down for you. Always got my book handy.

So, this is a good deal. It is -- I encourage you to allow us to do this for you. So -- and I think -- Commander, I think we would have to go into a vote for that.

CMDR CLARK: Discussion too.

MR. McFARLAIN: Say it again?

CMDR CLARK: Discussion too.

MR. McFARLAIN: Well, yeah, I can't call for the vote anyway. I am just giving my report because that is -- so that is my recommendation or the foundation -- I am sorry, the National Finance Committee met and we authorized Joe and Sabrina -- Jasmine to renegotiate some of these routes. Look at possibilities. But our recommendation from the National Finance Committee for 2027 is Reno, Nevada. Then from there -- but we also didn't allow them to explore other options. So that is our recommendation to you, the members, that you elected me to do for you. All right. Thank you.

(Applause)

MOTION

CMDR CLARK: We are going to take a motion for 2027. We have Rosen Center and The Nugget to choose from. I am going to entertain a motion.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Motion for Reno.

MR. RICE: Second, Maryland.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Commander -- Commander, Chris Studebaker, 4th National District Commander. I move that we go to Reno, Nevada for our 2027 Convention.

CMDR CLARK: All right.

MR. RICE: Bruce Rice from Maryland. I second that motion.

CMDR CLARK: We have a motion and a second for Reno, Nevada for 2027. The Nugget -- Sparks actually is the town. Any discussion?

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: I just want to

make sure that you all know that when you are making these bids, you know you always complain about these hotels, the elevators ain't working, the air conditioning is this, that and the other and this thing, this sucks and that sucks, you get what you pay for. That is all I want to say. You get what you pay for.

MS. WONG: Commander Clark?

CMDR CLARK: Yes?

MS. WONG: Helen Wong, Commander, Department of California. If we do vote for Reno, who -- which department would be responsible for hosting? Would that be California by chance?

CMDR CLARK: We don't have to have a hosting department. So National would handle that. Any other discussion?

MR. BUSHHOCKER: Commander, Lee Bushhocker, Department of Tennessee, I have been to a convention in Reno. The American Legion National Convention. It is hot as hell in August. You got to know that. Okay.

CMDR CLARK: Mr. Bankhead?

MR. BANKHEAD: Commander, Bob Bankhead, NEC of Pennsylvania. I just want everybody to realize this is not Reno where this is Nugget is. This is in Sparks. You cannot walk to Reno from that hotel.

CMDR CLARK: For those that haven't been there, it is ride to Reno, however there is a full casino in this hotel. It is self-contained. Tina?

MS. LUMPKINS: Tina Lumpkins from the Department of Texas. I have gone to Sparks several -- twice. We have been there twice. We -- me being there at the time -- the last time I was there, I think I was National Saddest. We -- there was not that many problems at that hotel. And I have been to a lot of conventions. And I am telling you when we were at that hotel, we didn't -- I did not hear very few -- very few problems in that hotel.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: You have a tough decision here. Both hotels work well. I have been to both several times and they both have great amenities. They both have good service. The decisions is basically location from where we want to go. Any other questions? Discussions?

PNC MISKULIN: Commander? Commander? Duane Miskulin, Past National Commander from Wisconsin.

CMDR CLARK: Yes, sir.

PNC MISKULIN: If I remember last time we had a convention in Nevada, we got back to headquarters and voted not to have another convention in a state that is not a Department of AMVETS. And Nevada is not a department. Am I correct?

CMDR CLARK: Last year we had a CBL change to that.

PNC MISKULIN: I am sorry, what was that?

CMDR CLARK: I believe last year there was a CBL change to that if I am not mistaken. Thought it was changed.

MR. : Yeah, we changed it last year.

CMDR CLARK: It was changed. Department of Alaska?

MS. FOLI: Christa Foli, Department of Alaska, Commander. I am fairly new to all of these conventions. I have only been to the last few. But I really like the idea that we are having it on two sides of the country. Everyone I have been to, has all been East Coast. I would like to see one on the West Coast. We have a huge contingency from the West Coast. For me, I have to pay no matter where I go.

I would love to get you to Alaska but that is way too expensive. And so I understand that is every organization but I really love to see the West Coast -- the west side of our country get as much love as the east side and middle get from this organization. And I know we all love each other and I love all of you but I would like to see a balance.

So for me, I understand I am not a gambler, so Reno is not important to me. But look at the cost, look at the benefits for us. We are all trying to save money so that we have more to give to our charities, right. So if they are not charging food and beverage, that is a huge thing. A minimum that our National doesn't have to come up with, if we don't meet that need.

And that bar is really hard to meet sometimes. I have done a lot of other things within my career and my life of putting these things together and I know that F&B is critical if you don't know what that means. But I recommend for myself and I guess people in the whole department because they are not here today but I am speaking for them, I hope we do Reno this year. Thank you.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: All right. We have had discussion. All those in favor for the 2027 convention to be held at The Nugget in Sparks, Nevada, signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(Chorus of "nays.")

CMDR CLARK: The ayes have it. We are going to Nevada.

(Applause)

MOTION

MR. McFARLAIN: Commander, I make a motion -- Kelly McFarlain, National Finance Officer, I make a motion that we move on with the negotiations of contracts for '28, '29, and '30. '28 Orlando -- '30 in Sparks. '31 in Orlando. '33 in Sparks. '34 in Orlando. Listen, listen up. Listen to what we are saying before you have your sidebars. We -- the motion is made that we allow them to bring their numbers back to the floor before we vote on them. We are not voting on locking this in. Let's see what their proposal is. So that is my motion.

MS. LUMPKIN: Tina Lumpkin, second.

MR. McFARLAIN: Second was Tina Lumpkin. Out of Texas.

CMDR CLARK: Do you understand what we are saying?

(Chorus of "yes.")

CMDR CLARK: We are not voting on anything. We are talking about negotiating between Orlando and Nevada to rotate -- alternate back and forth for the next four years.

MR. HAWK: Commander? Gerry Hawk, Executive Director for Department of Pennsylvania. Does this mean that we can never hold another convention -- National Convention in any other state? If a state wants to --

CMDR CLARK: No.

MR. HAWK: Sounds like we are locking this in. Alternating years.

MR. McFARLAIN: So the motion is --

MR. HAWK: I just would like that clarified. If you are making a motion, I don't want it to be the motion that that is what we are doing.

CMDR CLARK: No, not forever.

MR. : Kelly McFarlain's motion, the years here would be 2 years would be these two sites. Third year undetermined at this point. Then the next -- then the next time it would be Sparks, then Orlando, yes Orlando and then another blank year that would be determined. And then another Orlando and Sparks. And

so it would cover us out -- it would cover 7 of the next ten years is what it would cover.

CMDR CLARK: Sir?

MR. MARTEL: Andy Martel from Maryland. I am sorry, I have done this for 30 years and I have really enjoyed going across the country. I have enjoyed Pittsburgh, I have enjoyed Dallas, I have enjoyed even Reno and Florida and all the rest of the places. Wonderful places to visit. And I would love to visit them again. To be able to go from Reno to Florida to Reno to Florida to Reno to Florida is not what I am looking for.

And I understand that is not what you are proposing but you are proposing to get bids in that direction. And --

MR. McFARLAIN: You are missing the whole --

MR. MARTEL: Hang on, it is my floor. So at the moment, that is what we are seeing right now. We are seeing Reno and Florida. We are doing that for the next couple of years. We are going to do that again. I believe that the headquarters owes it to the membership to be able to move it around the country, to be able to show what AMVETS looks like across the country.

I mean, there is 30,000 AMVETS in Ohio. Why aren't we in Ohio? Right, so. So yeah I mean, let's not bounce back and forth between two cities. That is a pain in the butt.

MR. DUFF: Commander?

CMDR CLARK: Yes?

MR. DUFF: Al Duff, Department of Connecticut Commander. I think people aren't understanding. We are not voting today to just use those two states. All we are doing is giving National permission to go and research and see what they can get for prices and come back to us and vote later on. We are not authorizing them to make any deals today for those two places. All we are authorizing them to do is to go out and negotiate and see what kind of prices.

And in today's world, I think we all know things are going up higher and higher and the more you can negotiate, the better price you can get. Maybe it ain't going to work out. We don't know that. But we should give our National Department the chance to go and negotiate these prices and see what they can get us for prices.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: If you remember in Bethesda at the NEC, we turned down every area, state

that submitted pricing because it was outrageous. We could not afford it. What we are doing here is giving an option that we say if we go to Reno and Florida, for two years, we can do it for this amount of money. The following year is open for bids and we can wherever, whoever puts the bids in, we decide on.

But at least for those two years, here is where we are negotiating, here is what we can do, here is how much money we can possibly save. All we are asking is to be able to present that and give it as an option. If you all don't like, you can shoot it down at that point but at least we have something to compare to what it would be to individually pick out like Andy was saying, other parts of the country.

But we tried that in Bethesda and we saw what happened there. But we keep trying different hotels and Jasmine went out of her way trying to attract different states to a bid and we wound up with six or seven that were just way, way out of range. Yes, sir?

MR. ROBERTS: Bob Roberts, Texas. You are not going to shut down the possibility of other people bidding at this point is what I understand.

CMDR CLARK: No.

MR. ROBERTS: So other people can come in next year and present a bid for us to vote on.

CMDR CLARK: Absolutely.

MR. ROBERTS: So we are not shutting down the possibility. So what he is proposing is a pretty good proposition in my book. We are not closing the door to other places. We are just trying to find the best deal available.

CMDR CLARK: What we are saying is next year if we have three states that want to bid individually, here is what we have. Three different locations. If we use the venues of Florida and Nevada, here is what we can do. Here is the different pricing, here is the -- and then it is up to the body to decide. But at least we are asking for the option to negotiate with Florida and Sparks to do that. Nothing locked in. It is still your vote come next year. Yes?

MS. EAVES: Good morning, Georgia Eaves from the Department of the great state of Washington, D.C. Be nice. But what I recommend -- I hear what you all are saying and I agree wholeheartedly but we are limiting the states that you are going to go look at and bring back as a proposal. We still using just two states. I recommend that we have three or four and being said that, my name is Georgia. So why not Georgia?

MR. McFARLAIN: Some people aren't understanding the way this works. We don't just

call hotels and say hey we want to do this -- we contact -- Jasmine contacts city officials and it is a long -- it is a very drawn out process. We are talking -- it is half -- three quarters of a million dollar operation. It is not just go and get a hotel in a convention center.

It is more than all of that. So when Atlanta came and Georgia -- they have to -- we solicit to everyone. We -- everyone knows and I promise you, Jasmine sends our information -- it is called RFP -- when she sends it out, she sends it to everyone. They don't reply. So the ones that do reply is who get our business. And we -- so it is not just a -- I promise you, she e-mails every one, she contacts everyone to try to get conventions, to get better deals, and things like that. They don't reply.

MS. EAVES: I hear what you are saying. I agree with what you are saying but let's -- we are being specific when we say let's go to Orlando, let's go to Reno. So let's be specific when we say let's go to the state of Georgia, not send out a blast e-mail and you pick it up and say that is like calling Uber, whoever is in the area wants you, they will come and pick you up. So I think we should identify the states that we want to go to, get them to come back with a proposal. Not blast an e-mail and whoever pick it up that is where we are going.

Only targeting two places. Nevada and Orlando. I love them both and I go to all of them, but --

MR. : Ma'am, we brought a bid to this floor last year -- less than a year ago, from Atlanta, Georgia and it was voted down.

CMDR CLARK: It was too high. PNC Heun.

PNC HEUN: Thank you, Commander. PNC Heun, I think what we are failing to understand what this body is trying to achieve is a deal. We are trying to achieve the best price for all of us sitting in this room right now and our room rates, our dinner rates, the -- doing a multiple year deal, we can get a better rate and at the end of the day, we know what our budget is going into the next year. That is what this body is trying to achieve right now.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: All right, you know what we are trying to do. It is simply a matter of getting the information together to present to you, nothing more than that. And we will continue to solicit other areas to present for your approval. We are just asking permission to negotiate with those two venues.

PNC HEUN: Commander, can we call for the question please.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Just one more

comment. And if we did what the question is about, if you talk to Reno and you talk to Florida, and tell them that you want to consider this -- they will give you a today's rate. And now if you can find another state that can beat that, well then have it.

But if you tell Reno and Florida you are going to do it on certain years, they will give you a price now as opposed to the price they will give you if you waited until then.

CMDR CLARK: We have a call for the question. All those in favor in giving us permission to negotiate and get funding options from Reno -- Sparks, Nevada and Florida Rosen Center, signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(Chorus of "no.")

CMDR CLARK: The ayes have it. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: My decision. All right. Jan, can you come up and give us a credentials report please.

Credentials Report by PNC Jan Brown

PNC BROWN: All right. Sorry for the delay but we are -- what I want you all to understand is we don't have a program that does registration. We get an excel spreadsheet from Eventbrite or whatever that place is called. And there is duplicates and there is -- all kinds of garbage on there. There is all kinds of garbage that we get that we have to straighten out. We have people and anybody that was there Tuesday morning, I told you people come back later but no, everybody is going to stand in line, got to be there at 8:30 in the morning.

It is a small space. A lot of paperwork and we are working off excel spreadsheets.

MR. : You are doing a great job.

PNC BROWN: Well, I know but we -- we are trying to make it right. And I can't always -- excuse me, but I can't always be here when you guys need me to do the report unless I just give you whatever. And I don't want to do that. I want to make sure -- we want to make sure that it is right. And we went over every single person that walked in. Every person that signed in. And there was confusion because we were waiting on badges.

So I may -- if your numbers are different, I am not doing it in the hall here, come to

registration and I will be there -- I will stay there until 2:00 today. So if there is -- send a person, no more than two from each department if you need -- if you have problems with the numbers. Those numbers do not include people who checked in today. A lot of writers came in this morning and checked in. So this is as of close of business yesterday. It is a lesser number than we had yesterday because we finally got all of the duplicates out and we got all of the garbage out.

So -- and if anybody has an issue with it, I will be glad to put you on the committee next year with the permission of the Commander. So, all right, here we go again. Alaska 3, Alabama 4, Arkansas 1, Arizona 3, California 18, Colorado 1 -- who is Colorado? Yay, welcome. District of Columbia 10, Delaware 3, Florida 25, Georgia 12, Hawaii 1. Where is Marcus? He here? Welcome.

Iowa 8, Illinois has 25, Indiana has 26, Kansas 1, Kentucky 13, Louisiana 4. Massachusetts 8, Maryland 7, Maine 2, Michigan 5, Missouri 13, North Carolina 11, North Dakota 5, Nebraska 1, New Mexico 1, New York 18, Ohio 18, Oklahoma 1, Pennsylvania 10, Rhode Island 2.

South Carolina 3, Tennessee 25, Texas 8, Virginia 9, Vermont 1 -- where is Mr. Cobin? He here? I never waived at anyone from Vermont since I have been doing this. Washington 4, Wisconsin 15. That is the most I have ever seen from Wisconsin. Ever.

(Applause)

PNC BROWN: And West Virginia 2. For a grand total of 330. Did I miss Connecticut? I probably did. Connecticut 3. Yes. And our grand total is 330. Like I said, that does not include any pre-registers who have not signed in. If anybody feels like they are missing somebody, come down and see me. Like I said, I will stay until 2:00 today. After that, I am done.

But we are going to have the numbers right. We are open again tomorrow morning between 7:00 and 9:00. Not 8:00 and 10:00. We want to get everybody in and out and get the elections going. So we will be going from 7:00 until 9:00. Commander? You still owe me \$60. I am just saying. And I have yesterday -- I will take a check yes or credit card.

I was -- for those of you that don't know, I am the Sons advisor. And I won the 50/50 yesterday. And I am donating this towards the haircuts \$230 there.

CMDR CLARK: God bless you.

PNC BROWN: And I got the sons to donate \$500 towards the project also.

MR. : PNC Brown, I would like to if I can please. I want everybody to stand up and give this lady an applause for her work, her and her group bust their ass to make sure all of this goes well.

(Applause)

PNC BROWN: You can do this tomorrow for my group because they work -- this is not a -- we meet once a year committee. This is we come to convention and we meet for six days. And there is a lot of work that goes into it ahead of time. So it is not just a one and done. So anyway, that is my report.

MOTION

PNC BROWN: And I move for its adoption please.

PNC HEUN: Second, PNC Heun.

CMDR CLARK: We have a motion and a second to accept the credentials report.

MR. : That is second by PNC Heun, sorry.

CMDR CLARK: Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: All in favor signify by saying aye?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried. We have somebody outside.

(Chorus of "Boos.")

National Saddest/Snappiest by Dana Dillon

MS. DILLON: Good night. I hope you are all having a lousy convention. If you don't know me, I don't think there is anyone here that doesn't know me. I am Dana Dillon and I am the incoming Saddest.

(Chorus of "Boos.")

MS. DILLON: I am going to talk regular now. How many Sad Sacks are in this room? Can you please stand up.

(Standing)

MS. DILLON: So our sole purpose -- you guys can sit down. Our sole purpose is to promote AMVETS and raise money for nursing schol-

arships. As I am talking, the Provost Marshals are going to pass around a bag and I would ask if you are able to please put what you can in there. All the money goes to the nursing scholarships.

If you do not have a Sad Sacks unit in your state, please contact me. I would be more than happy to talk to you guys and let you know what it is that we do. If you are new and don't know about Sad Sacks, what we do is we do everything backwards. We are the fun organization. So if I tell you to sit down, you would all stand up. If you don't, I am going to fine you a \$1 usually. And your units can do any price they want.

If you are sitting next to somebody and you are not talking, not imputing. I am going to fine you. If you are talking imputing, I am going to fine you for talking. If the person next to you says hey that is my friend, I am going to fine him for being your friend and I am going to fine you for saying that he is your friend. So anything we can, we have fun and we raise a lot of money.

The last -- the sadder, the previous, she had her testimonial. There was like 40 maybe people there. She raised over \$4,000 in that one night. We do auctions. It might be an empty bag. It might be a plastic turd. You know whatever, we just have a lot of fun raising money. If somebody were to take this off of me, they have an auction and I have to buy it back because Snoopy has been around since the very first Sad Sack scrimmage.

So thank you very much. I appreciate anything that you can give and if you have any questions, contact one of the many Sad Sacks that are around or get a hold of me. Thank you very much.

(Chorus of "boos.")

CMDR CLARK: PNC McLean in the room? Will you come to the podium please.

MR. CHENELLY: Bumi, if we can please get the slides for the new National Headquarters.

New National Headquarters Presentation by PNC Don McLean and Joe Chenelly

PNC McLEAN: Good morning, Delegates, how are we all doing today? Good, good. Mr. Chenelly are going to do a presentation showing you where we are with the sale of the old building and the purchase of the building. And where the construction subcommittee stands on its progress with getting work done. Thank you.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: So, pretty much it is self-ex-

planatory. And next slide please for me.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: So we put the old building on the market for \$3 million. Listed it in late December. And we actually had a bid for the full amount in less than 30 days. But we had a time line within that, so we had to keep it on the market. Next one please, Bumi.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: And then we accepted the offer and now we had to move. And I can't say enough good things about the staff and the Sons for getting this move done in a orderly manner and getting the equipment over to the new facility. And the temporary facility is what less than 3 miles away in Maryland and it is a building that is owned by the National Service Foundation. And they have been gracious to allow us and all of the subordinate organizations to use it until we get the final move up to our new building.

So long term, we are looking to host operations in the D.C. area where the National Capital Regional office is for the family organizations, making their own decisions as to where they shall base. So.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: So the original relocation committee was Chairman Past National Commander Art Stahl, Past National Commander J.P. Brown, myself, NEC Andy Martel from Maryland, Fred Vineyard from New Jersey and NEC Dana Dillon from Connecticut. And then the non-voting members were the National JA PNC Jim King, Auxiliary Executive Director Carol King, Sons PNC Harold Collins, and National Membership Director Warren Cox supporting the office and staff liaison was Joe Chenelly.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: And the committee began by establishing criteria we wanted for the new building. As far as location, size, distance from Washington, D.C. and what would the area be like and everything else that you can think of and trying to select a new house. A new building I should say.

And we went through different cities and towns, cost of living. Veterans' populations of the area. The proximity of the airports that would be there for getting to Washington, D.C. and the suitability to host NEC meetings and a Government friendly towards veterans in the area.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: So we researched five different states based on driving distances to Washington, D.C. And we chose nine markets in those states to engage. We had commercial real estate professionals conducting searches for available properties. And we reviewed more than a dozen listings and mostly -- we visit almost every single offering in person. As a committee or staggered but we all -- we saw the properties.

One property stood out consistently and that was the property that we ended up purchasing is 265 North Avenue, in Washington, Pennsylvania. It was a historical synagogue built in 1955. Had 30,000 square feet. And sits on three and three quarter acres -- 3.3 acres. So it had all of the space requirements, it is on two levels and was sufficient conference and office space for all of the staff and subordinate organizations.

And has ample storage and an area for production. And sufficient onsite parking. So the bonuses with this is we had a large event space with possible being able to rent out. Had a functional gymnasium with a basketball court. It had a commercial kitchen. An auditorium with 264 seats plus a stage. And a large build in lot and yard. And a 3 bedroom house on site with a garage.

And other bonuses, ability to host NEC meetings at the headquarters. Capabilities to create revenue through the events and catering by using the kitchen. Room to create the AMVETS National Museum. Room for AMVETS National Library. And room for AMVETS National Chapel and ample space to create AMVETS Memorial Park with our ---- an Past National Commanders and Presidents markers.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: Identified repairs that we knew right off. A new roof. Updates needed for electrical and HVAC and plumbing. Exterior masonry needed to be repointed into some places repaired and sidewalks needed to be repaired to meet ADA requirements.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: The cost of living in southwestern Pennsylvania is 17 percent. And that is 17 percent below the National average, I am sorry. Cost in D.C. area was 30 percent above the National average. The facility is 20 to 25 minutes from Pittsburgh International Airport. And the hotel room rates are -- range from \$89 to \$113 a night.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: The population is 209,470. And the cost of living index is 83. National av-

erage of 100. Twelve percent of the population are veterans. National average is five percent.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: And it is a three and a half hour drive between Little Washington and Washington, D.C. Washington City is located at the intersection of Interstate 70, Interstate 79 and U.S. Route 19. It is within five miles of Interstate 80, U.S. Route 22, U.S. Route 40 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike. There are 60 direct flights daily from Pittsburgh Airport and 61 direct flights to Pittsburgh.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: So we set a capital budget of -- for repairs and renovations of \$1.5 million plus grant funding. The move and associated costs for that are approximately 150,000 and leftover funds will go into a building fund that cannot be spent without NEC approval.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: County assessment for the building was \$1,505,500. Property taxes \$32,478 and we are tax exempt. The house is Zillow estimated at \$164,600. This whole property originally listed for \$1.6 million was on the market since 1920 -- 2021 and listed for \$795,000 at the time of our offer and the repairs and renovations budgeted at \$1.5 million as was stated.

We set a maximum purchase price of \$550,000. And the negotiated sale price came to \$525,000 including house and all land. We closed on the purchase June 24th, 2024.

(Applause)

PNC McLEAN: And --

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: This is the new building as it looks today. And next we have some -- this is all around the outside, the parking lot. The house there on the left.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: This is on the interior of the auditorium for the seating and proposed NEC meetings.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: And this is a reception room that was off the main foyer. The library and outside deck. Covered the way on the left lower down to the expected offices and the existing chapel.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: And the committee that recommended the building and this is -- this is what we saw and this is the lower level. This is the gymnasium. And now we have a relocation sub-committee. Chairman Don McLean, 2nd Vice Commander Paul Shipley, 4th National District Commander Chris Studebaker, National JA PNC King, National Commander Bill Clark, and Joe Chenelly as the staff liaison.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: So renovating the building, we had construction management company, architects, planning and design phase. And after receiving 7 different bids to our request for proposals, the Rocky Bleier Construction Group was selected and the level heads architects and engineers have come up with some renderings.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: So this is the quick rendering of the exterior of the entry way. This is the floor plan of the first floor. The auditorium on the right. And this is the basement level which is the gymnasium in the back right and storage space unused on the forward right. And then offices and other production area on the left. And again that is it.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: And this is -- are artists rendition of a proposed changes so far that we are still working with the Rocky Bleier Group. We have the AMVETS logo on the facing wall on the left -- on the right side, I mean. And AMVETS National Headquarter prominently displayed.

Over the entry way, we have veterans serving veterans since 1944. And then we have our flags and a walkway out to the flags.

(Slide)

PNC McLEAN: And so we are hoping within the next week, two weeks at the latest to be reviewing bids for the removal and replacement of the roof. Getting a new roof in. And the remainder of the construction begin later this summer, almost the fall. We are looking to be hiring our first employee to be based at the new headquarters. And Brady Brooks -- is Brady in the room --

MR. BROOKS: Yes.

PNC McLEAN: Brady Brooks, great guy. He has established a post in Pennsylvania -- in Washington, Pennsylvania already. And he has got 36 plus members.

(Applause)

PNC McLEAN: And we are hoping for a ribbon cutting ceremony during the spring NEC at your new National Headquarters.

(Applause)

PNC McLEAN: Hope everybody likes that. We got more work to do but we will be getting there.

MOTION

PNC McLEAN: Make a motion to accept the report from the construction relocation committee.

PNC KING: Second, King.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: There is a motion and it has been seconded. Is there any discussion?

(No response.)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Hearing none, all in favor indicate by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Oppose ----

(No response.)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Ayes have it.

PNC McLEAN: Thank you.

(Applause)

AMVETS Charities Presentation by PNC J.P. Brown and Joe Chenelly

PNC J.P. BROWN: Good morning.

(Chorus of "Good morning.")

PNC J.P. BROWN: You know, I had the pleasure of traveling a little bit with Don and his crew when they went to Pennsylvania to look at places for a new headquarters. And they had originally looked at a building, they bypassed it because they didn't think it would really fit the criteria.

And after some deep thoughts with a few of our people at the National Charities, we went and looked at the other building and decided that this could be a gym for AMVETS to start a national family center. Not just for veterans but for their families.

And we chose a building that is about 10 minutes away, maybe 15 at the most from the new headquarters. And we looked heavy into it and we have some renditions and some information that I would like to share with you that is coming from AMVETS National Charities.

Can we have the next slide please.

(Slide)

PNC J.P. BROWN: Took a bold new approach to providing direct services to veterans and their families. Major purchase in March will include a lifesaving program to slice -- to a slice of the veterans community that is grossly under-served nationwide. Homelessness among veterans has resurfaced as a major problem among veterans.

Most of you already know that. It is kind of redundant that I even talk about it. But I think we need to reiterate that. Homeless veterans and their children and spouses have nearly no options to avoid being separated. And I personally -- and our committee personally feels that in order to bring that male or that female veteran back into the fold, they need their families with them. Not be isolated from their families.

This is why we looked at this the way we did. Next slide please.

(Slide)

PNC J.P. BROWN: This is -- the building is a former school -- an elementary school. It is in Washington County, PA. It sits on 3.74 acres and has 25,306 square feet. And it is all on one level. Additionally, there is a 10,253 square foot finished and unfinished lower level. Last occupied in 2022 as a school for students with exceptional disabilities.

The assessed value and this is what -- I want you to listen to this and watch this. The assessed value, \$2,124,200. Well Joe and I went to an auction and with Joe and myself, we got the authority from our charities board to go to a certain amount. But we ended up buying it for \$750,000.

(Applause)

PNC J.P. BROWN: That is way below what Charities authorized us. So, I don't know between my finagling and Joe's expertise, we got it.

MR. CHENELLY: I don't want to correct the Commander here, wait for the number. It is actually coming on another slide and it is lower than 750 --

MR. : A lot lower.

MR. CHENELLY: That is renovation cost.

PNC J.P. BROWN: Oh. Renovation costs that are, I am sorry. I am excited about this project that I am -- but how many of you have been at registration and stuff and you see all of the posters that were up on the easels. It is not

only this building but it was the new headquarters. The renditions that the architects have come up with are unbelievable.

(Slide)

PNC J.P. BROWN: This is some of the interior. The boiler room. These are all classrooms and what is unique about these being a grade school, each classroom which is quite large as you can see, had its own bathroom. So when we start expanding into other sections of the building, the plumbing is already there. We just bust up the concrete, re-plumb and we can go with more units.

This hallway and the tile is -- it is really in good shape, clean it up.

(Slide)

PNC J.P. BROWN: AMVETS National Charities won the auction with a final bid of \$245,000.

(Applause)

PNC J.P. BROWN: Thanks for correcting me, Joe. I spent money that I didn't -- AMVETS Charity Board of Trustee took a leap of faith that AMVETS family will step up to help homeless veterans and families. Commander Clark, who is not here right now, took this on as his project and I am very happy that -- oh he is in the back. Commander Clark, thank you for taking this on as your project.

(Applause)

(Slide)

PNC J.P. BROWN: AMVETS Charities Family Service Center, American Veterans make up six percent of the U.S. population but thirteen percent of the homeless populations are veterans. There is a growing need for safe, secure housing for veterans both male and female, adults and children. The impact that maximize through programs already offered by AMVETS as the Career Center, the Veterans Service Center, and the Thrift stores.

One of the slides will show you an overview and I will explain something here, the most effective program for homeless and at risk veterans, veterans serving veterans groups. Programs proven to work best featuring transitional housing that offers the camaraderie of the living and structured -- substance free environments with fellow veterans who are successfully regaining control of their lives. And I think that is very important that we have a program that is going to help them regain.

This is -- AMVETS an opportunity to create a real chance to survive for many who fell

through the cracks. This can be the nucleus of even more throughout the country if this -- when this becomes successful.

(Slide)

PNC J.P. BROWN: The AMVETS Family Service Center will stabilize and strengthen families affording a critical safety net while they work together with AMVETS, the VA and social services to over towards safe and affordable housing. The service offices that the AMVETS Family Service Center will include safe transition housing. Housing counseling, access to VA medical and mental health care. AMVETS career readiness. And the young lady that runs the AMVETS Career Center, she is here. She is excited about this also. And AMVETS claims representatives, financial education, pro bono legal services.

You know I am an attorney. How many attorneys are in here? Probably none because they don't spend their money on us, they spend it on other things. But we will give pro bono legal services. We are able to get services, nutritional meals, clothing and comradery. Veterans together will really make a difference.

(Slide)

PNC J.P. BROWN: Charities will recoup the initial investments via donations to the capital project drive and grant funds for operation and construction and staffing. County and state government already pledge their supports. When we were down there, they loved us. They thought this was the best thing for them that they have seen other than the oil fields that came in a few years ago.

I can say that there was a young man and I don't remember his name from Indiana that went down there to start a post -- where is he at? He stole three of my members because I signed up three government officials while I was there. You can have him. You keep him moving down there.

You will enable AMVETS to provide unique services to veterans, veteran homeless, community with the family housing units. You will make a dramatic impact in the lives of veterans struggling to transition back to the civilian society. And I think we really across the country, have seen this.

(Slide)

PNC J.P. BROWN: The center is located, like I said in Pennsylvania. But it is not open to Pennsylvania residents only. Anybody across the country can -- will be able to be assisted. If a VA in California thinks this would be good for one year veterans, they can send them there and we will take care of them. It is a dynamic thing.

(Slide)

PNC J.P. BROWN: This is an -- that was an overview of the building from the top -- there we go. You can see the courtyard in the middle. This would be good for if we have families with children. Safe, secure place for them to play. Off to the bottom of the screen, where you see a little jog in the building and it drops down -- dropped down over the hill, is a city park.

Beautiful place. I was there on my way back from North Carolina, I stopped and there was a party going on down there. These kids were having a ball. So it is something that we can do for the community also. Next slide please.

(Slide)

PNC J.P. BROWN: This is an overview of what we would like to see. Again, we are using Rocky Bleier Construction Group. And Level Heads Architects. We had them put this stuff all out to bid. And we found that if we use the same construction company and the same architects, we saved a whole lot of money. And I don't know how many of you know who Rocky Bleier is, how many of you know Rocky Bleier? Former NFL football player. Unfortunately when he came back from Vietnam, he had two things wrong with him.

He lost part of his foot, number one. And then he went to play for the Steelers.

(Laughter)

PNC J.P. BROWN: My friends in Pennsylvania, that is a joke, I am sorry. But if you look to the left there, coming up, you will see the arrow, that goes -- it is a handicapped ramp and goes into the proposed rooms that we are looking at now. And in the green, the purpose on the far side are the classrooms that I talked about that can be used for expansion. As you can see the courtyard is there and in the red, there is a community center that can be used for other things, from that community also.

(Slide)

PNC J.P. BROWN: That is what the front of the building proposedly(sic) will look like. I don't know if they have a slide for what it looked like prior to this or not. But this rendition here is very similar to what we -- you all looked at with the new headquarters. Kind of not modern. This has been brought up to be modern and be captive in the -- from the community.

This building if you are coming up, off the freeway is about 8 minutes off the freeway. That is it. From the -- coming from the north, it is about 30 minutes off the freeway. So it is easy access. Next slide please.

(Slide)

PNC J.P. BROWN: This is a rendition of what the room will look like. This is a one bedroom -- as you can see the young man in the wheelchair has his grandson visiting him. It is a family oriented unit. And this to me is very important -- family. And I keep saying it, sounds redundant but family is they key to getting veterans back into the real world. Next slide please.

(Slide)

PNC J.P. BROWN: Please help with this -- make this a reality. AMVETS.org/family-servicecenter. There is a picture and the top of the building itself as you have seen larger, the picture below we used -- because I think it is very important, I went to our AMVETS Charities in Ohio. And I talked to them about this. And I said you know, 50,000, 100,000, 25,000 would really be a good dent into getting this started.

When they had their meeting and I was kicked out and I had their meeting, at the next meeting in Ohio, they presented me with a check for \$100,000 towards this project.

(Applause)

PNC J.P. BROWN: And our service foundation presented me with a check for, I believe it was \$5,000 or \$10,000 rather --

2ND VICE COMDR SHIPLEY: 25 --

PNC J.P. BROWN: How much?

2ND VICE COMDR SHIPLEY: 25.

PNC J.P. BROWN: 25,000.

(Applause)

PNC J.P. BROWN: And I come from a small post in Struthers, Ohio. AMVETS Post 44. We are very active. We have an active riders, we have an active AMVETS and I went to them. I said hey I need some help. I need some money. And I get the same answer. We don't have any. I said you don't? Well then give me a check for \$5,000 and you will have less. I got a check for \$5,000 from our post.

So what I am doing is pleading to you, I wanted you to see what we had here. Ask you to go back to your local post, foundations, businesses -- you want businesses? You guys are tiding all -- ladies are tiding all over the country with major corporations. This is a project that they could use to better their business also by showing their support -- veterans and the needs of veterans.

So please -- I am excited about this as you can

tell but I just -- I just think we as AMVETS, this is going to be a role model. A role model. This -- when this is successful, we could take dollars, start one in another area that is needed. Who knows where it might be? It could be anywhere in the United States. Maybe one of your departments wants to spearhead it and help find a place to get it started. We would love that.

But if there is any questions, I am done. I don't want to bore you with any more. Is there any questions about this or -- and I know this guy is coming up because he gave me a check for \$2,000 I think it was.

MR. RANDOLPH: J.P., Jackie Randolph, Chaplain Department of Indiana, I just want to say this project, getting families together is a big thing for the AMVETS but the main thing, all the homelessness out there for veterans there is a need. And most of the shelters that we find across the country, it will take women and the kids or a shelter just for the men. But having this as a family and what they need as a family all together, is a great deal. And I applaud the committee and everything for doing that. And those who donated the funds, job well done. Thank you.

(Applause)

PNC J.P. BROWN: Thank you, Jackie. Jackie, remember though, we don't have it funded 100 percent yet though. We got to get some more dollars in to make sure that this happens. We are working with the contractors and we will have bids for roof repairs. The whole roof doesn't need replacing. Roof repairs -- any flat roof you know, guys, ---- club, flat roofs are always a pain. But yes, sir?

MR. ALLBERRY: Steven Allberry, Commander of Ohio. I don't know how all of the states do it but I know my project I picked this year, is this Family Center. So I challenge any of the other commanders out there who are still looking for a project. We are a family. We need to continue to be a family, we need to support us as a family. This is a great way to do that.

PNC J.P. BROWN: Thank you, Steve.

(Applause)

PNC J.P. BROWN: Yes, ma'am?

MS. GOODE: Commander, Terry Goode, Alaska. On behalf of AMVETS Post 49, I have a check for \$500 for your project.

PNC J.P. BROWN: Thank you very much.

(Applause)

PNC J.P. BROWN: Anybody else have any-

thing?

MR. HENSLEY: J.P.? Ralph Hensley from Department of Virginia, I lost my handlebar mustache at our last convention. And we raised \$2,500 to donate this project.

PNC J.P. BROWN: Thank you very much.

(Applause)

PNC J.P. BROWN: I would like to thank, Joe. Joe is constantly back and forth between his duties in Washington, D.C. and Washington, PA. I all him about something and I say Joe, is it PA or D.C.? Washington. And normally it is in between. He is hustling. But thank you all very much for your time.

MOTION

PNC J.P. BROWN: Mr. Commander, I move for the adoption of my presentation.

MS. DILLON: Second, Dillon, Connecticut.

CMDR CLARK: I have a motion and a second to approve the presentation. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: All those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried. Before J.P. leaves, I wanted to relate the story about the folks in Washington, Pennsylvania. The legal firm, lady owns ---- donated pro bono the closings and all the legal work for both the headquarters building and school and she also ---- the rest of the story, gave a \$1,000 check of her own funds to my project, which we have -- I turned over which you didn't know.

PNC J.P. BROWN: I didn't know that.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: Also, I have been the finance officer for National District II for 8 or 9 years. And District II has never spent a dime, believe me. They don't go for spit. However, with this project in mind, they gave a \$1,000 this year. So it is really commendable. Thank you.

(Applause)

PNC J.P. BROWN: Thank you very much, Commander. You know, we talked about big monies being donated. How about if I say this to you. Commander got a \$1,000 out of his district. Maybe next year, he will get another \$1,000. You got \$500 out of Alaska. Maybe next year or sometime during the year, you send another \$500. It is like an endowment. It

is an endowment on the future of our veterans of the United States of America. Thank you.

(Applause)

PNC HEUN: Commander, there is a motion on the floor.

(Chorus "It passed.")

PNC HEUN: Okay. My apologies. Commander, at this time, I would like to give the Honors and Awards Committee report if that is acceptable to you.

CMDR CLARK: Is it a short report?

PNC HEUN: It is a short report.

CMDR CLARK: Go ahead.

Honors and Awards Report by PNC Gregory Heun

PNC HEUN: The Honors and Awards Committee met at 9:00. PNC Piening, PNC Taylor, Jan Brown's husband, PNC Brown. PNC King, PNC Heun, Chapman, Johnny Collins and Chuck as followed. The Sons of AMVETS National Aid and Support Award is Jan and J.P. Brown. The Juniors Supporter Award is Harold Collins. The Ladies Auxiliary Humanitarian Award is Cindy McGrout. The Writer's Guardian Award was David Strickmatter. The Civil Service Award Leanne Mackey ----. Thank you.

And the AMVET of the Year was Robert Becker, Jr. I would like to ask that please give us more selections next year. Would you please submit people for these awards? We were authorized to give four awards and the Silver Helmet and so a total of five. We only got two awards submitted. So that is my report commander.

MOTION

PNC HEUN: I would like to ask for its adoption at the proper time.

MR. BROWN: Second, Brown.

CMDR CLARK: We have a motion and a second. Any questions?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried. Provost Marshal, we have the ladies outside. Bring them in now.

Ladies Auxiliary Nation by Amy Stopyra, National President

MR. BRYANT: I would say be seated but then you would be blocked by everyone. So if you want to sit down, by all means, thank you. Thank you for the welcome. Thank you, Commander Clark for allowing us to address the floor today. I am here again today to speak in opposition of AMVETS Draft CBL Amendment, CBL 25-04. Adding males to the list of eligibility for the AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary would be the death sentence for the Sons of AMVETS.

This is not an exaggeration. This is not an overstatement, it is fact. If a man can join the Joint Auxiliary, we would never again see a Sons Squadron formed where an Auxiliary already exists because why would people join both? Anyone a post is considering a subordinate, they would always go with the auxiliary because that covers all people who wanted to join.

Anywhere there is a current squadron that might fold temporarily, it will most likely be gone forever as their members can just join the auxiliary and maintain their post privileges. It will be a war of attrition until the National Sons of AMVETS collapses financially. Will the National AMVETS Service Foundation be there to bail us out year after year?

The argument we have heard over and over again is that husbands of female veterans do not want to be considered the son of their spouse. This is a misunderstanding of our name. We are the sons of American Veterans. Veterans in that phrase is plural. We act as the sons of all veterans. Taking care of our parents and helping them where they need it.

Whether that be to move a dresser from one side of the room to another, to bring them to VA for medical appointments or to lobby Capitol Hill to secure their benefits. Our membership comes from all relations to veterans not just sons. We are the sons, grandsons, adopted sons, stepsons, fathers, grandfathers, brothers and husbands and widowers of members of AMVETS and deceased veterans and service personnel.

Our first, last and only mission is to aide and support all veterans that we can in any way that we can. If 24-04 passes, we will no longer be able to do our biggest projects in support of the veterans. We enjoy doing the work we do and we strongly request that AMVETS vote no on this resolution.

In conclusion, please, please, please don't make us wear those green skirts.

(Laughter and applause.)

MS. STOPYRA: Good morning. Commander Clark, thank you for allowing the Auxiliary and the Sons both to address your floor. In September 1946, AMVETS National Commander Jack Hardy instructed National AMVETS Liaison Officer D.B. Burnhardt to contact all AMVETS Auxiliaries in the United States for the purpose of organizing the National Department of AMVETS Auxiliaries.

The National Auxiliary was formed in Pittsburgh, PA September 22nd, 1946 with temporary officers elected until the next National Convention. Among the recommendations made was to keep membership restricted to wives, mothers and daughters over 19 of AMVETS members or deceased veterans.

Our moto was adopted. We waited together, now let's work together. In 1946, the first Sad Bags was organized. In 1950, Sad Bags was changed to Sackettes. And in 1973, the first squadron of the Sons of AMVETS was formed. And in 1983 was when the National Sons of AMVETS were formed. This organization talks a lot about family and the value of diversity. And yet here we are again standing before you, you can see us, we are here.

We thought our voices were heard last year. But we guess not. The Ladies Auxiliary historically has provided non-military women with numerous opportunities for leadership roles. If men start to flow into the auxiliary with leadership opportunities for women are likely to be limited. How an organization built and chartered separately by women seeking to serve our families, communities and military have its fate determined without any consideration for how its existing members feel, we are not begrudging the spouses of veterans or forming their own subordinate organization.

We are not asking you to change our history. And as a last note, the proposed change does not indicate the change to the auxiliary uniform. Some of the men, might look cute in a forest green dress. No, it is a dress. Our ladies are here today in forest green dresses. Please take a look. We look beautiful. Some of our ladies are here in forest green slacks. We look beautiful.

(Applause)

MS. STOPYRA: We are the AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary. Thank you.

(Applause)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Some of you guys might want to go home and sleep with auxiliary members, it might get ugly.

(Laughter)

MS. STOPYRA: Okay, so the National Commander has asked me to just stay here for a few more extra moments. So I am going to take a few more extra moments of your time. So I just want to say thank you to our AMVETS family for allowing me the opportunity to travel with your Commander, where we have met across the states.

He has been an asset to your AMVETS and I really truly appreciate the time that we have had. And he is an asset to all of us. Thank you to each and every one of you for allowing my theme to really truly connect, Foster Connections, because it has worked all year long. Thank you. Thank you, AMVETS Commander Bill Clark.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: Amy and I didn't get to spend as much time together as I would have thought this year. But the time we did, we had a great time. She is an excellent representative of the Auxiliary. And I didn't know what to get her. I don't know what her hobbies are and I found out I am spending money at a certain dress shop or clothing shop. Which doesn't give gift cards. So I got you ---- cards that you can spend anywhere. I forget the name of the place, but anywhere you would like.

MS. STOPYRA: Thank you. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. BRYANT: And on a slightly less serious note, my first address here is just like my address to the ladies today and it is also my last address here on the floor as National Commander. And I just want to thank everyone for being so supportive. Most of you know what has happened to me in the past month.

It has been tough but the number of people who have reached out and just sent me a message or two, has made all the difference in the world and that is -- that is the definition of family.

And I do have a slight donation towards Commander's project from the Sons. And if you are wondering, that doesn't go towards the haircut. The other \$500 we donated goes towards the haircut. So.

CMDR CLARK: Thank you very much.

MR. BRYANT: Thank you, sir.

CMDR CLARK: As you may know, his profession, he is a professional chef. So it wasn't too hard to figure out what to get him. So I got you this, Bobby.

MR. BRYANT: I think I can find use for these. Inscribed with my name and everything is

very personalized. It is a beautiful gift. Thank you, Commander. And I have a feeling that this might also speed up to this afternoon's meeting. So -- Thank you, so much.

(Applause)

MS. DILLON: Commander? Commander? While people are sitting, can I let them know what we raised for Sad Sacks?

CMDR CLARK: I can't hear you.

MS. DILLON: Due to your generosity, we raised \$1,163.02 for Sad Sacks. Thank you all very much.

(Chorus of "Boos.")

CMDR CLARK: Anybody interested in a 10 minute recess or -- well we can't do that unfortunately. But let's take 10 minutes and make sure it is 10. We have a pretty heavy schedule here today. We will recess now for 10 minutes.

(Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

CMDR CLARK: Please take your seats. We will have the National Service Foundations annual report. PNC Chappy.

**National Service Foundation Annual Report
by PNC Harold Chapman, Dana Bolton,
Sybrena Bullock, Agha Hossein
and Joe Chenelly**

PNC CHAPMAN: That is what they call me. Good morning everyone.

(Chorus of "Good morning.")

PNC CHAPMAN: Once again you all were here Tuesday morning when we had our reports. And the -- we went into deep discussion. We are going to go into another, more deep discussion today. And unfortunately it is going to take a while. So anyway, moving on, it is lengthy but it is encouraging. And I am very proud of the team that worked this year and got us back to where we wanted to be -- or we are working on where we wanted to be, but it only took us 13 months. And that is a big, big, big thing for us. And of course, you were all part of it because you were very patient. You put up with a lot of stuff this year. But I am promising you it is going to be better moving forward.

So with this, I am going to turn it over to Agha, I guess no Joe?

MR. : Joe.

PNC CHAPMAN: Joe. He -- you are going to be seeing the screens and thank you so much for your patience.

MR. CHENELLY: So you probably saw that title slide, Presentation estimated time 45 minutes. We don't have 45 minutes. So we are going to power through this obviously. Very important stuff here. We know where we were last year. We are going to start right there. If I can get the next slide please.

(Slide)

MR. CHENELLY: So 13 months ago, we came before the same team here, mostly the same board came before you and we were in dire straits. We had severe cash flow issues. We had lost four and a half million dollars over the previous two years at that point. We had been borrowing \$250,000 a month. \$250,000 a month just to stay moving.

We had cash reserves were depleted with very dangerously low number of payrolls -- one, payroll of available cash. And had operating losses across the board of more than 300 percent. We had vendor bills that were past due at that point and a lot of it came down to very unreasonable and non-serviceable retro service contracts. Retro-service of what we had already paid and they had already provided a product or service you need to pay back the design of those plans where money was going to come in from those products.

A lot of this crisis really became crisis point. Became the emergency it was when the money never came back but we still owed the money for the mail, for the solicitations that had gone out. And corporate -- this last line here, corporate continuity disruptions. You know we had a of turn over. We didn't have a real succession plan.

We had some people who had been in position for 40 years and I guess maybe we were counting on them being there for another 40 years. But we had a lot of institutional knowledge go out the door. And a lot of the design, a lot of the way things were built really wasn't understood by anyone other than some of the people who left. Slide please.

(Slide)

MR. CHENELLY: Now, 13 months later, we had a cash deficient has been eliminated. We have not borrowed in 9 months. That is a huge marker of what we know now that this is a successful turnaround. That we are on the right path. When we first started this right after convention last year, we knew we needed to be able to prove that this was the right path we were in, we were in three months of not having to borrow.

We knew there would be road bumps along the way, we thought things might be able to go slower than we are forecasting. We have now gone 9 months straight -- 11 months now.

So this is through June, these numbers here. We are now 11 months without borrowing. It seems like setting the bar low but that is a major change from where we were.

We have paid off \$1.7 million in outstanding payables. Those retro contracts that we were talking about, that they have all been paid off now. They were all paid off in July -- last month. We have opened two new stores. It is a major deal.

(Applause)

MR. CHENELLY: We have been able to open two new thrift stores which those are driving force for revenue. We have been able to do that without having to borrow any money. We were able to do that using our operational funds. Funding ourselves here which is really -- that is the best obviously -- the smartest way, the cleanest way to invest in ourselves. We had to be able to do that -- two new stores is going to make a tremendous difference. You will get a little bit more later, more stores are coming.

We have been operating in the surplus for the first time in many years now. Surplus can be a tricky word. When people hear surplus, great. You have got money to spend now. You have you know, doing great. Everything will go back to normal. Normal was not sustainable. Normal doesn't really exist anymore. Finding the new norm which is a phrase that I think most of us have grown tired to, but it is real.

The contractual exposure -- a lot of the contracts we have talked about, we have either renegotiated them, terminated them or we are still in a meaningful review or renegotiating them still at this point. But we are in such a better place and that is a huge part of this -- this v-shaped recovery that we are -- that we have experienced here in the last 13 months.

We have also been able to modernize. Modernize our information, the way that our information is stored, the way it is processed. It has made us a lot more effective, a lot more efficient. And although it has required an investment in this time, it is saving us money now.

Number 8 here is a huge part of additional revenue streams. We have to diversify our revenue. We really -- a year ago, we were depending on Thrift Stores and direct mail and that was it. And really for generations that is what we have relied on. Thrift Stores are still doing well. Direct mail, at least the processes that we were in, the contracts that we were in, it was dead. And it was costing us millions rather than bringing in millions.

So, that is -- and Sybrena, our Chief Operating Officer, will talk about direct mail a little bit

more in a moment. But we are going to have a new revenue stream here and it is going to be very vital to us. It is the Federal Grant funding for the first time in our organization's history, we are now eligible for Federal Grant funding. There has long been these concerns if we are accepting Federal Grants, can we still be the watchdog that we need to be. Can we still tell the VA when they are messing up? Or still tell Congress when they are not keeping their promises?

We have found a way to be able to do that. To be able to keep our independence and be able to -- both of our unique roles as both a watchdog and an advocate.

(Slide)

MR. CHENELLY: We have recovered with grace. That is something that we have felt this entire organization needs. And we have done that by not interrupting, not compromising the quality of veterans' services. We know we are doing it with a lot less people. And we are going to get to that in a moment here. But as you heard from the Under(sic) secretary on Wednesday, we have not had to drop off the services -- at least the quantity and the quality of the services that we are providing to veterans.

And really, the new way that we are in right now, even though we want to be able to -- we are going to grow our service officers and our overall advocacy for veterans, we have achieved greater effectiveness and efficiency and really a return on our investment and you will see that in the numbers coming up in a moment here.

(Slide)

MR. CHENELLY: So, Dana Bolton or "Bo" is going to talk a little bit about the service department now.

MR. BOLTON: All right, good morning AMVETS.

(Chorus of "Good morning.")

MR. BOLTON: My name is Dana Bolton, Bo, the Service Director for National. Like Joe said, these numbers come directly from the secretary -- under the secretary of the VA, so that is where I got them from. That is where I pull them from. This is how we go.

As you can see on the slide right there, the claim submitted was 3,299 claims from March to June. That is pretty good from what we had at a National level. But let me go back first and let me thank all of the DSOs and --- DSOs all the hard work you all are doing too. Because without you all we wouldn't have these numbers, so I really appreciate it.

(Applause)

MR. BOLTON: But back to the open claims that you can see, I don't want to read it out to you, you see the numbers and stuff. And you can see the average award -- how many new claims have that has been awarded this fiscal year? Through June of this year. And our VA reports, our payout is \$1.8 billion with the small staff we had at National, we are still at \$1.8 billion and I think that is damn good for what we have.

(Slide)

MR. BOLTON: As you can see in 2023, it was at 1.7 and in 2024 it is 1.8. The average payout in 2023 was 1,826 and now it is at 1,982. And the appeals -- that is the only thing that when it goes down, so the appeals went down to 34.9 percent approved. So that is a good thing on appeals. Next slide.

(Slide)

MR. CHENELLY: So we got a numbers guy here of course, Agha and he crunches his numbers. So this as we were team planning this presentation today. So what is this, but if you think about the number of service officers we had at the National level and we still have a lot of -- the department and county and some -- even at some post levels, but the number of National Service officers, they are each bringing in about \$60 million for veterans per year with the latest numbers.

With three service officers, it breaks down to \$514 million. Our numbers really didn't go down this year. I am not saying that would be the long term effect. And we are going to get more service officers this year. But as you can see here, the amount of service that veterans received did not go down in this past year through this rough period for us. Dana, back to you.

MS. WHEELER: Just a question, how much of that reporting for the National VSO is California?

MR. BOLTON: I can report the report for you but as California had the same access as I have too for the numbers. So they can pull the report. But if you need me to pull it for you, I can give it to you before you leave today, all right?

MS. WHEELER: I would like for you to give the floor the numbers for California? Of what you are reporting.

MR. BOLTON: I don't --

MR. CHENELLY: Leona, just so you know, this is how the numbers are reported every year. It is the overall number. And as Dana

started off here by thanking our department service officers and county service officers, that is where these numbers are coming from right? We are not pulling from a different source. We are not trying to take credit for California or any other department.

California does an outstanding job. So does Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio -- Illinois, I thought I said Illinois yes. Just -- we can get those numbers for you but these numbers aren't different than last years towards what we are reporting. This the overall AMVETS program. The AMVETS accreditation nation wide.

MR. BOLTON: So moving forward, with the NSO side of the house. We doubled the budget of the service department in 2024-2025. We are going to put greater focus on Department Service Officer and the County Service Officer. And we also going to put in the new technology. So here is our plan for the NSO side of the house. We are going to go totally virtual. So there is no longer if they are not in my state, they are not in my county, I can't serve them.

NSO will be able to serve anybody across the nation. So that is the platform we are going to. Also on AI side of the house and I don't know if you are aware of it or not but that is the way the VA is going, so that is the way we need to start thinking and the way we need to start going to.

And by saying that, we have some plans for AI that we are trying to get ahead of every other VSO organization to start this. So me and Joe are working on it. And then like I said, --- officers plan. Next to follow me, would be Agha? Oh Sybrena, I am sorry.

MS. BULLOCK: Good morning everyone.

(Chorus of "Good morning.")

MS. BULLOCK: Tennessee, you ought to be ashamed. I will be visiting your hospitality tonight. Let's take a look at this slide and let me show you what operationally we did to continue to go up. Cost rationalization. We reduced our GA which is our general administration by 28 percent.

We moved to a cloud based computing system. We have re-designed and modernized our direct mail program. In a nutshell, we have fired everybody, kicked them out and said let's take over and do it ourselves. We also implemented a cloud based HRIS system.

MR. : What does that mean?

MS. BULLOCK: My sincere apologies. That is basically your HR system. Performance

management. Also falls within that.

MR. HOSSEIN: Thank you, Joe. I have three slides for you. First slide, is -- tells you the story. We have compared last three years, just to give you an idea we -- and where we are now. So as you can see the first two years, we have a deficit. '21, '22, 350,000. Then it rolls to 1.5 million. And this year by June, we are at \$1.3 million positive.

So this is a turn around and in those 13 months. So that is really encouraging. Next slide please.

(Slide)

MR. HOSSEIN: So, any organization, cash is king. Right. So this is where we went wrong all of us. And what we did -- and I gave you the story the first three bars that you see is the net cash flows. Meaning money coming in and money going out. So in the -- in '21, '22, we lost \$2.2 million. \$2 million in one year. Then in '22, '23 we lost another 2.5. So four and a half million dollars in two years.

So that actually ate up all of our reserves that we had thanks to PBP loans that we got and savings that we had before. So we were down right. And so start '23, '24, we are cash flow positive. And we are breaking even but we have not lost a single dollar in this fiscal year. And that is a -- again, when we say a turn around, it might look like an overstatement but I tell you, this is not only an overstatement, this is unbelievable. Thank you.

Next three bars are also very important. If you see, I am comparing the accounts payable. Amounts that you owed to third parties. So at each fiscal year end, '21, '22, we owed people \$1.5 million. Just as Joe said. We brought it down, '22, '23, one point something and then this year, by June, they are down to 694 and in July, I have cleared more and we are down to 254,000 only.

So we achieved this net positive cash flows, not just by cutting costs but also we paid everything back to people who we owed and also we invested on our two new stores, all from my internal -- and we did not borrow for 11 months. Now the third -- three bars are very important. That is the loan portion. When in '21, '22 we had a prehistoric loan that we have 2.5, it has been there forever.

We took another 800 grand in '22, '23 and we took only \$200,000 in this fiscal year and then we stopped borrowing. So we stopped the bleeding there and then. Whatever we have, we are earning and we are spending and we are trying to save also. The last one is where the issue still remains. Which is on bank balance. The cash reserves.

So what we started off when I joined March 2022, we had \$4.2 million U.S. dollars in our bank. When we closed that year, '21, '22 we were 2.2 and then as you can see the balance depleted and we are down to now around 800,000 in our bank. And that is -- if you can change the slide --

(Slide)

MR. HOSSEIN: This slide actually gives the real AMVETS recovery stabilization story. This is a roller coaster ride. This is the bank balance at the end of each month. And as you can see, initially 11 or 12 months, it is just a roller coaster nose dive. And then we were able to stabilize our cash flows somewhere September and October. And we are trying to sustain the same balance. But as you can see, we have never crossed a million dollar plus in all of those months and that seems to be our problem.

And that is haunting us day and night that we have cash in our bank, not even enough for a month salary. And that is where the problem starts. And we are very hopeful with these positive news we will be able to you know, accumulate funds so that our working capital which is the blood line of any organization, our sweet spot is \$2 million U.S. dollars.

Once we hit that, I would say now we can restart looking at various programs. But until we achieve the \$2 million mark, I think we are still struggling but the good thing is, we are not bleeding. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

MR. CHENELLY: So we got here by cutting to size. Very painful obviously. Something nobody wanted to do. We had to do it. Really we can say there is no options, there were none. If you followed the numbers, there were no options. We have to follow the numbers. That is the only way back to re-sustainability and back to being able to be thriving. ---- decisions.

They weren't popular decisions. Having to make major moves two months before convention. It wasn't trying to procure three months before convention. We weren't trying to circumvent anything along those lines. Still make decisions and we are losing \$250,000 a month. That is another \$750K that would have been gone if the decisions weren't made when they were made.

Goes along with quick implementation. We have had to have the boards getting together quickly, making tough decisions, putting as much time and research into it as possible and as needed to make the quick moves. And with Agha and his team watching every penny as it comes in and as it goes out, making sure that we don't fall to that death zone. Slide please.

(Slide)

MR. CHENELLY: So as we move forward, we have to look at what could go wrong. And we got to -- these are the pitfalls that could undo the good, through all of the sacrifices that have been made over the last year, we do not want to go backward. So taking eyes off of the numbers again, if we are not following the numbers, we are going to go backward.

If we start getting excited about this recovery, and overexcited and we deciding hey, we are going to spend, we are going to start handing out more money than we really can right now, it will send us backward. We will get back to right where we were months ago or even worse. If we don't improve our revenue streams, as we have talked about here, continuing to build more stores, getting into the grants, the Federal Grants and the state grants. But getting into those grant systems.

If we don't do that, we are going to go backward. And if we don't continue to closely monitor our cash flows, we will go backward. We are not going to allow these things to happen and thankfully -- I am very thankful for President Chapman and the entire board of trustees for ensuring that no one is going to try to force the organization into doing these things.

And of course, we have to make sure that we retain our resources whether it is our great staff that I am very proud to work with everyone here behind me and everyone else who is back in Maryland or out there, but we also have other partners out there too. And being able to make sure that we are taking care of the right way, treating everyone the right way and I am talking about paying our bills on time. I am talking about being fair and making sure we are executing the right way obviously key to make sure that we don't go the back -- backward.

(Slide)

MR. CHENELLY: I will do a very quick recap here. Got the V shape turn around, less than 13 months. When we came up here last year we said this could take 3 years. And some of it -- in some ways we are not going to be out of the woods. We still have to build back the depleted cash and that is going to take close to that full three years. But we are way ahead of schedule right now. We are -- we are at least twice as far as we thought we would be at this point.

And adding additional revenue streams again, is going to be key. We can't rely on just a couple of revenue streams which there you go. Federal Grants is going to be a very big key, you are going to be able to hear a lot about this next year when we come back to update

this recovery -- Federal Grant is going to be a major part of it.

Mr. Chairman, any questions and answers -- or questions and we will have answers hopefully.

Questions and Answers

MR. WILLIAMS: Quick question, Lee Williams PDC, Department of Indiana. Our department service officers are amongst the best in the nation. They are rock stars. But they are a little concerned about their accreditation due to what has happened to the National Service Officers. Can you address that for me please.

MR. CHENELLY: They were concerned about that 13 months ago, right? Right. So 13 months ago, they were concerned that with what was about to happen, what was happening to our National Service Department would it impact their accreditation. I was up here, I said it is not going to impact their accreditation. 13 months later, it hasn't impacted anyone's accreditation and we just had the under secretary of Veterans Benefits Administration, the person who is responsible for accreditation came up here and he praised what our service department has done the last year.

Accreditation is not going to be a concern. It will continue to not be a concern.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

MR. FEARY: Dave Feary, PDC Department of New York. On the grant writing, New York finds themselves in need of diversifying our income. So is there any way you can assist the fellow departments with the grant writing?

MR. CHENELLY: Dave, that is really a great idea and I think especially the departments that we have worked with over the years and they are struggling now because of our struggles. We can definitely look into that -- I will say we have been struggling to find good grant writers. Good grant writer in D.C. starts around \$350,000 a year. You are using carrying that salary for 13, 14, 18 months while they get things running. You understand that is part of the commitment. We are close. We are looking at some alternatives other than just having someone on staff.

But whoever we bring in, and we already have one now in place for a state level, and we have some fundraising at the Federal level as well. We will share those resources with you, absolutely. I think that is a great idea, Dave. Thank you.

MS. LAUFENBERG: I came up for a different question but I am going to ask one more question. Like -- Gaya Laufenberg, Oklahoma. In our state -- in Oklahoma and there

is a free grant writing workshop that we can attend. And so I volunteered to attend to the one in October. But I am thinking that that right there would have given a good resource in your individual states for a grant writing workshop.

And then if once we complete those in your state workshops, if we can submit that to somebody at National to where they know that we have attended this workshop, to where maybe some more grant opportunities that you all might know about, you can pass out to us.

PNC CHAPMAN: I think that is a --

MS. LAUFENBERG: Since we have attended the workshops.

PNC CHAPMAN: I think that is a tremendous idea.

MS. LAUFENBERG: Okay. Wonderful. And then, my next question is, I understand that somewhere in Oklahoma there is a AMVETS Thrift Store and even I am having a hard time locating it. So I was just curious, how are you passing out the information on where the thrift stores are and then two, is each district in AMVETS have at least one AMVETS Thrift Store? Because thrift stores are a big thing right now.

MR. CHENELLY: Gayla, there is no AMVETS thrift store in Oklahoma. There are AMVETS thrift pick up, donation runs that are happening in there and there is a company that we partner with there. It is up on both the AMVETS.org and the AMVETS National Service Foundation websites. If you need more specific information, let us know. Sybrena and her team really honcho that. But we don't have an actual AMVETS thrift store there.

MS. LAUFENBERG: Okay. But that is the majority of the income here that you are reporting is coming from the AMVETS thrift stores, correct?

MR. CHENELLY: Correct.

MS. LAUFENBERG: Okay and so is there an AMVETS thrift store in each district?

MR. CHENELLY: No.

MS. LAUFENBERG: Okay.

MR. CHENELLY: They are in about four states.

PNC CHAPMAN: Any other questions out there? Okay. Can I get a motion to adopt the --

MOTION

PNC CHAPMAN: I make the motion. I make the motion that we adopt the agenda -- I mean, the report.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Second, Horace in Florida.

CMDR CLARK: I have a motion and second. Any further questions or discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: All those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried. We will have our 3rd Vice Commander's Report.

Legislation Committee Report by 3rd Vice Commander Sandy Vorhies

3RD VICE CMDR VORHIES: Okay. This is fast. This is the Legislation Committee/ Round table and I just want to let you know right now, I know there is some confusion because it was listed as round table. So some of my committee people didn't make it but we -- Joe and I talked about this. We will have it corrected next year that it will say committee/ round table so that way they know they need to be there.

And with that being said, we did not have a quorum in order to make recommendations on the resolutions but we did call to order the meeting. What we did was we had a good round table, we had 17 individuals -- guests there. And we had -- we discussed each resolution. We had very good conversation and discussion on it. I will tell you that I just spoke about the newsletter of the AMVETS legislation updates and how to get that. So anyone that was there and provided Danielle, who is part of the legislation team their e-mail, has now been put on to that newsletter.

And we also spoke about the new legislative action center and they will also be connected with that. With that, it adjourned -- it started at 1430 and we adjourned at 1530.

MOTION

3RD VICE CMDR VORHIES: And with that, I will ask that my report be adopted. Thank you.

PNC KING: King, second.

CMDR CLARK: I have a motion and second to accept the report. Any further discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: All those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried. Are there any other final reports? Committee reports?

Women's Veterans Committee Report by Inetta Bullock

MS. BULLOCK: Good morning or good afternoon AMVETS and family and Commander. The Women's Veterans Committee met yesterday at 1700. We had 61 in attendance and that is not including the members that were present from the dais(sic).

(Applause)

MS. BULLOCK: I think one of the things that helped that was the move back to the later time because we were able to not all be in other meetings that we all like to attend which is why we come here. But we were able to attend the meetings that we came for and for our meetings also that we came for.

Our discussion. We introduced each other. Went around the room and did introductions, so we would all get to know each other better because that was suggested, get to know at least five but we got to know at least 61. This year our focus is going to be on working more so along the lines with our VAs. Each of the VAs has a woman director in them -- or not director but a woman ---- point of contact, so what we are going to do is coordinate with them when they do their June programs.

And we are going to work alongside with them and co-host or assist as we -- as necessary or as available at the VAs in each of our home states. That is going to be one unified project for the Women's Veterans Committee for this year.

Also with that being said, I expressed how over the past year I have worked in conjunction with ---- James Haley and ---- Pines and have conducted events at both of those locations to where -- because it is for veterans, they don't charge you anything. They let you use their cafeterias, their libraries, their rooms. So our VAs are a resource where we ask veterans, not just women veterans, but also for our male counterparts, our brother in arms that we can host events there along with other service organizations to bring us all up and

educate us all.

We have set a date for our next meeting, October 15th and I will be coordinating with Bumi or whomever the point of contact is to get us the Zoom appointment and we will continue to press forward for the new year.

MOTION

MS. BULLOCK: Commander, I move my report.

MS. DILLON: Second, Dillon, Connecticut.

CMDR CLARK: I have a motion and second to accept the report. Any further questions or discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: All those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried. Past National Commander Don McLean.

Past National Commander's Council Report by PNC Donald McLean

PNC McLean: Thank you, Commander. Past National Commander McLean here. The -- had the meeting of the Past National Commanders Council this morning at approximately 1000 hours. Members in attendance were PNC Joe Piening, PNC Chuck Taylor, PNC Jim King, PNC William Kilgore, PNC J.P. Brown, III, PNC Harold Chapman, PNC Greg Heun and myself as Chair.

There were no qualified items brought before the commission for discussion. And meeting adjourned at approximately 10:15.

MOTION

PNC McLEAN: Move for adoption of my committee report.

MS. PIERCE: Second, Pierce, Ohio.

CMDR CLARK: I have a motion and second. Any questions or discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: All those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried.

PNC McLEAN: Thank you.

CMDR CLARK: I don't see any other reports to be done. We will move into resolutions and amendments. Joe?

Resolutions and Amendments by Joseph Chenelly

MR. CHENELLY: Obviously we are very short on time and in fact, we are already past time. So if you are going to be -- if you are committee chair and you are going to reporting on weighing in on any of these resolutions, please be near a microphone. Draft Resolution 25-01, subject implementation of the electronic healthcare record. Source if the AMVETS Legislative Committee. Endorsing Departments Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Illinois, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Wisconsin. I am going to pause here real quick.

We really got a number of reports from a small number of states. Number of departments. There may be more here, there may not be. And if your department wants to step up and say you are an endorsing department, you can that with each one of these that comes up. I am going to read the resolved. Everyone should have the books. They have been in the bags.

Be it resolved, that AMVETS acknowledged the urgent need for a modern solution to serve current and future veterans effectively. And that AMVETS wholeheartedly endorses the VA's initiative to develop and implement a unified, efficient electronic health record across all VA medical facilities.

And that AMVETS encourages supports Congressional oversight to ensure the VA's accountability in leading and managing this effort. And be it further resolved, that AMVETS will adamantly oppose any actions taken by Congress or other entities to return to the outdated and harmful VISTA system at VA facilities.

MOTION

MR. CHENELLY: Is there a motion to accept the resolution?

PNC KING: Motion.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Second it.

Horace, Florida.

MR. CHENELLY: Any discussion?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: All in favor, say aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

MR. CHENELLY: All opposed.

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: O1 passes. Draft Resolution 25-02. Subject Traumatic Brain Injury and Connected to Mental Health Incomes. Source, legislative committee. Endorsing departments Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Be it resolved that AMVETS supports additional studies and to the effects of TBI and mental health outcomes particularly post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression and suicidality. And be it further resolved, that AMVETS encourages the VA to pursue new and novel approaches to integration of TBI care into existing mental health treatment models.

MOTION

MR. CHENELLY: Is there a motion?

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: So moved.

MR. CHENELLY: Is there a second?

MR. : Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Second, Riley, Pennsylvania. Any discussion?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: All in favor, say aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

MR. CHENELLY: All opposed.

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Ayes have it. 25-03 Obesity in the Armed Forces and its impact on National Security and Readiness. Legislative Committee. Endorsing departments Alabama, Illinois, Florida, and North Carolina.

Be it resolved that AMVETS believes that the bedrock of a Nation's Defense lies in its military readiness. That AMVETS seeks to bolster efforts to enhance recruitment and promote the whole health and well-being of service members. That AMVETS encourages a system wide recognition of obesity as a chronic

disease that can be treated while in service.

And be it further resolved that AMVETS supports a full review of obesity identification and treatment guidelines within the Department of Defense to prompt the pursuit of alternate pathways to treatment. Is there a motion?

MOTION

MR. STUDEBAKER: So moved Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Studebaker, Illinois. Second?

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Second it. Horace, Florida.

MR. CHENELLY: Any discussion?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: All in favor, say aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

MR. CHENELLY: All opposed.

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Ayes have it. 25-04 Veteran Incarceration and Veteran Suicide. Legislative Committee and AMVETS Oklahoma Post 6. Endorsing departments Alabama, Florida, Iowa, North Carolina, and Wisconsin. Be it resolved that AMVETS believes that incarcerated veterans should be screened and subsequently treated for mental health conditions immediately upon their arrest through a Veteran Court.

Be it further resolved that AMVETS encourages Veterans Court to immediately provide incarcerated veterans with mental health services, substance abuse treatment, education, disability benefits, assistance and other Department of Veterans Affairs services. And be it further resolved that AMVETS urges State Department of Corrections to begin officially tracking how many veterans are incarcerated and conduct comprehensory reviews of their sentence and other relevant information to better track and report their veterans' status throughout their time in the system.

MOTION

MS. DILLON: Motion to approve, Dillon, Connecticut.

MR. CHENELLY: Dillon, Connecticut. Motion. Is there a second.

MR. RILEY: Second. Riley, Ohio.

MR. CHENELLY: Any discussion? Okay.

MS. FOLI: Thank you. Christ Foli, Alaska. We recommend from Alaska, we were looking into this and in our state, sometimes they require that the veteran that the veteran has to plead guilty in order to be able to use the Veterans Court services in our state.

So we would recommend that this be amended to state that they do not have to plead guilty in order to receive the services of Veterans Court. Thank you.

MR. CHENELLY: Is there a second for the amendment?

MR. FUERRY: Second the amendment, Fuerry, New York.

MR. CHENELLY: Fuerry, New York, second. Any discussion on the amendment?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: All in favor, say aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

MR. CHENELLY: All opposed.

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Now any discussion on the amendment as -- or on the resolution as amended.

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: All in favor?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

MR. CHENELLY: All opposed?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Passes -- adopted as amended. 25-05 Support statehood for Puerto Rico. Source National Headquarters. Endorsing departments Florida and Illinois. Be it resolved that AMVETS National Headquarters supports statehood for Puerto Rico in its activities with the U.S. Congress. Is there a motion?

MOTION

MR. STUDEBAKER: Studebaker, Illinois.

MR. CHENELLY: Studebaker, Illinois.

MS. PIERCE: Pierce, Ohio.

MR. CHENELLY: Pierce, Ohio, seconds. Any discussion?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: All in favor, say aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

MR. CHENELLY: All opposed.

(Chorus of "nays.")

MR. CHENELLY: The nays have it. 25-06. Post Traumatic Growth Day. PTG Day. AMVETS legislative committee. Alabama, Florida, Illinois, Wisconsin. Be it resolved that AMVETS fully supports and encourages education surrounding post traumatic growth day, shifting the conversation from disorder to growth and turning painful experiences into a life worth living. Is there a motion?

MOTION

MS. DILLON: Dillon, Connecticut.

MR. CHENELLY: Dillon, Connecticut makes a motion. Is there a second?

PNC RILEY: Riley, Pennsylvania.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Riley, Pennsylvania seconds. Any discussion?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: All in favor?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

MR. CHENELLY: Opposed?

(Chorus of "nays.")

MR. CHENELLY: Call it again. All in favor, say aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

MR. CHENELLY: All opposed?

(Chorus of "nays.")

MR. CHENELLY: You know you would have saved time if you didn't yell. So we are going to count. If you are in favor, stand.

(Standing Count.)

MR. CHENELLY: Provost? 186 for aye. That is the majority. The ayes have it. The resolution is adopted. Resolution 25-07. Subject AMVETS National Service Foundation. Source Department of New York. Endorsing department is New York. Be it resolved that this body instruct and demand that the AMVETS National Service Foundation immediately and without haste re-establish the National Service Department at the 2022-2023 funding and staffing levels.

Be it further resolve that the AMVETS National Service Foundation take the immediate action to come into compliance with the AMVETS National Constitution Article XVII: Service Foundation. Section 1. AMVETS recognizes a subordinate organization known as the AMVETS National Service Foundation. Said foundation shall report on its activities at each NEC meeting and convention.

Section 2. Authority to hereby given each state department to authorize and create a subordinate organization known as the AMVETS Department of -- put the state in there, Service Foundation. Each foundation so created shall adopt a constitution and bylaws, which shall be submitted within 30 days thereafter to the National Judge Advocate for approval. No service foundation may be created by any post of AMVETS.

Section 3. A copy of the constitution and bylaws, and any amendments thereto, shall be transmitted to the National Judge Advocate for approval by September 30th of each year. Section 4. The AMVETS National Service Foundation shall provide a National Service Director and a Deputy National Service Director.

Paragraph 1. National Service Director. The national service director shall be the service and welfare officer of the National Service Foundation. The National Service Director shall be responsible for the proper handling of claims of veterans and their dependents or survivors before the Department of Veterans Affairs. Addressing veterans' employment problems, the prosecution of rights under all applicable federal statutes concerning veterans' affairs and the answering of individual requests for assistance of information from members, posts and departments. It shall be the duty of the National Service Director to formulate a rehabilitation program and to direct the activities of staff members charged with implementing the program. A part of this program shall be the formation of a staff of trained national service officers and their assignment to the various regional offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs, subject to the approval of the National Service Foundation Executive Director and the Board of Trustees. The National Service Director shall serve at the pleasure of the AMVETS National Service Foundation Board of Trustees.

Second 2. Deputy National Service Director. The Deputy National Service Director shall be under the supervision of the National Service Director and shall supervise the operations of the cadre, ensuring adherence to AMVETS and national service program policies, maintaining all records pertinent to the field operations, advise the National Service Director on all aspects of field operation, represent AMVETS at appropriate events and meetings

and fulfill other duties as required.

Is there a motion?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: No motion, resolution dies. Going to Amendments. CBL25-01. Electronic Voting. The source is the CBL Committee. Endorsing department North Carolina. Be it resolved that the word electronic be deleted, to read as following in Article 10, Section 3 which states at all meetings of the AMVETS National Convention or the National Executive Committee or the duly constituted committees therefore voting mechanical or written methods shall be prohibited.

And be it further resolved, this change could eliminate the possibility of delegates being pressured into voting for a candidate that they do not want to vote for. Need the CBL Committee to report on each of these committees. Each of these and any other committees that wish to, that have been asked to review.

MR. REMINGTON: Barry Remington, NEC from Iowa. Chairman of the CBL Committee. We voted to reject.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

MR. McFARLAIN: Mr. Director, Kelly McFarlain, National Finance Officer. The Finance Committee met and elected to reject.

MR. CHENELLY: Do I have a motion to adopt this amendment?

MOTION

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: So moved.

MR. CHENELLY: Horace Johnson, Florida. Is there a second?

MR. : Second, North Carolina.

MR. CHENELLY: North Carolina.

MR. : ---- North Carolina, Second.

MR. CHENELLY: Okay. Thank you. Any discussion?

PNC KING: Years ago, I worked in a lab where we built, maintained, repaired computer equipment for the Navy. This was used to collect data off of ships. We had a big sign, right in the middle of that lab. And said if it ain't broke, don't fix it. We have a very good operating system for electing officers here at this convention. There is no reason to change that.

MR. CHENELLY: All in favor of CBL Amendment 25-01, say aye.

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Opposed?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

MR. CHENELLY: Defeated. Subject alternate -- 25-02. Alternate NEC Members. Source Department of Ohio. Endorsing departments Iowa, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin. Be it resolved, that Article VII, Executive Committee, Section 1, paragraph 5 be amended to read, "The Alternate National Committeeman when National Committeeman is present and the National Chaplain shall be a member of the National Executive Committee but without a vote." Is there a motion?

MR. REMMINGTON: CBL Committee recommended rejection.

MR. McFARLAIN: Kelly McFarlain, National Finance Officer, National Finance Committee voted to approve.

MOTION

MR. DUFF: Motion to approve, Duff Connecticut.

MR. FERGUSON: Second.

MR. CHENELLY: Duff, Connecticut and the motion, who was the second?

MR. FERGUSON: Ferguson.

MR. CHENELLY: Ferguson, North Carolina on the second. Any further discussion?

MR. McFARLAIN: McFarlain, National Finance Officer. This does not include travel. So the alternate NEC is not -- National -- I am going back to the money right. So when we -- National pays for the NEC men for the Department to travel. Now that your alternate is part of the Executive Committee with vote, that doesn't mean that -- look at the wording. It says you are now a member of the Executive Committee. That is without funding. Make sense? All right.

MR. CHENELLY: All right. All in favor of adopting CBL 25-02 say aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

MR. CHENELLY: All opposed?

(Chorus of "no.")

MR. CHENELLY: The ayes have it. CBL Amendment 25-03. Subject insurance requirements. Source Department of Florida. Be it resolved, that Article VII, Section 3(c) be changed to "Any post operating a clubroom, as mentioned in Section 3(c), hereof shall be

required to carry workers' compensation insurance in accordance with the law of the state in which the post is located and public liability insurance, including product liability and personal injury coverage, with a minimum single limit of \$300,000. This is reducing the limit -- the minimum from 500,000 to 300,000. Do we have a motion?

MR. REMMINGTON: CBL Committee recommended adoption.

MR. McFARLAIN: Kelly McFarlain, National Finance Officer, the Finance Committee recommended adoption.

MR. CHENELLY: Do I have a motion?

MOTION

PNC KING: Move to adopt, King.

3RD VICE CMDR SHIPLEY: Second, Shipley.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you. All right, any discussion? If you are going to have discussion, you have to be at the microphone. The microphone is the only way you are going to get into the convention minutes.

MR. ROBERTS: Bob Roberts from Texas. Does this eliminate the need of obtaining a liquor liability amendment?

MR. CHENELLY: No, it does not.

CMDR CLARK: No, it does not. If I may --

MR. ROBERT: That is all I needed to clarify.

PNC KING: The purpose of this is that we presently require a liquor liability of \$500,000. However, we found that across the country, people are having trouble trying to get \$500,000 worth of liquor liability insurance because the companies will not write it. So therefore we are lowering it to \$300,000, which is a figure that they can get insurance for.

The other alternative to that is we have got posts that are going to have to shut down their clubrooms or they are going to be operating in violation of our constitution.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: This is an example of you all listening to these constitutions and by-laws, I mean, these resolutions and stuff and just saying aye. Just saying aye. Because it was \$300,000 before within the last four or five years and we changed it to 500,000. We should have left it alone then but again listen to when he is talking about when you get those -- those resolutions and stuff, read them. Read them to your post and discuss it.

Because when you come up here, you need to know what you are saying aye for and what

you are saying no for.

MR. CALLOWAY: Gonzalez Calloway, Indiana. You might want to make a correction on the amount. It is --

MR. McFARLAIN: You are talking about that extra zero?

MR. CALLOWAY: Yeah.

MR. McFARLAIN: Acknowledged.

MR. CALLOWAY: Yeah, you got too many zeros.

MR. McFARLAIN: Noted.

MR. CHENELLY: All in favor of adopting CBL 25-03, say aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

MR. CHENELLY: All opposed.

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Adopted. Our last Amendment 25-04. I can bring them back in if you want. AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary. Source the Department of Alabama.

MR. REMMINGTON: CBL Committee recommends rejection.

MR. McFARLAIN: Kelly McFarlain, National Finance Officer, Finance Committee voted to reject. Motion was to reject.

MR. CHENELLY: Is there a motion?

MR. : Reject.

MR. CHENELLY: You can't have a negative motion. Is there a motion to adopt?

MR. : Excuse me, point of order. Motion to reject is not a proper -- proper motion.

MS. : I just corrected myself.

MR. : Thank you.

MR. : The resolution is a motion you either vote up or down on the resolution.

MR. : I would recommend that nobody adopt anything. Let this shit die.

MR. CHENELLY: Any motion? Thank you, Commander, rejected or died.

(Applause)

PNC KING: If I could make a comment, Mr. Chairman? If I could make a comment?

MR. CHENELLY: Judge Advocate King?

PNC KING: This is a difficult situation because this came up last year, if you all recall. And I understand that Alabama has already said they are going to submit it again next year. I believe and -- the difficulty is if they submit through -- the resolution, we got to bring it on the floor.

I believe in the next year we need to look at an amendment to our amendment procedure, seeing if something has submitted twice and rejected twice, it cannot be re-submitted again. So that is something for you all to go home and think about.

(Applause)

PNC HEUN: I would just -- if I can, Commander, I would just like to ring on what Jim said. You all have seen all the people that came in here, the Auxiliary and the Sons that came in here. That shit is causing an upheaval in our organization and it needs to stop.

MS. TRACY: Hello, Jessica Tracy. Department of Tennessee. Jessica Tracy, Department of Tennessee. I have two sons. So we talk about females and their husbands. What about females and their sons? My sons. My sons are 11 and 12. I don't have a youth either. My youth can't join the Auxiliary because they are boys. Right. Because they are boys, even if they turned 18, they don't get to be in the Auxiliary.

PNC KING: Are you a veteran?

MR. : Yes, she is.

MS. TRACY: I am going to get there. I will get there. But you are also stopping my time as well. So my children when they grow up and turn 18, they have to go 45 minutes from my house to get to the next Sons. That is fine too, right? Now they are in another post. Mom, Grandma, they are in post 2. So does mom and grandmom move to go -- that they can be with the Sons or is that post going to come over?

But here is what I am saying, now you are still separating families for posts. Oh but you know what, my sons -- my 18 year olds can start one. Could your 18 year olds do it? Probably not. With help, yes. But at the same time, we need to adjust this to where maybe the Auxiliary can accept so many --

MR. : Point of order.

MS. TRACY: -- without having to be pushed off. Why can't we amend it to that? So it doesn't come back. We say hey, you guys have to deal with up to 8 -- up to 8. Eight men aren't going to do that. These people just

walked into a room of 200 plus men and said female Marines, Army, Soldiers, Airman -- the 60 of us -- 60, they never showed up in our meeting. They sent out an e-mail, I discussed it with you.

But we are trying to kill it to where it can't come back. They sent an e-mail --

CMDR CLARK: This is a discussion for the department --

MS. TRACY: I didn't get that e-mail --

MR. : She is out of order.

CMDR CLARK: You are out of order at this time. That is ---- Department. Ma'am, please sit down.

MR. CHENELLY: Jason Tremly from Indiana.

MR. TREMLY: I have a resolution that was sent in but must have got lost in the mail as it was never received and it is not in the books. It has to do with how we report Red Shirt Friday and Patriotism Flag. If I could read that today please.

MS. : Point of order. We are still in the middle of --

MS. : I would like to be heard on the current resolution in front of us.

CMDR CLARK: He can read it. Do you want to have a vote on it?

MS. : Before we open another discussion.

CMDR CLARK: You can read it, do you want to have a vote on it?

MR. TREMLY: I would like to have a vote on it if possible.

CMDR CLARK: It has to be 100 percent. Go ahead.

MR. TREMLY: It was sent it, two months ago. We voted on it at SEC and it was unanimously voted on and was submitted but --

CMDR CLARK: Go ahead and read it.

MR. TREMLY: My name is Jason Tremly and I --

MS. : Sir? Sir? I would like to be heard on the existing resolution before we take another one, if you don't mind, sir?

CMDR CLARK: What resolution?

MS. : The discussion was still open and I really would like to be heard.

CMDR CLARK: What resolution? It is already closed. It was declared dead, ma'am.

MS. : Well last year, at this committee, the --

CMDR CLARK: It was declared dead, ma'am. It is not open for discussion. No one made a motion. It died.

MS. : Well, people were still discussing it.

PNC KING: Commander?

CMDR CLARK: Yes, Mr. King?

PNC KING: Unless I am sadly mistaken, Amendment 25-04 was dumped. The comment I made was something to do in the future and had nothing whatsoever to do with that resolution. I did not open anything up. I just -- and that may not be the only resolution we ever want to keep from repeating and repeating. But we can't have a resolution coming up year after year after year and being rejected. That is all I am saying. We need to change our methods.

CMDR CLARK: Go ahead.

MR. TREMLY: My name is Jason Tremly. I bring before the National Board as well as my brothers and sisters, some concerns I have for reporting Red Shirt Friday and Patriotism Flag. Currently there are no standards to guide us on reporting these programs. We report currently Red Shirt Friday eight hours every Friday per volunteer. Patriotism Flag eight hours per day, per volunteer. I feel this is immoral as it overshadows values of programs that we do actually help veterans and their families as well as members of our community. I have an example here and we had a veteran suicide in my community two weeks ago.

And on Monday, 7/22, I had 12 volunteers go with me to a funeral detail for an Army veteran and the program value they received was \$1,113.54. I had 10 more volunteers that Wednesday go with me for the funeral escort and the program value they received was \$952.80. The total between those two programs was \$2,066.34. And then that following Friday, I had 39 volunteers that wore a red shirt for 8 hours and received a program value of \$8,904.48.

So, I feel like we -- I don't want to tell people not to fly a flag, wear a red shirt. We should all be doing that anyway. And we should continue to get it out there. I just feel like we are receiving too big of a program value. I would like to regulate it. So the resolution is, whereas AMVETS has no written SOPs to guide us in reporting these programs and whereas, Red Shirt Friday is currently reported 8 hours per Friday per volunteer and volunteers can be

anyone.

And whereas, Patriotism Flag is current reported 8 hours per day per volunteer and volunteers can be anyone. And whereas, a volunteer wearing a red shirt or flying a flag gets a higher program value than an AMVETS standing for a three hour funeral detail or serving at a food pantry, thus overshadowing values of programs that directly help veterans, their families and community members. Now therefore be it resolved that AMVETS allows Red Shirt Friday volunteers to report one hour per Friday, per volunteer.

And be it further resolved that AMVETS allows Patriotism Flag volunteers to report 8 hours per month, per volunteer and be it further resolved that volunteers reporting Red Shirt Friday or Patriotism Flag programs must be a member of AMVETS, AMVETS Auxiliary or Sons of AMVETS. That is my resolution.

MOTION

MR. CHENELLY: Do you move for its adoption?

MR. TREMLY: Yes.

MR. CHENELLY: The record shows he moves for the adoption. Is there a second?

MR. MARTIN: Second, Martin, Indiana.

MR. CHENELLY: Second, Martin, Indiana. Any discussion?

MS. DILLON: Dana Dillon, Connecticut, NEC. We do help veterans and families by wearing our red shirts on Friday. If someone's child is deployed or son whatever, brother, by them seeing the shirt, they know that we are supporting them. So it does help them.

MR. TREMLY: I absolutely believe that. I just feel like we are receiving too big of a program value for that.

MS. BULLOCK: Now the amendment that you are suggesting, it is covering two separate things. They are not supposed to cover two separate entities. You are doing Red Shirts and Flags all in one. We don't do it that way. They have to come up separately. You just said for Flags and also for Red Shirts. You can't include the two as one. They have to be separate. So based off that alone, it cannot be presented today as written.

MR. CHENELLY: Any further discussion?

MR. : I second the second motion that you can't have them both in the same vote.

MR. CHENELLY: We can't have two motions at the same time. If we want to amend,

you can amend. All right, all in favor of this amendment -- I am sorry, this resolution, say aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

MR. CHENELLY: All opposed.

(Chorus of "nays.")

MR. CHENELLY: It is defeated. Commander.

CMDR CLARK: Final call or any other committee announcements? Any other committee reports? Provost Marshal, anybody out there from the Riders.

MR. MARTEL: Commander, Andy Martel from Maryland. Commander?

CMDR CLARK: Yes?

MR. MARTEL: Andy Martel from Maryland. It is 12:55. Are the district meetings still scheduled for 1:00?

CMDR CLARK: Don't anticipate -- we are working on it.

MR. MARTEL: Okay.

CMDR CLARK: All right. Right now, the district meetings have been moved to 1:30. We can't go any further than that because we have the 3:00 with the Congressman -- so we can't go 2:00 for the meetings because it will run late and we won't have anybody in for the Congressman Bost(sic). That is in the ballroom of the Lincoln Hotel. This will be the last activity and then we are closing.

**Riders Floor Visit
by Tom McNamara**

MR. McNAMARA: Good morning AMVETS.

(Chorus of "Good afternoon.")

MR. McNAMARA: We are honored to be part of this convention in Springfield. Through a bunch of flights and rental cars, but we are here. I am speaking on behalf of President Natalie Cummings. She wasn't really given a time to be here and I just happened to be in the room, so I am happy to speak for her. We are honored to be a part of this family. We are honored for the past several years. We have built relationships and worked together as the entire AMVETS family.

That is something we pride ourselves on in the Riders. The AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary and Sons have an equal vote. We are all equal within the Riders. But we all know that we are AMVETS first to our respectful parent organizations. One thing we are extremely proud of is for the past four years now, we have been

assisting the AMVETS with the Rolling to Remember.

Something that is particularly endearing to my heart is the AMVETS -- we took it from Rolling Thunder when they gave it up to we brought it on as the AMVETS Rolling to Remember, but we have included the AMVETS suicide prevention. That is something that I have been advocating for and I do public speaking regularly and I have been on national news channels speaking about this, it is one of our biggest crisis that I think that we need to hit the VAs on. They need to do better.

There has been improvement, I just know from my personal experience of standing on a psychologist desk in the VA, they can do better. So we encourage -- just like in the AMVETS Riders family that we are all family. The AMVETS, Ladies Auxiliary and Sons of AMVETS, I would like to encourage as a family let's show up to the Rolling to Remember, for the over 82,000 service members that are still not home over the past 100 years and for veterans suicide awareness.

This is more than just a motorcycle ride through the Capital. This is an actual demonstration to show our congressmen and women that we care, we still care and we are out there advocating for those that have not come home and those that probably won't survive the night. Commander, Commander Cummings does have a check for your program. She will give it to you tonight at the awards banquet. Or at your dinner. And I apologize that I don't have that on me, with me right now. We will find her. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

MS. DILLON: Excuse me, don't leave yet. Commander if I may?

CMDR CLARK: Yes.

MS. DILLON: The Suicide Prevention and Awareness Committee met and we are going to have people at Rolling to Remember to help that cause.

(Applause)

MR. EATON: Commander, Media ---- Commander, Massachusetts, Timothy Eaton. I just like to present you a check from Massachusetts of \$500 for your project.

CMDR CLARK: Thank you. Come on up.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: I will read off quickly the room numbers District I meeting is B4E, District I B4E. District II is B4W. III is B9. District IV B10. District V B3. District VI B8.

MR. CHENELLY: I really, I beg you to be at the 3:00. It is in the Grand Ballroom. The Chairman of the House of Special Affairs Committee -- the most influential member of the House of Representatives -- I would say that probably the most influential member of Congress right now for veterans. Be really important to have a good showing for him. I promise you it is going to be quick. I don't think that session is going to last twenty minutes.

It is just him speaking. He is going to address us. It is really important that he sees how many of us there are and that we are standing together. We have a great relationship but right now, we need to show that grass roots. But again 3:00 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom. Thank you.

CMDR CLARK: Please stand for benediction. I know it has been a long morning with one 10 minute recess. I thank you all for staying.

**Benediction
by Chaplain Milton Allen**

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: (Prayer.)

(Chorus of "amen.")

CMDR CLARK: Provost Marshal.

**Honors to the Colors
by Provost Marshal Art Majors**

PROVOST MARSHAL MAJORS: AMVETS, attention. Hand salute.

(Meeting adjourned at 1:03 p.m. to reconvene on August 10th, 2024.)

AMVETS 79th Annual Convention

Fourth Business Session

Meeting Minutes



*Saturday,
August 10, 2024*

Held at the
President Abraham Lincoln DoubleTree Hotel
Springfield, Illinois

**Morning Session
(8:37 a.m.)**

**Call to Order
by Commander Bill Clark**

CMDR CLARK: Please rise for the invocation. Chaplain Allen.

**Invocation
by Chaplain Milton Allen**

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: Good morning, good morning, good morning. Chaplains, would you please join me this morning. (Prayer.)

(Chorus of "amen.")

CMDR CLARK: Provost Marshal.

**Honor to the Colors
by Provost Marshal Art Majors**

PROVOST MARSHAL MAJORS: AMVETS, attention. Hand salute.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

CMDR CLARK: Please be seated. PNC Jan Brown, are you here?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Are there any other final committee reports to be given this morning?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Would the District Commanders like to announce who the new District Commanders are for the upcoming year?

District Commander Election Results

CMDR CLARK: District 1?

MR. DAVITT: Commander, Thom Davitt from the Department of Massachusetts, I was elected as the new District 1 Commander for AMVETS National District 1.

(Applause.)

CMDR CLARK: Congratulations. District II?

MR. FERGUSON: Commander, Randy Ferguson, National District II, new Commander, Past Commander, whatever and my new 1st Vice is the guy from Virginia, Ralph.

CMDR CLARK: Thank you. District III? District III Commander Laura McFarlain.

MR. HOOD: Earl Hood, I was elected yesterday from South Carolina.

(Applause.)

CMDR CLARK: District IV?

MR. STUDEBAKER: Commander, Chris Studebaker, Past 4th National District Commander and our new commander is Sheldon Hartsfield out of the great state of Missouri.

(Applause.)

CMDR CLARK: District V?

MR. TRAYLOR: Terry Traylor from District V. I would like to introduce Deborah Whirley, from the state of Nebraska is our new IV District Commander.

(Applause.)

CMDR CLARK: And District VI?

MS. GOOD: This is Terry Good. I would like to introduce Jack Isaacson from California as our new District VI Commander. Arizona -- Arizona.

(Applause.)

National Officer Reports

CMDR CLARK: Okay. All right, Chaplain Allen, would you like to give your report for the year?

**National Chaplain Report
Milton Allen**

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: Good morning again. Chaplains have been busy this year. I want to let you know that --

(Chorus of "Can't year you.")

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: Can you hear me now?

(Chorus of "Yes.")

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: Okay. There we are. Your chaplains have been busy this year. I want to let you know that many of them have went above and beyond. They have taken on some tasks that I have given them and they became more than just a prayer giver. Alaska, you have Chaplain Jones who is not only your Chaplain but he pastors through several churches as well.

New York, you got Chaplain Hank Schroeder and well, that man is on a mission. And every month he calls me and we check in and we share thoughts and work things out. California, wow, you got that mighty, mighty Chaplain Jackson. And he has served how many years? 30 years. 30. 30. 30 years. Some of you are barely over 30, aren't you?

Georgia, you got Chaplain Shannon Baxter. He has a hospital ministry that he tends to and

he does an awesome job as that. And then Georgia once again, you got that Jesus looking fellow that rides the motorcycle. And that would be Chaplain Jeremiah Bodkins. And well, Gold Star Mothers, Rolling to Remember and the list goes on and on.

But the thing that I want you to know that, the Chaplain is more than the prayer giver. He is a mentor -- or she. Let me correct myself. He is a mentor, she is a mentor. A coach. A guidance counselor. A friend. A confidant. Whatever you might need that day, that is what they are right? So, -- but last but not least, before I tell you about this last person, I want to tell you some other things that -- Virginia.

I believe that is right -- who belongs to PNC, I mean I am sorry, PDC Rich Caldwell? Who is that? Yeah. That Chaplain has went beyond all purpose for us this year. Not only is he doing his chaplain work, he also helps stand up post. He has baptized over 100 members at his church. Constantly, he is driving here and there to do all he can do to represent the chaplaincy.

I want you to know that these men and women are out there to help you, support you, be there for you each and every step of the way. All you got to do is open your hearts and your minds. They are there for you. Seek them out, they are there to listen. Chaplains for this year, we partnered with Daily Bread, 1687, Bible Institute of America. All that literature that you see in the back that is where that comes from.

And I have shared -- I am going to be sharing something with your departments and your districts so that you can go get your own. So what they are going to do is send it directly to your departments. You don't have to wait until the chaplain shows up at National. It is going to come straight to you. For free of charge. Shipping to you. Okay.

So once I send it out to you this week, take heed and take care of that. And get that out to your post. I could be up here for a minute but my heart is heavy, so I am going to let it go. That is my report, Commander.

MOTION

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: I accept -- I request for its acceptance at the proper time.

(Chorus of "Second.")

CMDR CLARK: We have a motion and second by 1st Vice Commander Johnson. Any discussion?

MS. HEBERT: Commander, here in the back.

CMDR CLARK: Yes?

MS. HEBERT: My name is Carol Hebert. Many of you know who I was, many of you know I was really, really sick. I just want to thank publically Chaplain Allen because he called me. He checked me. He got me -- he sent me -- he got you guys to sign Get Well cards and sent them to me. So I want to publically thank Chaplain Allen for everything he has done as National Chaplain.

(Applause.)

CMDR CLARK: Thank you.

PNC CHAPMAN: Commander?

CMDR CLARK: Yes?

PNC CHAPMAN: Chicago, Post 18, the Police Post, they would like to come and make a presentation to you.

CMDR CLARK: We have a motion on the floor now.

PNC CHAPMAN: Oh, I didn't realize that. I thought it was finished.

CMDR CLARK: Any further discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried. PNC Chapman?

PNC CHAPMAN: Yes. And the AMVETS Post 18, the Police Post out of Chicago would like to come and join you on the dais. They have a presentation for you.

MR. GREZBOWSKI: Good morning everybody. This is Police Post 18. Chicago. We are up here to make a donation to the Commander's project, which we do every year with the new commanders. So this year, we are going to give a check for his project in a total of \$50,000.

(Applause.)

MR. : Thanks again. You don't have to stand. But thank you anyway. We have one more thing I need to -- Past Commander Don McLean up here also please. A presentation to him. But first of the Commander for Mr. Bill Clark, we always do this every year to the commanders. We give them one of our police stars. They are really nice, very beautiful. And you can probably get out of jail

free with it.

(Laughter.)

MR. : You have seen them before.

(Applause.)

MR. : And one more for the Past Commander, Don McLean. We didn't get to him last year for some reason why, it is hard to get the Coast Guard. But we got one. This is for you, sir.

(Applause.)

MR. : Thank you very much. Hopefully we will see you again next year for something new whatever you guys are going to do, new project. The new commander will do something. But thanks again.

(Applause.)

MS. BRITTON: Commander?

CMDR CLARK: Yes?

MS. BRITTON: To your left -- to your left. Laura Britton, North Carolina. Construction company from North Carolina, Millennium Contractors is under COO have \$1,000 for your project, Commander.

CMDR CLARK: Thank you.

(Applause.)

CMDR CLARK: Who authorized that?

(Laughter.)

MS. BRITTON: The COO --

CMDR CLARK: Thank you.

MR. : There goes that Christmas bonus.

CMDR CLARK: The next report is from our JA, Past National Commander, Jim King.

(Applause.)

Judge Advocate Report PNC Jim King

PNC KING: I stood up a little while ago to come to give me report and we had all that other going on, I wasn't going to sit down again as much trouble as I have getting up. I guess that it is fitting that my report follows Chaplain Allen's. Because a Chaplain's job and my job as a Judge Advocate are very much alike. We can tell you what you need to do, we can't make you do it.

This will be my final report as a National Judge

Advocate. And I would like to say that it has been an enjoyable experience. I would really like to -- but in all seriousness, I want to thank everybody for the support and the help and the cooperation I received over the past several years. And I sincerely hope that you will pass that on to my follow on Judge Advocate. Thank you all very much. Commander, this concludes my report.

MOTION

PNC KING: I would ask for its adoption.

(Applause.)

CMDR CLARK: We have a motion, do we have a second?

MS. GAUSE: Laura Gause, state of Illinois. I second that motion.

CMDR CLARK: Thank you. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none. Those in favor, signify by saying "aye."

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried. Now the National Finance Officer, Kelly McFarlain.

National Finance Officer Report Kelly McFarlain

MR. McFARLAIN: Good morning, Commander. So, my finance report -- it has been a good year. Learned a lot. And until you understand the inner workings of AMVETS, it is -- it becomes quite interesting. And I think I am getting there. I think we are getting there. We have a big year as the Commander spoke last night, between selling a building and buying a building, renovating a building.

All these great things. Membership databases crashed. All that cost money. And you know, then still move forward and still do all of the great things all require money. So, one of the things I do appreciate is the like -- the Jim King is on my committee and the Joe Pining is on my committee. You know, a lot of people see the arguing and things -- I encourage the arguing, I encourage the accountability, I encourage the challenging me -- hey -- coming to me and saying hey, I don't -- I want to see this or I want to see that. I encourage that.

But I will also defend it. I -- I defend my stance and if I am wrong, I will always say that I am wrong. If you can prove me wrong, prove me wrong.

That's -- you have to do that as a budget guy. And one of the things that you know, I heard yesterday, somebody asking about grants. The guy was sitting in the foyer the whole time.

I will -- I am giving you his contact info, so that it is in the minutes. His name is Elvis Walden. You want to know anything about grants, call Elvis Walden. His phone number is 737-243-2854. So there it is. Elvis Walden. 737-243-2854. I walked around -- that guy has sat in -- there are still members that go forward, hey I want to know about grants -- the guy has been around the whole time.

The guy -- please -- please help encourage younger guys to come in and help us move forward so we have an organization -- I want to be Jim King. I want to have an organization where I can be one of the elders of the post or of this organization, sit in the back telling the young guys what they are doing wrong. I want to have an organization to do that. All that costs money.

MOTION

MR. McFARLAIN: So, Commander, that is my report.

MR. STUDEBACKER: Second, Studebacker ---.

CMDR CLARK: We have a motion and a second. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none. All those in favor, signify by saying "aye."

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried. We now have a visitor, our White Clover Princess.

White Clover Princess Noel Rataichek

MS. RATAICHEK: Good morning, my name is Noel Rataichek. I am from Post 1032, Reedsville, Wisconsin. I had no idea what to expect when I was crowned Wisconsin's White Clover Princess last June. I have grown up with the AMVETS and always being a part of my life. When the time came to apply for White Clover Princess, I felt I needed to do it to honor both my grandpa and past state commander and my grandma past president -- state president.

I wish my grandpa was here this year to see it all. From the many banquets, parades, instal-

lation of officers and meetings, my pride for this organization has grown. I am so honored to be standing here one last time as the state of Wisconsin's White Clover Princess. I would like -- I would also like to mention how I am standing here today.

The state of Wisconsin is pretty much the only state that has a consecutive White Clover Princess for over 50 years. Girls between the ages of 14 through 18 years old who are daughters, granddaughters, nieces or -- nieces of AMVETS can apply. They fill out an application then they write an essay. I was completely shocked and excited when I was picked.

I spent the last year traveling around Wisconsin with our state commander and auxiliary president. I met many amazing people and have taken a part in memorable trips. My trip to Philadelphia was by far my favorite this year. Learning about Freedoms Foundation, now Founding Forward and taking a part in leadership conference was eye opening.

I think the mock trial we did was the best part and -- and this conference helped when it came to my AP Government class. My AP teacher was jealous when I told him about my D.C. to lay the wreath with now Past State Commander Brian and Past President Deb at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Next time he goes to D.C. he wants to borrow my lifetime pass to see Congress in session. We were able to head to the Hill to talk to our state representatives. This was so cool. I never thought I had such an opportunity to hear about the many issues our veterans still face.

The whole D.C. trip was so humbling to me with all I got to see. I have been given so many amazing opportunities as White Clover Princess and I am so honored to be the state of Wisconsin's representative for the AMVETS. It is sad to think this is my last event as White Clover Princess. But my role is filled back home with an amazing young lady representing the AMVETS very well.

I wanted to thank the state of Wisconsin, AMVETS and Auxiliary 1032 in Reedsville and everybody here today for giving me the opportunity. It is -- this is a memory that I'll never forget. Thank you so much for your service and continued efforts to secure for our freedom. If anybody would like to share pins, I am more than happy to take them off your hands.

(Laughter.)

MS. RATAICHEK: And thank you.

(Applause.)

CMDR CLARK: Sandy, you are up. Our Na-

tional 3rd Vice Commander, Sandy Vorhies.

National Officer Reports National 3rd Vice Commander Report Sandy Vorhies

3RD VICE CMDR VORHIES: Good morning everyone.

You will find my report on page 68 in your report books. I would just like to mention to you that this past year I have come to realize that we all have several correctional AMVETS posts and I would like to see our departments make sure that you reach out to the liaisons for those correctional posts and make sure that they get a copy of the bylaw changes and resolutions that is going to be addressed here.

They all are a part of our AMVETS family and I would like to see them and what their remarks are on what we are doing here on their behalf. So if you could just remember to do that I would deeply appreciate it. Thank you and that is my report.

MOTION

3RD VICE CMDR VORHIES: I ask for its adoption.

MR. DANIELS: Second. Daniels, Ohio.

CMDR CLARK: We have a motion to second. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying "aye."

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried.

Now our National 2nd Vice Commander Paul Shipley.

National 2nd Vice Commander Report Paul Shipley

2ND VICE CMDR SHIPLEY: Programs reporting hit an all-time high this year in numbers. \$200 million. That is fantastic. But as I have said before, that is less than half of our post reporting. So I challenge each and every one of you new 2nd Vice Commanders, reach out to every post in your department. And for those of you that have unorganized departments near you, reach out to them. Make sure we get that number up.

Because if we had 200 million with less than half, think what we could do if we had 100

percent post reporting. We would be unstoppable. Thank you for everybody that contributed to help me this year with membership and programs. Yes, I said membership and programs because I truly, truly believed that programs are what gets us membership.

Programs are the lifeblood of this organization. When we go to Congress, we say that we did this with programs. When we go in our communities, we say we do these programs. When we are seeing that veteran who needs help, we reach out to them to use the programs that we have. So please, participate and record.

MOTION

2ND VICE CMDR SHIPLEY: Commander, that is my report and I move for its adoption at the appropriate time.

CMDR CLARK: Do we have a second?

MS. : Here, second.

CMDR CLARK: Thank you. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by saying "aye."

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried. Our National 1st Vice Commander Horace Johnson.

National 1st Vice Commander Report Horace Johnson

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Good morning everybody.

(Chorus of "Good morning.")

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: So, my report is in the book -- in the report book on page 66 but I like to -- just to like to add what we have done since we have been here this weekend. And we had a training class Wednesday morning and we had a -- somebody from every department at that class. The room was full. And then we had a round table Thursday and the room was full.

And I just want to explain to you all the difference. The training class is supposed to be the membership persons training on a certain subject and then after that training, there is questions and answers. This time it was a little different. We actually two round tables because people had a lot of questions and

Warren Cox did very well fielding all those questions. He was right on time and I want to thank you a lot for that, Director Cox.

And at the Thursday afternoon, it was the same thing. I hope we got a lot of your questions answered. I am sure you are going to always have questions that we are always going to want to -- that is what we do. We are here for you. Membership support @ AMVETS.org, go through your chain of command first. But if you can't get no answer there, your chain of command is going to go through member support anyway.

And they react on any question or any request and they can react at 3:00 in the morning. That is what they like to do and they get paid for it. So they like their job and they get paid for their job. So we are there for you. Don't you ever forget that. I am glad we are back in net(sic) forums, although we were trying to get net(sic) forums. But at least net forums work for us. They cost a little bit more, they are slow but they show. Okay. And that is all I got for right now.

MOTION

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Commander, I move my report at the proper time.

MR. : Second, Florida.

CMDR CLARK: I have a motion and a second. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none. All those in favor, signify by saying "aye."

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried.

National Commander Report William "Bill" Clark

CMDR CLARK: My report is on page 65. This will be last report for this year. It has been a long year. We sold a building. We moved into temporary quarters. We bought a building, we are in the process of renovations. Moving alone was a horrendous operation. Unfortunately, I had to leave town during most of it and missed all the fun. For five weeks, I was out of the area.

When I came back, there was some disgruntled folks. But we all got together and made it happen and it was successful. We are down at the temporary building. It all worked out.

This year, there has been so many memories, it is hard to put them all together. I kept a scrapbook, it is that important. There are so many different things that I have done.

Things that stay in mind when you first get married, first child is born, you first come back from overseas. Date of your divorce. These things just stay in your mind and -- but my overseas trip, the day the gavel goes down on this podium and you realize and you are sitting there as 1st Vice, you are the National Commander coming up is a moment that will stay with you forever.

But I want to thank you for all of your support during my Vice Commanders as I came up. And hopefully you will support the new regime coming in. And we had a -- so far, I feel a great convention and safe travels on your way home. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. BULLOCK: Eddie Bullock, Florida, second that report.

MOTION

MS. DILLON: Since he seconded, I will make the motion to accept the Commander's report, Dana Dillon, Connecticut.

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Any discussion?

(No response.)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Hearing none, all in favor indicate by saying "aye."

(Chorus of "ayes.")

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Ones opposed?

(No response.)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Have it.

CMDR CLARK: Right now, I would ask Chuck Kissel to please come up.

MR. KISSEL: I am here to give a progress report on the flags for the U.S.A. Olympics. People that went. It is not over yet. It does not end tonight with the closing ceremony because Monday the paras start. And we have worked to help those people also. So, the figures for the total amount of flags that we distributed was 1132. At \$30 a piece, which is more or less the selling price that we asked for -- sometimes higher, sometimes lower, that value winds up being \$33,700 into charities.

If you back out the price, not counting shipping, that value as a profit is \$16,000 to charities in calendar last year and this year

combined. The amount of athletes that were provided for in the beginning they were spent by me contacting individual teams and shipping the flags.

The second doors to get in are not obvious to somebody who doesn't know they are secret doors. You can call a number on the web, you can leave a message, they won't respond. You have to have a contact number. I had some assistance from Tennessee in kind of rigging the game for us. And I eventually found the secret number. It is the number for the procurement people in Colorado Springs.

So the bulk shipment, final shipment went to Colorado Springs in early April. And that is because they were going to ship to France and Tahiti and everywhere else. It is not just Paris. So the flags would be there in time in the right place, whatever that means for the start of the games in that particular region on the world basis.

The thing that I tried to do to enhance the possibility of us getting a final kind of article, it might be a newspaper report. It may be published in Stars and Stripes, we don't know that yet. But without the pictures, it is going to be kind of hard to make a big impact. The pictures -- you should be seeing the pictures for the Army people that received -- I think there were 13 Army people that were provided through the Army. This includes a gal who was on active duty -- a Captain and she was working in Italy and she got hers direct to Italy and she was on the rugby team.

I don't know much about rugby, so I can't really tell you what position she was. But the Army was the first one up and that was a connection again through Tennessee for me. I am doing this so you understand we really are a family and if you don't think you can do it, I mean, you can figure out how you can get help, it is a heck of a lot easier.

The Army led me to the Air Force. And we equipt 9 Air Force people -- now, contacting the Marines, I got a number and never called me back. Contacting the -- hold on -- contacting the -- the Space Force is part of the Air Force but there are no space military people this year that were involved in program at the Air Force level.

The Navy Coast Guard, I couldn't find it. I got to a -- believe it or not, in Annapolis an MD, whose specialty is athletic health. He knew about what they were doing but he couldn't tell me where I should go to equip that particular branch of the military, which includes a Coast Guard.

So, it is not all in vain because when those people enter into the program at the Olympics level, they are cut loose from their active duty level so they can become part of the U.S.A.

team level. Well, the secret door that I found out was the procurement group and they are in Colorado Springs and they received a bulk shipment like I already told you which theoretically would have provided the flags to the people in the military that I couldn't contact.

Yes, I seen the pictures on TV just like you have and I will be darned if I can see where the logo is. But I have some help in the audience. They volunteered when we leave today, we will start flushing through everything that is on the web to see if we can locate pictures that we really need. I don't know how many different Army people you have been looking at other than me. And those people were again, part of the problem in trying to figure out how to do this.

But what is more important is -- is what your second vice told you. And you haven't heard anything yet until you understand that all of this has been program reported. Now the original money -- the original money was all spent to get the flags from charities in the first half of the six months. So it doesn't count on what program stuff that we are working on still now.

The combined program reporting just for the last six months totaled -- where is that darned number, well it is \$16,000. The first number I read you in program reporting by three people. So, there was a discussion earlier about something not being worth the value because the number was too large.

Well, hopefully you wouldn't think 16 grand is too large for the project that we are doing. The work doesn't end. And I should have something more concrete when we get to the December NEC because it should be done by then. What we do for the winter games in '28, I don't know yet -- I am sorry, '26. I don't know what we are going to do yet.

But I would certainly go to the -- one shot deal through procurement in Colorado Springs and avoid the leg work trying to get somebody to answer the phone. Commander, that concludes my report.

MOTION

MR. : Ohio.

CMDR CLARK: That motion was second. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying "aye."

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed.

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried.

PROVOST MARSHAL MAJORS: We have the Juniors.

CMDR CLARK: Bring in our guests, the Juniors are here.

Junior AMVETS Aidyn Dolf

MR. DOLF: Good morning, AMVETS.

(Chorus of "Good morning.")

MR. DOLF: It has been a great year. And I have been honored to work with all of you this year. Commander Clark, I have been honored to work with you this year and here is a token of my appreciation.

CMDR CLARK: Well, thank you.

MR. DOLF: Thank you.

CMDR CLARK: It is beautiful.

(Applause.)

MR. DOLF: My project this year has been Folds of Honor. And thank you to everyone that has participated and supported me throughout this year. My officers this year have been Senior Vice President Corbyn Dolf.

(Applause)

MR. DOLF: Junior Vic President Ash Stopyra.

(Applause)

MR. DOLF: Chaplain Hannah Shipley.

(Applause)

MR. DOLF: Secretary Peyton Jackson.

(Applause)

MR. DOLF: Treasurer, Kelsey Shipley.

(Applause)

MR. DOLF: Sergeant at Arms Corey Riley.

(Applause)

MR. DOLF: PRO Charlotte Shipley.

(Applause)

MR. DOLF: Thank you to all of my officers for making it such a great year. Commander Clark, Executive Director Chenelly, can I have you please come with me and joining me in

signing the new Juniors charter? Never mind.

(Laughter)

MR. DOLF: But we do have a new Juniors charter. Okay. We have drawn the 50/50 ticket. The one that is all pink. The ticket number is 501398. The pink ones. Hot pink. 501398. We found a winner.

(Applause)

MR. DOLF: And now your 2024/2025 National President, Corbyn Dolf.

(Applause)

MR. C. DOLF: Good morning.

(Chorus of "Good morning.")

MR. C. DOLF: I am Corbyn Dolf, your newly elected 2024/2025 Junior AMVETS President. My president's project is Gold Star mothers.

(Applause)

MR. C. DOLF: My new 2024/2025 National Junior AMVETS Officers are Senior Vice Ash Stopyra.

(Applause)

MR. C. DOLF: Junior Vice President Kelsey Shipley.

(Applause)

MR. C. DOLF: Chaplain Hannah Shipley.

(Applause)

MR. C. DOLF: Secretary Layla W.

(Applause)

MR. C. DOLF: Treasurer Peyton Jackson.

(Applause)

MR. C. DOLF: Sergeant of Arms Corey Riley.

(Applause)

MR. C. DOLF: Public Relations Officer Charlotte Shipley.

(Applause)

MR. C. DOLF: Parliamentarian Aidyn Dolf.

(Applause)

MR. C. DOLF: Thank you.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: You want to talk about a sign of the times. They are up here with their phone doing all that. I got six pieces of paper and a pen.

(Laughter)

CMDR CLARK: I left the phone in the room because I am not sure if I can put it on vibrate or if it is going to ring or whatever and they got everything right on the phone. Anyway, at this time, I would like to ask Warren Cox, our Programs Director to please come up.

Presentation by Warren Cox, Program Director

MR. COX: Good morning AMVETS family. You got to love the youth, man, that is our future and it just makes my heart warm. Commander, we have one more order of business before you go and I think that it is befitting that you do this. We have not one, not two but three new posts that have chartered Virginia, Missouri and Washington, PA where our new headquarters building is.

I know Doug Johnson if you wouldn't mind stepping up and if Executive Director Chenelly and Commander, if you could sign here and we can present this to them. And I have the charter right here. So it is official.

(Applause)

MR. COX: Okay. And this next person, I would like to have stand and come. Brady Brooks. Is he in the house? There he is over there. Come on up, Brady. Now, family as Brady approaches, let me tell you a little story. He is -- he packed his car up from Indiana. He knew our mission in Washington, PA and he said Warren and Mr. Chenelly, I would like to help.

Within three months he had close to 50 members join. He established the post. From doctors to politicians to the governor. He is a rock star amongst rock stars and Brady, I want to personally say thank you very much for what you do. You are doing an outstanding job. And I have your charter right here, so it is official. And Mr. Chenelly and our commander will sign for you --

(Applause)

MR. COX: We also have with Brady the State Commander, ---- to you sir. Brady, you have any words that you would like to say to your family?

MR. BROOKS: Yes, I would. I would like to recognize my Post 99 family in Indianapolis, Indiana. A lot of support, a lot of direction. I learned a lot from you folks. Appreciate and love you all. My new family from PA, I am

looking forward to working with you. We got a lot of work to do and our mission is going to be to support the charities and to support headquarters to do whatever we can do to make it work and make it grow and make it function. So thank you.

(Applause)

MR. COX: Brady. Lastly I would like to offer Brady -- not offer but give him a certificate of achievement for your outstanding work.

(Applause)

MR. BROOKS: Thank you.

MR. COX: God bless everyone.

CMDR CLARK: It is almost 9 minutes to 10. At 10:00, we will secure the room. I would like to take a 10 minute break please. Please be back by 10:00. We can do a ---- and do what we need to do. Quickly please. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

CMDR CLARK: Provost Marshal, secure the room. AMVETS please take your seats. PNC Jan Brown, would you please come up for the Credentials Report. All right, AMVETS, please settle down for the Credentials Report.

Credential Report PNC Jan Brown

PNC BROWN: While everybody is getting re-seated. We will go ahead -- I am going to -- I would like to introduce my committee. We came in late as usual. We came in after we closed and so we are related to the back of the room. But if they would -- making sure that everybody is there. Everybody there? Okay. We have Jody Wood from California -- I am sorry, Florida 44 -- I know the number because -- no 44, they would love to have her, trust me. But she ain't going back.

Kathy Argyle from 1985 in Ohio. Katie Barber, I don't know her post number but she is from Florida. 2000. Diana Johnson, Executive Director from Missouri. And Jim Dodson, Missouri Post 1, he is our token male this year.

(Laughter)

PNC BROWN: He is -- he was with us before and he had opportunity to come back to us. He called and asked if he could come back and we said yes. So we lost Don Oliver this year due to -- he is just not able to travel right now. So we always try to keep one token male on there and -- some -- Butch Adams volunteered for next year. So we will see.

But anyway, I would like you to give them a round of applause because they worked really

hard this week.

(Applause)

PNC BROWN: We get put in the cage back there and Wi-Fi doesn't work. The phones don't work. So it was challenging at best. All right. This is the final credentials report. If you have an issue, come see me at the back of the room and we will try and work it out. Or we might be able to work it out up here, I don't know. So most everybody with large delegations has already been to see me. So here we go.

Alaska 3, Alabama 4, Arkansas 1, Arizona 3, California -- excuse me, I had to write big and I got lots of pages. California 18, Colorado 1, Connecticut 3, District of Columbia 10, Delaware 3, Florida 27, Georgia 12, Hawaii 1, Iowa 10 -- I am sorry -- Illinois -- no hold on, Illinois has 31 plus 1 alternate. Indiana has 28 plus 3 alternates.

Kansas 1, Kentucky 13 -- did I forget Iowa? I am sorry. Iowa has 10. Massachusetts 8. I said Louisiana earlier, 4. We are going -- this list is different. Don't pay attention to that. She has got it. This is -- I use postal codes because that is easier for me. So just don't worry if you think I skipped somebody, I will get there, okay.

Massachusetts 8, Maryland 7, Maine 2, Michigan 6, Missouri 15, North Carolina 11 plus 1. The Commander is the plus 1, if there is a tie, he gets to vote. North Dakota 5, Nebraska 1, New Mexico 1, New York 20, Ohio 21, Oklahoma 1, Pennsylvania 10, Rhode Island 2.

South Carolina 3, Tennessee 27, Texas 8, Virginia 9, Vermont 1, Washington 4 -- that is Washington state, Wisconsin has 16 plus 1 alternate and West Virginia has 1. So for a total of -- did I get the total -- I didn't get the total, they cut that off. Total I believe is 340 -- Jody? Got it?

JODY: 355.

PNC BROWN: 355. Kind of a low turn out, about what we expected. So -- and Joe is going to reiterate this but we are starting with Illinois. You all know where you fall in line and this time it will be alphabetical by -- no not size. Alphabetical by state. Not postal code. Regular alphabetized. So you know you got to be up there, get your butt up and get going.

So be ready. And -- it is 179 is half way plus 1. Anybody have any questions? Last chance.

MOTION

PNC BROWN: Commander, that concludes my final credentials report and I move for its adoption.

MR. : Second.

CMDR CLARK: We have a motion to second. Any discussions?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried.

Final Nominations PNC Joe Chenelly

MR. CHENELLY: Happy Election Day to those who celebrate it. So nominations are still open. After I call through each race, be closing nominations after each one. Once we have completed nominations, contested races will have the votes in the same order. Nominations are still open for Trustee A. Andrew McElrath from Ohio has been entered in nomination and accepted the nomination. Are there any other nominations for Trustee A for the National Service Foundation, a three year term?

MR. WOODY: Yes, sir.

MR. CHENELLY: Yes, sir?

MR. WOODY: I am honored to stand here this morning --

MR. CHENELLY: Name and department please.

MR. WOODY: Tim Woody, Department Commander, Tennessee. I am honored to stand here this morning to nominate an Army Veteran who has been a leader in our organization, a mentor and most of all, a brother. He is a past Department Commander for Tennessee. He is currently the Third District First Vice-Commander. He has held every position at post level including commander and is awarded Post Commander of the Year in 2017.

He sits on our service foundation for the Department of Tennessee and has since 2021. He was instrumental in helping find the location and setting up an AMVETS thrift store in Alcoa, Tennessee. He is a selfless AMVET and dedicated to this organization. At this time, I would like to nominate Past Department Commander Mark Frederick for National Service Foundation, three year term Seat A.

(Applause)

MR. CHENELLY: Is there a second for this nomination? If you are going to second, you need to come to a microphone and state your name and department.

MR. ROBINS: Can you hear me?

MR. CHENELLY: Yes.

MR. ROBINS: My name is Wendell Robins from the Department of Georgia. I stand in second of the nomination for Mark Frederick. Mark is a good person. Ever since I have been in AMVETS, we have been talking and he understands AMVETS. We need someone in AMVETS that is going to do for AMVETS. Mark will not be using the term "I", he will be using the term "we" as AMVETS.

We need leaders that are going to be here and put AMVETS first. I ask for your vote for Mark for Service Foundation.

MR. CHENELLY: Mr. Frederick, do you accept this nomination?

MR. FREDERICK: I do.

MR. CHENELLY: The record show that he accepts the nomination. Are there any other nominations for National Service Foundation Trustee A?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominations for Trustee A?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Nominations are now closed for Trustee A. For National Service Foundation Trustee B. PNC Donald McLean from Massachusetts and PNC Rege Riley from Pennsylvania have been nominated and have accepted the nominations. Are there any other nominees or nominations for Trustee B?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominations for National Service Foundation Trustee B?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Hearing none, nominations are now closed for Trustee B. For National Judge Advocate, Frederick Bates of Georgia and Ross Smith of California have been nominated and accepted their nominations. Are there any other nominations for National Judge Advocate?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominations for National JA?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Hearing none. Nominations are now closed for National Judge Advocate. National Provost Marshal. Arthur Majors of Ohio has been nominated and accepted the nomination. Are there any other nominees for National Provost Marshal?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominations for Provost Marshal?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Hearing none. Nominations are now closed for National Provost Marshal. National Finance Officer. Kelly McFarlain, Louisiana has been nominated and accepted the nomination. Are there any other nominees for National Finance Officer?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominations for Finance Officer?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Hearing none. Nominations are now closed for National Finance Officer. National 3rd Vice Commander, Christopher Studebaker of Illinois and Sandra Durbin of California have been nominated and each accepted their nominations. Are there any other nominees for National 3rd Vice Commander?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominations for National 3rd Vice?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Hearing none. Nominations are now closed for National 3rd Vice Commander. National 2nd Vice Commander. Sandy Vorhies has been nominated and accepted the nomination. Are there any other nominees for National 2nd Vice Commander?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominees for National 2nd Vice?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Hearing none. Nominations are now closed for National 2nd Vice Commander. National 1st Vice Commander, Paul Shipley of Pennsylvania has been nominated and accepted the nomination. Are there any other nominees for National 1st Vice Commander?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominees for National 1st Vice?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Hearing none. Nominations are now closed for National 1st Vice. National Commander. Horace Johnson of Florida has been nominated and accepted the nomination. Are there any other nominees for National Commander?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Any other nominations for National Commander?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Hearing none. Nominations for National Commander are now closed. We will now hold the election for Trustee A, Andrew McElrath of Ohio and Mark Frederick of Tennessee are the two nominees.

MOTION

PNC J.P. BROWN: Mr. Chairman, before we go to the elections, I would like to make a motion as ---- cast a unanimous ballot for all uncontested races except for the Commander.

MR. CHENELLY: Is there a second for that motion?

MR. DICKSON: Second --

MR. CHENELLY: Please speak into a microphone.

MR. DICKSON: Dickson, Florida.

MR. CHENELLY: Name and Department. This is important to get these in the minutes. It won't be in the minutes --

MR. DICKSON: Dickson, Florida.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you. Any discussion?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: All in favor?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

MR. CHENELLY: All opposed?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Motion carries. Yes, Jody?

JODY: ----

MR. CHENELLY: You got it. We will get the screen changed over here. And we will begin the elections. We will begin with Trustee A. We will run through Trustee A, then Trustee B, then National Judge Advocate.

(Long Pause.)

MR. CHENELLY: To reiterate what our credentials chair said, please help us make this a efficient and -- a efficient process. We are going to go in the same order every round. You know what order it is. It will be up on the screen. When you are getting close, please be near a microphone. Jody, give me a thumbs up when you are ready please.

JODY: We are ready.

MR. CHENELLY: Ready? So we will be starting with Illinois.

Final Nominations Trustee A PNC Brown and Joe Chenelly

MR. CHENELLY: For those who weren't here on Wednesday, our first business session we had a drawing to randomly choose which department. The host department randomly won that and they really did. So Trustee A, we have Andy McElrath from Ohio, Mark Frederick from Illinois -- from Tennessee. I apologize. When you come to the microphone, please state your department and how your votes are going to be split up. Please use the last name of each of the two candidates. Please use the last name.

Illinois, you are on the clock.

ILLINOIS: The great state of Illinois has 30 delegates on the floor. We have 30 votes for Andy McElrath.

MR. CHENELLY: Yes, please have your delegates stand so they can be counted by the Provost. Thank you.

Indiana?

INDIANA: Indiana has 21 on the floor. We have 20 votes Ferguson(sic), 1 for McElrath.

(Chorus of "Frederick")

INDIANA: I am sorry, Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you. Iowa? Iowa?

IOWA: Iowa we have 10 delegates. 7 on the floor. We have 6 votes for McElrath, 1 vote for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you. Kansas?

KANSAS: Mary White, Kansas. 1 vote for

McElrath.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you. Are we good, Provost? Kentucky?

KENTUCKY: Kentucky has 13 on the floor, we have 13 for McElrath.

MR. CHENELLY: Louisiana?

LOUISIANA: Louisiana has 4 on the floor, 4 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Maine?

MAINE: Maine has 2 on the floor, 2 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Maryland.

MARYLAND: Maryland has 7 on the floor, 2 for McElrath and 5 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you. Massachusetts?

MASSACHUSETTS: Massachusetts has 8 for McElrath ----

MR. CHENELLY: We got it? Michigan?

MICHIGAN: Michigan 6 for -- or for Andy, sorry. McElrath.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

MASSACHUSETTS: May I repeat Massachusetts?

MR. CHENELLY: We have got it. Thank you. Missouri?

MISSOURI: Doug Johnson, Missouri, 11 for McElrath, 1 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Nebraska?

NEBRASKA: Nebraska, 1 on the floor and 1 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Is New Jersey? New Jersey?

MS. : Not here.

MR. CHENELLY: New Mexico?

NEW MEXICO: 1 on the floor, 1 for Andy McElrath, I forgot how to pronounce his last name.

MR. CHENELLY: 1 for McElrath, got it. Is that correct? Thank you. New York?

NEW YORK: New York has 20 on the floor. 8 for McElrath and 12 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: North Carolina.

NORTH CAROLINA: North Carolina has 11 plus 1 with 10 on the floor. We have 6 for -- we have 10 for Andy McElrath.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you. North Dakota?

NORTH DAKOTA: Julianne Miller, Department of North Dakota, we have 5 delegates, 4 on the floor. 4 votes for Andy McElroy. McElrath.

MR. CHENELLY: Got it. Ohio.

OHIO: Ohio has 21 delegates. 18 on the floor. And 18 for McElrath.

OKLAHOMA: ---- Oklahoma, Andy McElrath.

MR. CHENELLY: That is a 1. Pennsylvania.

PENNSYLVANIA: Pennsylvania has 10 on the floor. We have 9 for Mark Frederick and 1 for Andy McElrath.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you. Rhode Island.

RHODE ISLAND: Rhode Island. We have 2 on the floor. 2 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: South Carolina.

SOUTH CAROLINA: South Carolina, we have 2 on the floor. 2 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Tennessee.

TENNESSEE: Tennessee, we have 25 on the floor and 25 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Texas.

TEXAS: Texas we have 7 on the floor and 7 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Vermont?

VERMONT: Vermont 1, McElrath.

MR. CHENELLY: Virginia?

VIRGINIA: Virginia, 9 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: 9.

VIRGINIA: 9.

MR. CHENELLY: 9 for Frederick. Washington state?

WASHINGTON: 4 on the floor, sir. 4 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: West Virginia.

WEST VIRGINIA: Todd Kingsberry, West Virginia. 1 on the floor and I am standing. 1

vote for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Wisconsin?

WISCONSIN: Wisconsin has 13 on the floor, 13 for Frederick. I mean, I am sorry, McElrath.

MR. CHENELLY: Back to the beginning of the alphabet. Alabama.

ALABAMA: Alabama 4 on the floor, 4 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Alaska.

ALASKA: Alaska has 2 on the floor, 1 for McElrath and 1 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you for coming. Arkansas.

ARKANSAS: Arkansas 1 on the floor, 1 for McElrath.

MR. CHENELLY: Arizona.

ARIZONA: Arizona has 3 on the floor. 3 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: California.

CALIFORNIA: California has 17 on the floor. 1 for McElrath and 16 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Connecticut.

CONNECTICUT: Connecticut has 3 on the floor. 3 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Colorado.

COLORADO: Colorado has 1 on the floor and 1 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Delaware. Anyone from Delaware?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: District of Columbia.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: District of Columbia has 10 on the floor, 6 for McElrath and 4 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Florida.

FLORIDA: Florida has 24 Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Georgia.

GEORGIA: Georgia has 12 on the floor. 12 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Hawaii.

HAWAII: Hawaii, 1 on the floor, 1 for Frederick.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you. Congratulations Mr. Frederick.

(Applause)

MR. FREDERICK: I would like to thank everyone for their support and I will work every step of the way for you. Thank you.

**Final Nominations
Trustee B
PNC Brown and Joe Chenelly**

MR. CHENELLY: The next election is for Trustee B. We have PNC Donald McLean from Massachusetts and PNC Rege Riley from Pennsylvania. We will start with Illinois as soon as I get the thumbs up from the table. Thumbs up. Illinois, you are on the clock.

ILLINOIS: The great state of Illinois has 30 delegates on the floor. We have 30 for Don McLean and 2 for Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Indiana.

INDIANA: Indiana has 21 on the floor. 21 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: I am sorry, can you please repeat that.

INDIANA: 21 on the floor, 21 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: McLean. Iowa.

IOWA: Iowa has 7 on the floor. 7 for Don McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: Kansas.

KANSAS: Kansas. 1 vote for Don McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: Kentucky?

KENTUCKY: Kentucky has 13 on the floor, 13 for Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Louisiana?

LOUISIANA: Louisiana has 4 on the floor, 3 for McLean and 1 for Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Maine?

MAINE: 2 on the floor, 2 McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: Maryland.

MARYLAND: Maryland has 7 on the floor. 7 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: Massachusetts?

MASSACHUSETTS: Massachusetts 8 on the floor and 8 for Don McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: Michigan?

MICHIGAN: Michigan has 6 on the floor and 6 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: Missouri.

MISSOURI: I was sleeping at the wheel. We have 11 on the floor, 9 for Riley and 3 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: That is 12. Can you get a recount. So did you have 11 on the floor?

MISSOURI: Excuse me, we had 12 on the floor.

MR. CHENELLY: Nebraska?

NEBRASKA: Nebraska, 1 on the floor and 1 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: New Jersey is not here. New Mexico?

NEW MEXICO: New Mexico, 1 on the floor, 1 for Don McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: New York.

NEW YORK: New York has 20 on the floor. 2 for Riley and 14 for Don McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: North Carolina.

NORTH CAROLINA: North Carolina has 10 on the floor. 8 for Riley and 2 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: North Dakota.

NORTH DAKOTA: North Dakota, we have 4 on the floor and 4 for Don McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: Ohio.

OHIO: Ohio has 18 on the floor. And 14 for McLean and 2 for Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Oklahoma.

OKLAHOMA: ---- Oklahoma, 1 on the floor and Don McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: Pennsylvania.

PENNSYLVANIA: Pennsylvania has 10 on the floor. 10 for Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Rhode Island.

RHODE ISLAND: Rhode Island. We have 2 on the floor. 2 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: South Carolina.

SOUTH CAROLINA: South Carolina, we have 2 on the floor. 2 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: Tennessee.

TENNESSEE: Tennessee, we have 25 on the floor and 24 for Riley, 1 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: Texas.

TEXAS: Texas has 7 on the floor and 6 for McLean and 1 for Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Vermont?

VERMONT: Vermont 1 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: Virginia?

VIRGINIA: Virginia, 9 on the floor, 9 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: Washington?

WASHINGTON: 4 on the floor, sir. 4 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: West Virginia.

WEST VIRGINIA: West Virginia, 1 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: Wisconsin?

WISCONSIN: Wisconsin has 13 on the floor, 7 for McLean, 6 for Riley.

ALABAMA: Alabama 4 on the floor, 1 for McLean, 3 for Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Alaska.

ALASKA: Alaska has 2 on the floor, 1 for McLean and 1 for Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Arkansas.

ARKANSAS: Arkansas 1 on the floor, 1 for Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Arizona.

ARIZONA: Arizona has 3 on the floor. 3 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: California.

CALIFORNIA: California has 17 on the floor. 13 for McLean, 4 for Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Connecticut.

CONNECTICUT: Connecticut has 3 on the floor. 3 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: Colorado.

COLORADO: Colorado has 1 on the floor and 1 for McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: Delaware still not here?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: District of Columbia.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: District of Columbia has 10 on the floor and 10 for Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Florida.

FLORIDA: Florida has 11 Riley, 13 McLean.

MR. CHENELLY: So 13 then 11.

(Applause)

MR. CHENELLY: I am going to continue until -- Georgia.

MR. : It is over with.

MR. CHENELLY: Georgia.

GEORGIA: Georgia has 12 on the floor. 7 for McLean, 5 for Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Hawaii.

HAWAII: Hawaii, 1 on the floor, 1 for Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Congratulations PNC McLean.

(Applause)

PNC McLEAN: I want to thank everybody for their support today. And I look forward to working with the Service Foundation Board and the charities board. I will do everything I can to further this organization. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

MR. CHENELLY: I do not -- just so everybody knows -- I am saying this because I had several people yell up, I don't have the ability to stop an election. If one of the candidates was to choose to withdraw, then I could -- we can stop it. I cannot stop it. National Judge Advocate will be our next race.

**Final Nominations
National Judge Advocate
PNC Brown and Joe Chenelly**

MR. CHENELLY: We have Frederick Bates from Georgia and Ross Smith from California. When I get a thumbs up from the table, we will start with Illinois. Jody, are we good? Thank you. Illinois?

ILLINOIS: Illinois has 30 delegates, we have

28 for Freddie and 2 for Ross.

MR. CHENELLY: Indiana.

INDIANA: Indiana has 21 on the floor. 21 for Bates.

MR. CHENELLY: Iowa?

IOWA: Iowa has 7 on the floor. 7 for Fred Bates.

MR. CHENELLY: Kansas?

KANSAS: 1 on the floor, 1 for Ross Smith.

MR. CHENELLY: Kentucky?

KENTUCKY: Kentucky has 13 on the floor, we have 13 for Bates.

MR. CHENELLY: Louisiana?

LOUISIANA: Louisiana has 4 on the floor, 4 for Bates.

MR. CHENELLY: Maine?

MAINE: Maine has 2 on the floor, 2 for Bates.

MR. CHENELLY: Maryland.

MARYLAND: Maryland has 7 on the floor, 7 for Smith.

MR. CHENELLY: Massachusetts?

MASSACHUSETTS: Massachusetts has 8 on the floor, 8 for Smith.

MR. CHENELLY: Michigan?

MICHIGAN: Michigan has 6 on the floor, 6 for Bates.

MR. CHENELLY: Missouri?

MISSOURI: Missouri 12 on the floor, 11 for Bates, 1 for Smith.

MR. CHENELLY: Nebraska?

NEBRASKA: Nebraska, 1 on the floor and 1 for Smith.

MR. CHENELLY: New Jersey?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Not here, I am sorry. New Mexico.

NEW MEXICO: 1 on the floor, 1 for Ross Smith.

MR. CHENELLY: New York.

NEW YORK: New York has 20 on the floor, 20 for Bates.

MR. CHENELLY: North Carolina.

NORTH CAROLINA: North Carolina has 10 on the floor, 6 for Bates and 4 for Smith.

MR. CHENELLY: North Dakota.

NORTH DAKOTA: North Dakota, 4 on the floor, 1 for Ross Smith, 3 for Frederick Bates.

MR. CHENELLY: Ohio.

OHIO: Ohio has 18 on the floor, 4 for Bates and 13 for Ross.

MR. CHENELLY: Oklahoma.

OKLAHOMA: 1 on the floor, 1 for Ross.

MR. CHENELLY: Pennsylvania.

PENNSYLVANIA: 10 on the floor. 10 on the floor, 9 for Bates and 1 for Ross Smith.

MR. CHENELLY: Rhode Island.

RHODE ISLAND: We have 2 on the floor. 2 for Bates.

MR. CHENELLY: South Carolina.

SOUTH CAROLINA: South Carolina, we have 2 on the floor. 2 for Bates.

MR. CHENELLY: Tennessee.

TENNESSEE: Tennessee, we have 25 on the floor and 24 Bates, 1 Smith.

MR. CHENELLY: Texas.

TEXAS: Texas we have 7 on the floor and 5 for Smith, 2 for Bates.

MR. CHENELLY: Vermont.

VERMONT: Vermont 1 for Bates.

MR. CHENELLY: Virginia.

VIRGINIA: Virginia, 1 for Bates, 8 for Smith.

MR. CHENELLY: Washington?

WASHINGTON: 4 for Smith.

MR. CHENELLY: West Virginia.

WEST VIRGINIA: 1 Bates.

MR. CHENELLY: Wisconsin.

WISCONSIN: 13 Bates.

ALABAMA: Alabama --

MR. CHENELLY: Please stop.

MR. SMITH: We don't need to go any further. Ross Smith concedes the election to Fred Bates and I would like to tell this body that Fred Bates is a great AMVET and a great human being. I am still going to serve and I am here to help each and every one of you. God bless you. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. BATES: Fred Bates. I would like to thank everybody for voting for me. And I will continue to do the job for AMVETS. Ross is a great person. And like he said, we will vote together, for AMVETS family.

(Applause)

MR. CHENELLY: And the last race of the day is -- well the last race of this session. National 3rd Vice Commander. Christopher Studebaker from Illinois and Sandra Durbin from California, our two candidates.

**Final Nominations
National 3rd Vice Commander
PNC Brown and Joe Chenelly**

MR. CHENELLY: Looks like we are ready. Illinois.

ILLINOIS: Illinois has 30 delegates on the floor. 30 for Chris Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Indiana.

INDIANA: Indiana has 21 on the floor. 16 Studebaker, 5 Durbin.

MR. CHENELLY: Iowa.

IOWA: Iowa has 7 on the floor. 7 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Kansas.

KANSAS: 1 on the floor, 1 for Chris Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Kentucky.

KENTUCKY: Kentucky has 13 on the floor, 13 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Louisiana.

LOUISIANA: Louisiana has 4 on the floor, 4 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Maine.

MAINE: 2 on the floor, 2 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Maryland.

MARYLAND: Maryland has 7 on the floor. 2 Studebaker and 5 Durbin.

MR. CHENELLY: Massachusetts.

MASSACHUSETTS: Massachusetts 8 on the floor and 8 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Michigan.

MICHIGAN: Michigan has 6 on the floor and 4 for Studebaker and 2 for Durbin.

MR. CHENELLY: Missouri.

MISSOURI: Missouri 12 on the floor, 10 Studebaker, 2 Durbin.

MR. CHENELLY: Nebraska.

NEBRASKA: Nebraska, 1 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: New Mexico.

NEW MEXICO: 1 on the floor, 1 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: New York.

NEW YORK: New York has 20 on the floor. 16 for Studebaker and 4 for Durbin.

MR. CHENELLY: North Carolina.

NORTH CAROLINA: North Carolina has 10 on the floor, 10 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: North Dakota.

NORTH DAKOTA: North Dakota, we have 4 on the floor. 3 for Studebaker and 1 for Durbin.

MR. CHENELLY: Ohio.

OHIO: Ohio has 18 on the floor. 16 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Oklahoma.

OKLAHOMA: 1 on the floor, 1 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Pennsylvania.

PENNSYLVANIA: Pennsylvania has 10 on the floor. 10 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Rhode Island.

RHODE ISLAND: Rhode Island. We have 2 on the floor. 2 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: South Carolina.

SOUTH CAROLINA: South Carolina, we have 2 on the floor. 2 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Tennessee.

TENNESSEE: Tennessee, we have 25 on the floor and 20 Studebaker, 5 Durbin.

MR. CHENELLY: Texas.

TEXAS: Texas has 7 on the floor and 7 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Vermont.

VERMONT: Vermont 1 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Virginia.

VIRGINIA: Virginia, 7 for Durbin, 2 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: First number please.

VIRGINIA: 7 for Durbin.

MR. CHENELLY: 2 and 7.

VIRGINIA: 2 and 7.

MR. CHENELLY: Washington.

WASHINGTON: 4 for Durbin.

MR. CHENELLY: West Virginia.

WEST VIRGINIA: West Virginia, 1 Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Wisconsin.

WISCONSIN: 13 Studebaker.

ALABAMA: Alabama 4 on the floor, 4 for Durbin.

MR. CHENELLY: Alaska.

ALASKA: Alaska has 2 on the floor, 2 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Arkansas.

ARKANSAS: Arkansas 1 on the floor, 1 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Arizona.

ARIZONA: Arizona has 3 on the floor. 2 for -- 2 for Durbin, 1 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: California.

CALIFORNIA: California has 17 on the floor. 6 for Studebaker, 11 for Durbin.

MR. CHENELLY: Connecticut.

CONNECTICUT: Connecticut has 3 on the floor. 2 for Studebaker, 1 for Durbin.

MR. CHENELLY: Colorado.

COLORADO: Colorado has 1 on the floor and 1 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Delaware is not here. District of Columbia.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: District of Columbia has 10 on the floor and 10 for Studebaker.

MR. CHENELLY: Florida.

FLORIDA: Florida has 21 Studebaker, 3 Durbin.

MR. CHENELLY: Georgia.

GEORGIA: Georgia has 12 on the floor. 11 Studebaker, 1 Durbin.

MR. CHENELLY: And Hawaii.

HAWAII: Hawaii, 1 Durbin.

MR. CHENELLY: Congratulations Commander Studebaker.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Thank you everyone for your support, your vote. We are going to have a great year. And I look forward to working every single one of you. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: Are there any floor announcements?

MR. BANGOR: Commander, Bangor from Ohio. My pockets are real heavy because a bunch of people said they wanted some of these coins. Look me up after ---- and we will get your coins to you and I still have another box of 80 out there if anybody is interested.

MR. PIKE: Clyde Pike from the District of Columbia. Commander Clark, we have your ---- with us today and I would like to come up and present it to you.

PNC KING: We do have one more election to complete. I think somebody from Florida needs to make a motion.

MR. : Entertain a motion from --

MOTION

MR. FERGUSON: Doug Ferguson, Commander from Florida. I want to accept Horace Johnson as our next National Commander.

MR. CHENELLY: Is there a second to that motion?

MR. : Second, Florida.

MR. JOHN: A.J. John, Department of Florida seconds that motion.

MR. CHENELLY: Any discussion?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: All in favor?

(Chorus of "ayes.")

MR. CHENELLY: All opposed?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Congratulations Commander.

(Applause)

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: I woke up this morning. Before the alarm. And I heard all of these motorcycles riding around by the hotel and I says, damn this is a big deal. You know. I just want to thank you all for having the faith in me. I do plan on doing some things, you know, in this organization. I want you all to remember me and -- I just want to thank you all for the team that I am appointing and the team that all just elected, we are going to be one and we are going to do some great things.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: Department of D.C., did you say --

MR. PIKE: Commander, I am having a hard time giving you this vest. But I am going to bring it to you there, now.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: Thank you very much.

MR. JACKSON: Good morning, I am Ridley Jackson, Executive Director from Washington, D.C. I got a phone call a couple of weeks ago that Commander Bill Clark has an issue with holding onto his money and credit cards.

(Laughter)

MR. JACKSON: So I thought of an idea for -- so Commander, I got something for you that is going to solve that problem.

(Applause)

MR. JACKSON: It says "William Clark, National Commander" and it also gives the year that he was Commander. You have two

sides, sir.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: You know there is a post NEC meeting coming up and I want to acknowledge -- it is going to be in this room. But we need to acknowledge our Provost Marshals, the work they do. You don't realize even this morning, to get these rooms together, the little tunnel way was locked. They had to run around and get the keys to that.

Downstairs, the other room was locked. Running around, scurrying around to get all of this together. They do a hell of a job for these conventions. Gentlemen, thank you very much for your efforts.

(Applause)

PROVOST MARSHAL MAJORS: I thank you very much. I know I have been around for a while and I still got a lot to learn. And we are trying our best to make sure everybody has a good time and we will continue to do that. And I also want to thank everybody who voted for me today. Thank you.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: Thank you, Art. Are there any other floor announcements?

1ST VICE CMDR JOHNSON: Can I see Al Smith up here before you leave for the recess. I need to talk to you for a minute please.

MR. HENLEY: Commander, Ralph Henley from Virginia ---- order. So yesterday, we celebrated a birthday for Post 18 Commander Tyrone Krieger, 81st. And today, we celebrate Department Commander Sherwood Brown's birthday. How old are you, Sherwood?

MR. BROWN: 73.

MR. HENLEY: 73.

(Applause)

PROVOST MARSHAL MAJORS: Commander, I made one mistake. I forgot to introduce my group. They are the best workers that I think we have here to help me. Guys, stand up. They do what I ask them to do, no questions asked. Just like today, we were going to have the NEC upstairs, they said we were going to have it down here. So we have been moving up and down. I wanted to make sure that I thanked them.

CMDR CLARK: Thank you, Art.

MR. BODKIN: Jeremiah Bodkin, Commander, Post 10, Athens, Georgia. I would like to call up PNC Jan Brown's husband if I could for

just a second. Our Post is donating \$1,000 to the Family Resource Center.

(Applause)

PNC J.P. BROWN: Thank you. Thank you.

MS. WONG: Commander, Helen Wong, Department Commander California. I just want to let everyone know that our NEC man Ron Robinson, many of you know him, he had another death in his family and so that is why he has not been able to come. So please keep him in your thoughts and prayers. And unfortunately it was his third child. He has lost all of his children. Thank you.

MS. GOOD: Commander and incoming Commander, Alaska wants to be the first to invite you to Alaska. And we will find a moose.

MR. : I want to see a moose.

CMDR CLARK: Warren?

MR. COX: Thanks Commander. Family, for this of you that Department leads has not picked up your membership cards at the station right outside, please do so. Or else they are going home with me and I don't want you to call me that they are delayed. Thank you.

CMDR CLARK: We have calculated for the Commanders project, we are about with the monies from Ohio that were given to J.P., we are just pushing about \$235,000.

(Applause)

CMDR CLARK: I want to thank everyone for that.

MS. McFARLAIN: Laura McFarlain, Louisiana. I have a check for your project Commander, for \$500 from our post. In Alexandria, Louisiana.

CMDR CLARK: Thank you.

(Applause)

MS. DAVIS: Sharon Davis, Department of Florida. Incoming Commander, your Department would like to have a picture with you before we disperse this afternoon. Thank you.

MR. BURDICK: Commander, Dennis Burdick, Department of Wisconsin Commander. I would like to invite you to our convention.

CMDR CLARK: Okay. Inetta?

INETTA: Female veterans, women of AMVETS, please stand fast afterwards for a group picture.

CMDR CLARK: That is it.

MOTION

CMDR CLARK: Entertain a motion to adjourn.

MR. : So moved.

TENNESSEE: Tennessee, so moved.

CMDR CLARK: We have a motion and a second to adjourn and close the 78th(sic) Convention. Those in favor, signify by saying "aye".

(Chorus of "ayes.")

CMDR CLARK: Any opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR CLARK: So carried.

Benediction by Chaplain Milton Allen

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: ---- let me close this out please. While you are waiting, I want to share this short poem with you. I read it before and it is called the Train of Life.

(Poem)

CHAPLAIN ALLEN: So I want to tell you, thank you for riding this train of life with me. I truly appreciate you all. Let us pray.

(Prayer)

(Chorus of "amen.")

Honors to the Colors by Acting Provost Marshal Davis

ACTING PROVOST MARSHAL DAVIS:
AMVETS, attention. Hand salute.

(Meeting adjourned.)

AMVETS 79th Annual Convention

**Post Convention
National Executive Committee
(NEC) Meeting Minutes**



*Saturday,
August 10, 2024*

Held at the
President Abraham Lincoln DoubleTree Hotel
Springfield, Illinois

**PROCEEDINGS
(12:31 p.m.)**

**Call to Order
by Commander Bill Clark**

CMDR. CLARK: Call the post-NEC meeting to order. Please stand for the invocation.

**Invocation
by Chaplain Rigley Jackson**

CHAPLAIN JACKSON: Uncover.

(Prayer.)

CMDR. CLARK: Provost Marshal.

**Honors to the Colors
by Provost Marshal Art Majors**

MR. MAJORS: AMVETS, attention. Hand salute.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

COMDR. CLARK: Please be seated. Before we do the roll call, I have been reminded I forgot something during the convention. I left one person out that I should have given something to. I didn't forget. I didn't want to do it. I want to give Joe Chenelly something as the ED. I worked with him all year. And I am just being facetious. I did remember it. So Joe, thank you for all you have done.

(Applause.)

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you, Commander.

CMDR. CLARK: He deserves it. Works hard. Zero dark thirty and eleven at night we are on the phone. All right, Joe. Roll call.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you, Commander.

**Roll Call
by National Executive Director Joe Chenelly
National Officers**

MR. CHENELLY: And I will start off with National Commander Bill Clark.

CMDR. CLARK: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: National First Vice Commander Johnson?

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: National Second Vice Commander Shipley.

2ND VICE CMDR. SHIPLEY: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: National Third Vice Commander Vorhies?

3RD VICE CMDR. VORHIES: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: National Judge Advocate King.

PNC KING: Jim King is here.

MR. CHENELLY: National Finance Officer McFarlain?

MR. McFARLAIN: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: National Provost Marshal Majors?

MR. MAJORS: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: National Chaplain Allen?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: District I Commander Rodriques.

MR. RODRIQUES: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: District II Commander Ferguson.

MR. FERGUSON: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: District III Commander McFarlain.

MS. McFARLAIN: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: District IV Commander Studebaker.

MR. STUDEBAKER: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: District V Commander Traylor?

MR. TRAYLOR: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: District VI Commander Good.

MS. GOOD: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Let the record show I am here. National Service Director Bolton?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Excused, on a flight. National Membership Director Cox also on a flight. National Controller Hussain also on a flight. We are saving you money with getting the staff out of here.

Past National Commanders

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Piening?

PNC PIENING: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC King?

PNC KING: Jim King is still here.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Kilgore?

PNC KILGORE: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Taylor here?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: PNC J.P. Brown III?

PNC BROWN: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Miskulin?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Chapman?

PNC CHAPMAN: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Riley?

PNC RILEY: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Jan Brown?

PNC J. BROWN: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC Heun?

PNC HEUN: He is here.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC McLean?

PNC McLEAN: Present.

National Executive Committee Members

MR. CHENELLY: District I: Connecticut, Dana Dillon?

MS. DILLON: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: Maine, James Laflin?

MR. LAFLIN: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Massachusetts, Caroline Kenyon?

MS. KENYON: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: New Jersey, Fred Vineyard?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: New York, Alan Ashley.

MR. Ashley: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Rhode Island, Ron Bennett?

MR. BENNETT: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Delaware, David Haines.

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: District of Columbia, Aaron Smith.

MR. SMITH: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Maryland, Andy Martel?

MR. MARTEL: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: North Carolina, Dave Wilburn.

MR. WILBURN: Here, sir.

MR. CHENELLY: Pennsylvania, Bob Bankhead.

MR. BANKHEAD: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Virginia, Kyle Blake?

MR. BLAKE: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: West Virginia, Patricia Kishman?

MR. : She is not. State commander. I would like to make a motion that I be seated for her.

PNC KING: It requires a letter from the department commander to have someone other than the alternate ---.

MR. : I am the department commander.

PNC KING: Well, then write a letter.

MR. : I did not know that. She was only just subpoenaed and isn't able to be here.

PNC KING: How long would it take you ---.

MR. : I will do it.

MR. CHENELLY: District Three: Ernestine Doubek.

MS. DOUBEK: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: Arkansas, Terry Reece?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Florida, AJ John.

MR. JOHN: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Georgia, Brett Colbert.

MR. COLBERT: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Louisiana, Gary Stuart.

MR. STUART: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: South Carolina, Janice Shelton?

MS. SHELTON: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Tennessee, Lee Ann Adams.

MS. ADAMS: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: District Four: Illinois, Richard Shea.

MR. SHEA: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Indiana, Richard Caldwell.

MR. CALDWELL: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Iowa, Barry Remington.

MR. REMINGTON: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Kentucky, Alan Smith.

MR. SMITH: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Michigan, Jean Hall?

MR. HALL: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Anyone here from Minnesota?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: Missouri, Doug Johnson?

MR. JOHNSON: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Ohio, Sara Pierce?

MS. PIERCE: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Wisconsin, Dennis Barrington.

MR. BARRINGTON: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Nebraska, Deborah Wehrli?

MS. WEHRLI: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: North Dakota, Murray Strom.

MR. STROM: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Texas, Curtis Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: District VI: Alaska, Christa

Foli.

MS. FOLI: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: Arizona, Jack Isaacson.

MR. ISACCON: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: California, Sandra Durbin?

MS. DURBIN: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: Hawaii, Marcus Irons.

MR. : Plane.

MR. CHENELLY: And Washington, Steve Bird.

MR. BIRD: Here.

Alternate NECs

MR. CHENELLY: I am going to do alternates. I am just going to do the alternates who checked in. If I miss you, please let me know at the end of your district. District I: Massachusetts, KJ?

MR. : ---.

MR. CHENELLY: Yes, thank you. And that is the only one I have for District I. District II: Michael Mahoney, Maryland.

MR. MAHONEY: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Anyone else from District II?

MR. ROZMARYN: Michael Rozmaryn.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you.

PNC RILEY: PNC Riley, Pennsylvania, District II.

MR. CHENELLY: I will go back to District I in one second. Thank you. District I?

MR. : ---.

MR. CHENELLY: Maine. Henry Peters, right? Sorry, it looks like we signed you in the wrong spot there. Great, thank you. Anyone I miss from I or II?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: How about anyone I missed from III?

MR. : You didn't call III.

MR. CHENELLY: Exactly. Gotcha. Eddie Bullock, thank you. District IV? I have Indiana.

MS. WILLIAMS: Annquiek Williams, sir.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you, Ms. Williams. Kentucky, Deanna Maynard?

MS. MAYNARD: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Missouri, Robert Lee?

MR. LEE: Present, sir.

MS. HENNING: Illinois, Jean Henning.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you. Ohio, Steve Alberty.

MR. ALBERY: Present.

MR. CHENELLY: Dennis is already seated. Anyone else from District IV?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: All right. District V. North Dakota?

MS. : ---.

MR. CHENELLY: Say again?

MS. : District IV, Bob Green. Alternate NEC, Michigan.

MR. CHENELLY: Where is Bob Green? Thank you. That is not who I have listed here. Thank you.

District V: Got North Dakota, Brian Bartlett?

MR. BARTLETT: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: Texas, Bobby Lumpkins.

MR. LUMPKINS: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: District VI: Got California, Derrick Hendershot.

MR. HENDERSHOT: Here.

MR. CHENELLY: And that is the only person I have signed in for District VI. Am I missing anyone for alternates?

(No response.)

MR. CHENELLY: And the record shows we have a letter from the department commander of West Virginia, for Todd Kingsberry as seated as the NEC. Thank you. Commander, you have a quorum.

Adoption of Agenda

CMDR. CLARK: I will entertain a motion for the adoption of the agenda.

PNC McLEAN: So moved, McLean.

(Chorus of "Second.")

CMDR. CLARK: Second by Ferguson, North Carolina. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by saying aye?

(Chorus of "aye.")

CMDR. CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: So carried.

Nominations National Service Foundation Trustee

CMDR. CLARK: We will open nominations for the National Service Foundation Trustee one-year term. If you are going to nominate, please go to a microphone.

MR. BANKHEAD: Commander, Bob Bankhead. NEC, Department of Pennsylvania. It gives me great pleasure to nominate Past National Commander who has done a lot for the service foundation and this organization. I nominate PNC Rege Riley for this position.

MR. ROZMARYN: Rozmaryn, North Carolina. I second that motion.

MS. DILLON: I nominate a man who needs no introduction when it comes to the National Service Foundation, having served as a trustee, president, and the executive director. During his tenure as the executive director, he took them from being a negative \$1.4 million and 11 years later to plus \$22.5 million when he retired. I proudly nominate Joe Piening for the one-year term on the National Service Foundation.

MR. JOHN: AJ John, Department of Florida. I second that nomination.

MS. PIERCE: Sara Pierce, Department of Ohio. I proudly nominate Jan Brown for the one-year trustee on the service foundation. PNC Brown, sorry, J.P.'s wife. I had to make him feel good. Sorry. Thank you.

MR. CALDWELL: NEC Indiana, Richard Caldwell. I second the motion for Jan Brown.

CMDR. CLARK: Are there any other nominations for the one-year trustee?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Are there any other nomina-

tions for the one-year trustee in the National Service Foundation? Are there any other nominations?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Hearing none, nominations are now closed for the one-year trustee term. We will do a roll call for the voting.

MR. CHENELLY: Art, I need the roll call back.

CMDR. CLARK: Rege Riley, do you accept the nomination?

PNC RILEY: Yes, I do.

CMDR. CLARK: Joe Piening, do you accept?

PNC PIENING: Yes, I do.

CMDR. CLARK: Jan Brown, do you accept?

PNC J. BROWN: Yes.

CMDR. CLARK: All right. Thank you.

MR. CHENELLY: Our finance officer will keep our tally. Each candidate, please keep your own tallies as well, of course. We start with our national first vice commander, which have one vote for one person.

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: One vote for Joe Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: National second vice?

2ND VICE CMDR. SHIPLEY: One vote, Rege Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Third vice?

3RD VICE CMDR. VORHIES: One vote, Jan Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Judge advocate?

PNC KING: Joe Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Finance officer.

MR. McFARLAIN: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Provost marshal.

MR. MAJORS: Rege Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: District I commander.

MR. RODRIQUES: Joe Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: District II commander.

MR. FERGUSON: Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: District III.

MS. McFARLAIN: Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: District IV?

MR. STUDEBAKER: Joe Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: District V.

MR. TRAYLOR: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: District VI.

MS. GOOD: Rege Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: I can come back to the PNCs if the PNCs need to convene. One collective vote. Soon as we get the vote, we will start with Connecticut and move on down through District I.

PNC BROWN: Sorry about that. I had to -- we only get 1/100th of a vote, or something, but by the time we all talked, we came up with Jan Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Connecticut.

MS. DILLON: Joe Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Maine.

MR. LAFLIN: Joe Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Massachusetts.

MS. KENYON: Jan Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: New York.

MR. ASHLEY: Joe Piening. I am sorry. Jan Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Jan Brown, correct?

MR. ASHLEY: Yes.

MR. CHENELLY: Thank you, Alan. Rhode Island.

MR. BENNETT: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: District of Columbia.

MR. SMITH: Jan Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Maryland.

MR. MARTEL: Rege Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: North Carolina.

MR. WILBURN: Rege Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Pennsylvania.

MR. BANKHEAD: Rege Riley, PNC.

MR. CHENELLY: Virginia.

MR. BLAKE: Rege Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: West Virginia.

MR. KINGSBERRY: Jan Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: District II. Alabama. I am sorry. District III. Alabama.

MS. DOUBEK: Joe Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Arkansas.

MR. : Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Florida.

MR. JOHN: Joe Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Georgia.

MR. COLBERT: Joe Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Louisiana.

MR. STUART: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: South Carolina.

MS. SHELTON: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Tennessee.

MS. ADAMS: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: District IV: Illinois.

MR. SHEA: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Indiana.

MR. CALDWELL: Jan Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Iowa.

MR. REMINGTON: Jan Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Kentucky.

MR. SMITH: Jan Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Michigan.

MR. HALL: Jan Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Missouri.

MR. JOHNSON: Jan Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Ohio.

MS. PIERCE: Jan Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Wisconsin.

MR. BARRINGTON: Jan Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: District V: Nebraska.

MS. WEHRLI: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: North Dakota.

MR. STROM: Jan Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Texas.

MR. THOMAS: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: District VI: Alaska.

MS. FOLI: Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: Arizona.

MR. ISAACSON: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: California.

MS. DURBIN: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Hawaii.

MR. RODRIQUEZ: Riley.

MR. CHENELLY: And Washington.

MR. BIRD: Jan Brown.

(Pause.)

MR. McFARLAIN: I count 11, Riley; 19, Piening; 15, Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: So the remaining candidates are PNC Piening and PNC Brown. So we will do a roll call vote again. And once again we will start with first vice commander.

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: Joe Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Second vice?

2ND VICE CMDR. SHIPLEY: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Third vice?

3RD VICE CMDR. VORHIES: Jan Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Judge advocate?

PNC KING: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Finance officer.

MR. McFARLAIN: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Provost marshal.

MR. MAJORS: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: District I commander.

MR. RODRIQUES: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: District II commander.

MR. FERGUSON: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: District III.

MS. McFARLAIN: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: District IV?

MR. STUDEBAKER: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: District V.

MR. TRAYLOR: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: District VI.

MS. GOOD: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: District I, Connecticut.

MS. DILLON: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Maine.

MR. LAFLIN: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Massachusetts.

MS. KENYON: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: New York.

MR. ASHLEY: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Rhode Island.

MR. BENNETT: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: District of Columbia.

MR. SMITH: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Maryland.

MR. MARTEL: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: North Carolina.

MR. WILBURN: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Pennsylvania.

MR. BANKHEAD: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Virginia.

MR. BLAKE: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: West Virginia.

MR. KINGSBERRY: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: District III: Alabama.

MS. DOUBEK: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Arkansas.

MR. : Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Florida.

MR. JOHN: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Georgia.

MR. COLBERT: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Louisiana.

MR. STUART: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: South Carolina.

MS. SHELTON: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Tennessee.

MS. ADAMS: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: District IV: Illinois.

MR. SHEA: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Indiana.

MR. CALDWELL: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Iowa.

MR. REMINGTON: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Kentucky.

MR. SMITH: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Michigan.

MR. HALL: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Missouri.

MR. JOHNSON: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Ohio.

MS. PIERCE: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Wisconsin.

MR. BARRINGTON: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: District V: Nebraska.

MS. WEHRLI: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: North Dakota.

MR. STROM: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Texas.

MR. THOMAS: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: District VI: Alaska.

MS. FOLI: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: Arizona.

MR. ISAACSON: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: California.

MS. DURBIN: Piening.

MR. CHENELLY: Hawaii.

MR. RODRIQUEZ: Brown.

MR. CHENELLY: And Washington.

MR. BIRD: Brown.

(Pause.)

MR. McFARLAIN: I got 23, Piening. 25, Brown.

PNC BROWN: Point of order. No one has asked for the votes of the past national commanders.

MR. CHENELLY: National commander vote. My mistake.

PNC McLEAN: Past national commanders vote for Brown.

MR. McFARLAIN: I have another count: Piening, 23. Brown, 26.

MR. CHENELLY: Congratulations, PNC Brown.

PNC PIENING: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, I thank those who supported me. And I move a unanimous ballot be cast for Jan Brown.

(Applause.)

MR. McFARLAIN: McFarlain, second.

CMDR. CLARK: We have a motion. Do we have a second?

MR. MARTEL: Second. Martel, Maryland.

CMDR. CLARK: All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of "aye.")

CMDR. CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Motion carries. Jan?

PNC J. BROWN: I would like to thank everybody for their support, and I will do my best on this committee. Thanks you.

Finance Committee Members

CMDR. CLARK: Next we will open nominations for the Finance Committee member, one year times two. Chris?

MR. STUDEBAKER: Commander, Chris Studebaker, Fourth National District Commander. It gives me great pleasure today to nominate a great AMVET. He has been around for many, many years. He always looks for the best of this organization and makes sure everything is done properly. So at this time, I would like to nominate Past National Commander Jim King for the National Finance Committee trustee position.

MR. SHEA: Rich Shea, Illinois NEC. I second the nomination for Jim King.

MR. STUART: Gary Stuart, NEC, Louisiana. I nominate AJ John.

CMDR. CLARK: Could you stand closer to the mic.

MR. STUART: AJ John, Florida.

MR. THOMAS: Commander, Curtis Thomas, NEC, Texas. I second that nomination.

CMDR. CLARK: Jim King, do you accept that --

PNC KING: Yes.

CMDR. CLARK: AJ, do you accept?

MR. JOHN: Yes.

CMDR. CLARK: Are there any other nominations?

MR. BAILEY: Commander, Emmett Bailey from Louisiana. I nominate Lee Ann Adams for the position. She is from Tennessee. She has been a member of AMVETS since 2014, '18. I am sorry. She has had numerous post positions and has been the Department of Tennessee's Women's Veteran representative since this idea was suggested by then-Commander Brown. And since Lee Ann began in Tennessee, she has been the women's representative and got it in 100 percent of all the posts.

She is a very good person in the District, and I would like to nominate her.

CMDR. CLARK: Thank you.

MR. WOODY: Tim Woody, Department of Tennessee, seconds that nomination.

CMDR. CLARK: Thank you. Lee Ann, do you accept the nomination.

MS. ADAMS: I do.

CMDR. CLARK: Are there any other nominations?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Any other nominations for the Finance Committee, one year times two. Are there any other nominations?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Hearing none, nominations are now closed. Same procedure as the other. We will do it by roll call.

MR. CHENELLY: Again for the record, each of you who have a vote can vote for up to two candidates. And once again we will start with our national first vice commander.

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: National first vice commander votes for AJ John and Lee Ann Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: Second vice?

2ND VICE CMDR. SHIPLEY: Second vice votes King, Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: Third vice?

3RD VICE CMDR. VORHIES: King and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: National Judge advocate?

PNC KING: King and AJ.

MR. CHENELLY: Finance officer.

MR. McFARLAIN: AJ, Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: Provost.

MR. MAJORS: Jim King.

MR. CHENELLY: Just one? You get two votes?

MR. MAJORS: Who is the other person? I am sorry.

MR. CHENELLY: The candidates are --

MR. MAJORS: Lee Ann.

MR. CHENELLY: Lee Ann Adams? District I commander.

MR. RODRIQUES: King and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: District II commander.

MR. FERGUSON: King and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: District III.

MS. McFARLAIN: John, Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: District IV?

MR. STUDEBAKER: King and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: District V.

MR. TRAYLOR: John and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: And District VI commander.

MS. GOOD: John and King.

MR. CHENELLY: PNC vote.

(Pause.)

PNC BROWN: The past commanders, after much deliberation, one for King and one for Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: National District I: Connecticut.

MS. DILLON: King and John.

MR. CHENELLY: Maine.

MR. McFARLAIN: Say again? I didn't get that.

MS. DILLON: King and John.

MR. CHENELLY: Maine.

MR. LAFLIN: One for John; one for Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: Massachusetts.

MS. KENYON: King and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: New York.

MR. ASHLEY: King and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: Rhode Island.

MR. BENNETT: King and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: District II: Delaware is not here. District of Columbia.

MR. SMITH: King and John.

MR. CHENELLY: Maryland.

MR. MARTEL: King and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: North Carolina.

MR. WILBURN: King and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: Pennsylvania.

MR. BANKHEAD: Johns, Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: Virginia.

MR. BLAKE: Johns and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: West Virginia.

MR. KINGSBERRY: King, Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: District III: Alabama.

MS. DOUBEK: King and Johns.

MR. CHENELLY: Arkansas.

MR. : Johns and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: John, Adams? Florida.

MR. JOHN: John, King.

MR. CHENELLY: Georgia.

MR. COLBERT: John and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: Louisiana.

MR. STUART: John, Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: South Carolina.

MS. SHELTON: John, Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: Tennessee.

MS. ADAMS: John and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: District IV: Illinois.

MR. SHEA: King, Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: Indiana.

MR. CALDWELL: John, King.

MR. CHENELLY: Iowa.

MR. REMINGTON: King and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: Kentucky.

MR. SMITH: King and John.

MR. CHENELLY: Michigan.

MR. HALL: King and John.

MR. CHENELLY: Missouri.

MR. JOHNSON: King and John.

MR. CHENELLY: Ohio.

MS. PIERCE: King and Adams.

MR. CHENELLY: Wisconsin.

MR. BARRINGTON: King and John.

MR. CHENELLY: District V: Nebraska.

MS. WEHRLI: Adams and John.

MR. CHENELLY: North Dakota.

MR. STROM: Adams and John.

MR. CHENELLY: Texas.

MR. THOMAS: Adams and John.

MR. CHENELLY: District VI: Alaska.

MS. FOLI: King and John.

MR. CHENELLY: Arizona.

MR. ISAACSON: King and John.

MR. CHENELLY: California.

MS. DURBIN: Adams and John.

MR. CHENELLY: Hawaii.

MR. RODRIQUEZ: King, John.

MR. CHENELLY: And Washington.

MR. BIRD: King, John.

(Pause.)

MR. McFARLAIN: Got 31, John. 31, King. 30, Adams. Did you keep tally?

MR. : We both kept tally over here. We got 31, Adams. 31, John. 30, King.

MR. McFARLAIN: Say again?

MR. : On the tabs we both have 31, John; 31, Adams; 30, King.

MR. CHENELLY: Any of the candidates keep a tally?

MR. McFARLAIN: Any candidates kept tallies? You kept separate ones over there?

3RD VICE CMDR. VORHIES: Yes, we both kept separate ones. King had 30. John, 31. Adams, 31.

MR. McFARLAIN: Both the third vice and the second vice kept independent tallies during it. We had 31, Adams. 31, John. 30 King.

PNC KING: Congratulations, Mr. John and Ms. Adams.

(Applause.)

MR. JOHN: I would like to thank the body for supporting me. I really appreciate it. Thank you.

MS. ADAMS: And I would like to thank everybody that supported me. I am ready for the job and I will do the best I can. Thank you.

(Applause.)

CMDR. CLARK: Now I would like to call our incoming Commander up for his appointments.

(Applause.)

Incoming Commander Appointments

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: Okay, I got that. The chairperson for the Diversity Committee is going to be Sheldon out of Missouri. Sheldon Hartfield. IG is going to be Joe Ashman from New York. The deputy judge advocate is going to be Ross Smith from California. My Grievance Committee, I am going to have four on it. It is going to be Richard Shea, chairperson. No, Al Smith is the chair. Richard Shea will be there. Barry Remington will be there, and AJ John will be the vice chair.

It will be Richard Shea, Barry Remington and AJ John.

I am sorry, you all. Al Smith, chair. AJ John, vice chair, and Barry Remington is a member.

Oh, the chaplain. The chaplain is Rigley Jackson from DC.

(Applause.)

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: Sorry, you all. You have got to bear with me.

(Pause.)

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: Richard Shea, you are going to be on the Long-Range Planning Committee. And Wendell Rivens, he is going to be on the Long-Range Planning Committee.

(Pause.)

1ST VICE CMDR. JOHNSON: Is that it? Do I need to make a motion or is it just, that is it?

2ND VICE CMDR. SHIPLEY: Shipley, second vice, make a motion to accept the Commander's appointments.

MS. DILLON: Dana Dillon, second. Connecticut.

CMDR. CLARK: I have a motion on the floor and a second to accept the appointments as stated. Any discussion?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by saying aye?

(Chorus of "aye.")

CMDR. CLARK: Those opposed?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: So carried. Any old business to come before the NEC. Any old business?

(No response.)

CMDR. CLARK: Any new business for discussion? Hearing none, then we will move to benediction. Please stand.

**Benediction
by Chaplain Rigley Jackson**

CHAPLAIN JACKSON: Uncover.

(Prayer.)

**Honors to the Colors
by Provost Marshal Art Majors**

MR. MAJORS: AMVETS, attention. Hand salute.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 1:12 p.m.)

Report of James E. Laflin, NEC Department of Maine

National District I

Membership

The Department of Maine continues to push all posts to get all of their members renewed. WE are at about 70% for annual renewals.

Upcoming Events

The Fall NEC meeting is on 7 Dec. by ZOOM. I got the info on 5th of Dec. Our next Dist. One meeting is in Rhode Island on 10 - 12 Jan. Then the next NEC Mtg. will be in the spring.

Programs

The Dept. of Maine continues to get all posts working on reporting using the old system which is working out better.

Legislative

WE constantly are checking on any new veterans bills that come up concerning veterans.

Service

The Dept. of Maine continues to work with the Maine Veterans Coordinating to help fight for all veterans in the state. We also work closely with the Dept. of Veterans Services and our VA hospital to help veterans.

This is my report and I move for its adoptin at the proper time.

Report of Ronald H. Bennett, NEC Department of Rhode Island

National District I

Membership

Membership is coming in slow but steady

Upcoming Events

We will be collecting toys for Toys for Tots and socks and hats for veterans in need

Programs

I visited various posts to see how they are doing. They all are doing well and they provided Thanksgiving meals to veterans in need.

Legislative

We are meeting with local and State U.V.C. to get more benefits for our veterans.

Service

We provide transportation to and from V.A. for members in need we also visit members in nursing homes.

Report of Doug Johnson, NEC Department of Missouri

National District IV

National Commander, National Officers, Members of the National Executive Committee, and Fellow AMVETS:

Membership:

1. AMVETS Department of Missouri currently has 30 active posts with a total of 2973 current members (294 annual and 2679 life members).
2. The Commanders and 1st Vice Commanders of Membership at the Posts are encouraged to work on pursuing annual renewals for the 471 members that expired on 8/31/2024, the 473 members that expired on 8/31/2023, the 380 members that expired on 8/31/2022, and the 273 members whose membership expired on 8/31/2021. This additional 1597 Veterans would bring membership up to 4570! For a secondary project, these members will be contacted to encourage re-joining the organization.
3. The above numbers are based on what is currently in NetForum. There are still several membership errors in NetForum as everything transitioned back from the Springly software. These are gradually getting corrected.
4. There are locations within the Department that are being evaluated and considered for new posts.

Programs:

1. Programs for the reporting period of January 1 – June 30, 2024, 30 out of 30 posts (100%) have reported a total of 720 events online. These reports included 5,760 volunteers who performed 9,683 hours of services that covered 235,380 miles. The overall value of reported programs is \$3,267,895.88.
2. For the current reporting period of July 1 – December 31, 2024, 10 out of 30 posts (33%) have reported events online to date. These reports included 368 events with 3,149 volunteers who performed 30,452 hours in services that covered 165,918 miles. The overall value of reported programs is \$987,967.24.

Service:

1. Department of Missouri has 4 Service Officers in the St. Louis area (St. Louis VA Medical Center - Jefferson

Barracks, John Cochran VA Medical Center, and O'Fallon City Hall) to assist with Veterans and VA claims. James McKay is at John Cochran VA Medical Center on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Martin Payne covers Tuesdays and Thursdays at that location. Martin Payne is also at St. Louis VA Medical Center – Jefferson Barracks (JB) on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Carolyn Truvillion covers Tuesdays and Thursdays at JB. William Sifford works 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. at O'Fallon City Hall on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Two service officers also volunteer at H.E.R.O.E.S. Care in High Ridge, MO. Carolyn Truvillion is there on Wednesdays and William Sifford is there on Thursdays.

The Department is currently seeking a replacement for the Service Officer lost in the Kansas City area along with filling positions in Columbia, Poplar Bluff, and the Springfield area. The long-term plan is to have a Service Officer in each of the 5 VA Hospitals in Missouri and in the VA Clinics.

2. We have 2 VAVS Reps at 2 of our VA facilities with credentials good through 2026: Klint Oldham is at St. Louis VA Medical Center – Jefferson Barracks, and James McKay is at John Cochran VA Medical Center in St. Louis.
3. Ongoing projects throughout the Department continue to include military funerals, homeless Veterans, suicide prevention and awareness, supporting Veterans Hospitals and homes, and supporting JROTC and ROTC programs.

Upcoming Events:

1. The new location for our department meetings is the Oasis Hotel and Convention Center. The address is as follows: 2546 North Glenstone Avenue, Springfield, MO 65803. Phone number is: 417-866-5253.
2. Dates for 2025 meetings are as follows: February 1-2, April 12-13, June 27-29, and October 4-5.
3. Our 80th Annual Dept. Convention will be held June 27-29, 2025, at the Oasis Hotel and Convention Center.

Legislation:

The below House and Senate bills and resolutions of interest to veterans in Missouri reflect those that have been filed for the 2nd Regular Session (January 3 – May 17, 2024) of the 102nd General Assembly. If these pass, the proposed effective date is 8/28/2024 unless otherwise noted. These bills and resolutions can also be followed on these websites: <https://house.mo.gov> or <http://senate.mo.gov>. **The bills that are marked with asterisks (**)** are the focus of MAVO's (Missouri Association of Veterans' Organizations) legislative agenda for 2024.

1. **House Bill (HB) 1419** – Sponsored by Robert Sauls (D – District 021).

Authorizes the “Missouri Disabled Veterans Homestead Exemption.”

Second reading completed 1/4/2024. Referred to “Special Committee on Property Tax Reform” on 1/11/2024 where it still sits without further action to date.

2. **House Bill (HB) 1459** – Sponsored by Greg Sharp (R – District 004).

Modifies provisions relating to disabled American veterans special license plates.

Second reading completed 1/4/2024. Referred to “Transportation Infrastructure” Committee on 2/15/2024. Voted do pass on 2/28/2024 after a Public Hearing on 2/21/2024 and Executive Session on 2/28/2024.

Referred to “Consent and House Procedure” Committee on 2/29/2024. Voted do pass on 3/12/2024, perfected by Consent per House Rules on 3/27/2024, and placed on third reading calendar on 5/6/2024.

3. ****House Bill (HB) 1490** – Sponsored by Dave Griffith (R – District 060).

Creates provisions relating to compensation for assisting with veterans' benefits.

Second reading completed 1/4/2024. Referred to the “Veterans” Committee on 1/25/2024. Voted do pass on 3/5/2024 following a Public Hearing on 1/30/2024 and Executive Session on 3/5/2024.

Referred to “Rules – Regulatory Oversight” Committee on 3/28/2024. Voted do pass on 4/22/2024.

4. **House Bill (HB) 1494** – Sponsored by Dave Griffith (R – District 060).

Establishes the “Uniform Deployed Parents Custody and Visitation Act.”

Second reading completed 1/4/2024. Referred to the “Veterans” Committee on 2/19/2024. Voted do pass on 3/5/2024 following a Public Hearing on 2/27/2024 and Executive Session on 3/5/2024.

Referred to “Consent and House Procedure” Committee on 3/5/2024. Voted do pass on 3/12/2024, perfected by Consent per House Rules on 3/27/2024, and third reading completed and passed on 4/16/2024.

Bill presented to the Senate and first reading completed on 4/16/2024. The second reading and referral to the “Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence” committee was completed on 4/22/2024.

5. **House Bill (HB) 1495** – Sponsored by Dave Griffith (R – District 060).

Tasks the Missouri Veterans Commission (MVC) with expanding its efforts to prevent veteran suicide.

Second reading completed 1/4/2024. Referred to the “Veterans” Committee on 1/4/2024. Voted do pass on 1/16/2024 following a Public Hearing on 1/9/2024 and Executive Session on 1/16/2024.

Referred to the “Consent and House Procedures” Committee on 1/16/2024. Voted do pass 1/23/2024, perfected by Consent Pursuant to House Rules on 2/15/2024, and third reading completed and passed on 2/21/2024.

Bill was presented to the Senate where the first reading was completed on 2/21/2024. Second reading completed on 3/7/2024 and referred to the “Veterans, Military Affairs, and Pensions” Committee. Voted do pass on 3/27/2024 following a Public Hearing on 3/14/2024 and Executive Session on 3/27/2024. Agreed to and finally passed unanimously on 5/7/2024.

HB1495 was signed by the House Speaker and President Pro Tem of the Senate and delivered to the Governor for signature on 5/30/2024. On 7/12/2024, the bill was approved by the Governor and delivered to the Secretary of State.

6. **House Bill (HB) 1496** – Sponsored by Dave Griffith (R – District 060).
Establishes the “Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Freedom’s Sentinel and Operation Allies Refuge Program” which authorizes the issuance of a medallion, medal, and certificate to certain veterans who served in specific conflicts.
Second reading completed 1/4/2024. Voted do pass on 2/6/2024 following a Public Hearing on 1/30/2024 and Executive Session on 2/6/2024. Referred to the “Rules – Regulatory Oversight” Committee on 2/8/2024 where it passed on 2/12/2024. Bill perfected on 3/6/2024 with third reading and passage on 3/11/2024. Bill was presented to the Senate for first reading on 3/11/2024. On 3/28/2024, a second reading was conducted and referred to the “Veterans, Military Affairs, and Pensions” Committee. Voted do pass on 4/10/2024 following a Public Hearing on 4/2/2024 and Executive Session on 4/10/2024.
7. **House Bill (HB) 1712** – Sponsored by Adam Schnelting (R – District 069).
Allows Missouri National Guard member educational assistance grants to be available for tuition at out-of-state educational institutions.
Second reading completed 1/4/2024. Referred to the “Special Committee on Tax Reform” on 2/1/2024. Voted do pass on 2/27/2024 following a Public Hearing on 2/20/2024 and an Executive Session on 2/27/2024.
8. **House Bill (HB) 1713** – Sponsored by Adam Schnelting (R – District 069).
Modifies provisions relating to income tax deductions for enlistment bonuses paid to members of the armed forces.
Second reading completed 1/4/2024. Referred to “Special Committee on Tax Reform” on 2/1/2024. Voted do pass on 2/13/2024 following a Public Hearing on 2/6/2024 and Executive Session on 2/13/2024. Referred to the “Rules – Legislative Oversight” Committee on 2/29/2024 where it passed on 3/4/2024. Bill language perfected on 3/6/2024 and passed third reading on 3/11/2024. Bill was presented to the Senate for first reading on 3/11/2024. On 3/28/2024, a second reading was conducted and referred to the “Veterans, Military Affairs, and Pensions” Committee. Voted do pass on 4/10/2024 following a Public Hearing on 4/2/2024 and Executive Session on 4/10/2024.
9. **House Bill (HB) 1832** – Sponsored by Aaron McMullen (R – District 020).
Clarifies that military personnel are eligible for in-state tuition for undergraduate and graduate degree programs.
Second reading 1/4/2024. Referred to the “Veterans” Committee 4/4/2024. Public hearing on 4/9/2024.
10. **House Bill (HB) 1908** – Sponsored by Bruce Sassman (R – District 061).
Designates the “POW/MIA SSG Paul Hasenbeck Memorial Highway” in Osage County.
Second reading completed 1/4/2024 and referred to the “Transportation Infrastructure” Committee. Public hearing completed 1/24/2024. Executive Session completed on 3/27/2024 and voted do pass.
11. **House Bill (HB) 1988** – Sponsored by Phil Amato (R – District 113).
Modifies provisions relating to the military honor detail program.
Second reading completed 1/4/2024. Referred to “Veterans” Committee on 2/8/2024. Voted do pass on 3/5/2024 following a Public Hearing on 2/13/2024 and Executive Session on 3/5/2024. Referred to “Regulatory Oversight” Committee on 4/17/2024 and voted do pass on 4/22/2024. Placed on Informal Perfection Calendar on 5/1/2024 but dropped on 5/16/2024 pursuant to House rules.
12. **House Bill (HB) 2091** – Sponsored by Michael O’Donnell (R – District 095).
Establishes a special license plate for veterans of military operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq.
Second reading completed 1/4/2024. Referred to the “Transportation Infrastructure” Committee on 2/15/2024. Voted do pass on 2/28/2024 following a Public Hearing on 2/21/2024 and Executive Session on 2/28/2024.
13. **House Bill (HB) 2100** – Sponsored by Dave Griffith (R – District 060).

- Requires the Department of Transportation to install signs to honor recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor.**
Second reading completed 1/4/2024 and referred to the “Transportation Accountability” Committee. Voted do pass on 2/22/2024 following a Public Hearing on 1/11/2024 and Executive Session on 2/22/2024.
14. **House Bill (HB) 2162** – Sponsored by Kent Haden (R – District 043).
Designates the “US Army SPC4 James W Cahall Memorial Bridge” in Audrain County.
Second reading completed 1/4/2024 and referred to “Transportation Infrastructure” Committee. Voted do pass on 3/27/2024 following a Public Hearing completed on 1/24/2024 and Executive Session on 3/27/2024.
15. **House Bill (HB) 2166** – Sponsored by Bill Hardwick (R – District 121).
Modifies provisions relating to veterans’ affairs.
Second reading completed 1/4/2024 and referred to the “Higher Education” Committee. Public hearing completed 1/10/2024.
16. **House Bill (HB) 2215** – Sponsored by Chris Brown (R – District 016).
Creates provisions relating to alternative therapies for veterans with PTSD and traumatic brain injuries.
Second reading completed 1/4/2024. Referred to the “Veterans” Committee on 2/15/2024. Voted do pass on 3/5/2024 following a Public Hearing on 2/27/2024 and Executive Session on 3/5/2024.
17. **House Bill (HB) 2235** – Sponsored by Robert Sauls (D – District 021).
Provides federal Servicemember Civil Relief Act (SCRA) protections to National Guard members called to state duty.
Second reading completed 1/4/2024. Referred to “General Laws” Committee on 5/17/2024 where it sits.
18. **House Committee Resolution (HCR) 36** – Sponsored by Jerome Barnes (D – District 028).
Designates the week of November 4-11, 2024, as “Veterans Week of Service.”
Second reading completed 1/16/2024. Referred to the “Veterans” Committee on 2/1/2024. Voted do pass on 2/13/2024 following a Public Hearing on 2/6/2024 and Executive Session on 2/13/2024. Referred to “Legislative Oversight” Committee on 2/29/2024. Voted do pass on 3/4/2024 after their Executive Session. Placed back on calendar for third reading on 4/22/2024.
19. ****House Joint Resolution (HJR) 74** – Sponsored by Dave Griffith (R – District 060).
Proposes a constitutional amendment dividing state revenues from gaming activities between public institutions of elementary, secondary, and higher education and the administration of the Missouri Veterans Commission (MVC).
Second reading completed 1/4/2024. Referred to “Special Committee on Tax Reform” on 4/4/2024. Public Hearing completed on 4/9/2024.
20. ****House Joint Resolution (HJR) 75** – Sponsored by Dave Griffith (R – District 060).
Proposes an amendment to the Constitution of Missouri relating to property tax exemptions.
Second reading completed 1/4/2024. Referred to “Special Committee on Property Tax Reform” on 1/11/2024. Voted do pass on 2/7/2024 following a Public Hearing on 1/31/2024 and Executive Session on 2/7/2024. Referred to “Rules – Administrative Oversight” Committee on 4/4/2024. Voted do pass on 4/9/2024.
21. **House Joint Resolution (HJR) 95** – Sponsored by Alan Gray (D – District 075).
Proposes a constitutional amendment granting property tax exemptions to certain disabled veterans.
Second reading completed 1/4/2024. Referred to “Special Committee on Property Tax Reform” on 1/11/2024 where it still sits without further action to date.
22. **Senate Bill (SB) 734** – Sponsored by Bill Eigel (R – District 023).
This act modifies provisions relating to military affairs, including vaccination of members of the Missouri National Guard against COVID-19. Missouri Veterans’ Commission’s efforts on veteran suicide, information on veteran services provided by state agencies, medallion programs

for certain veterans, fees for hunting and fishing permits for certain members in the military, and foreign ownership of agricultural land near certain military areas.

Second reading on 1/8/2024 and referred to the “Veterans, Military Affairs, and Pensions” Committee. Voted Do Pass on 1/17/2024 by the “Veterans, Military Affairs, and Pensions” Committee. Reported from the Committee on 3/7/2024 and placed on informal calendar for senate bill perfection on 5/17/2024.

23. **Senate Bill (SB) 1308** – Sponsored by Ben Brown (R – District 026).

Designates “POW/MIA SSG Paul Hasenbeck Memorial Highway” in Osage County. Costs for the designation shall be paid by the Department of Transportation.

First reading completed 1/9/2024. Second reading completed 1/25/2024 and referred to the “Transportation, Infrastructure, and Public Safety” Committee. Hearing conducted on 2/7/2024. This bill was combined with other bills (1067, 1303, and 1308) on 2/21/2024. SEE SB-1067...Senate Bill (SB) 1067 – Voted do pass by the “Transportation, Infrastructure, and Public Safety” Committee on 2/21/2024.

24. **Senate Bill (SB) 1322** – Sponsored by Ben Brown (R – District 026).

Modifies provisions relating to education assistance for members of the Missouri National Guard. Currently any Missouri National Guard member may be awarded an education assistance grant to an approved public or private higher education institution. This act provides that any Missouri National Guard member may be awarded, upon application before each semester, either a tuition and fee waiver for undergraduate courses at a postsecondary institution of higher education located in a state that directly received funds appropriated by the General Assembly or a grant to certain eligible institutions as defined in this act.

This act additionally allows members of the Missouri National Guard to make a one-time transfer of educational assistance to a dependent

spouse. Spouses seeking to receive educational assistance shall provide a certificate of satisfactory service of the member’s National Guard duties along with proof of a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale while attending the approved institution.

First reading completed 1/11/2024. Second reading completed 1/25/2024 and referred to the “Veterans, Military Affairs, and Pensions” Committee. Voted do pass on 4/24/2024.

25. **Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) 58** – Sponsored by Tony Luetkemeyer (R – District 34).

This resolution exempts certain disabled veterans from property taxes. This constitutional amendment, if approved by the voters, expands the current exemption from real property taxes for former prisoners of war with a total service-connected disability to all disabled veterans, as defined in the amendment.

First reading completed 1/11/2024. Second reading completed 1/25/2024 and referred to the “Local Government and Elections” Committee. Voted do pass on 3/4/2024. Effective date upon voter approval.

Communications/PRO:

Department Commander Jack Down’s project for 2024-2025 is LifeWaters. LifeWaters is a non-profit located in St. Louis, Missouri, that improves the lives of disabled Veterans by offering scuba and scuba certifications as part of recreational water therapy. LifeWaters teaches adaptive scuba diving to those with mobility challenges and each year they take a terminally ill Veteran on a Hero Dive. Please refer to their website www.lifewaters.org for further information.

If anyone would like to donate to the Commander’s project, please send checks to “AMVETS Department of Missouri” with “Commander’s Project” identified in the memo. Please send to the following address:

AMVETS Department of Missouri
PO Box 190
Willard, MO 65781

**Report of Doug Johnson, NEC
Department of Missouri (*continued*)**

National District IV

You can also send a check to “LifeWaters c/o Jack Downs” to the following address:

Jack Downs
316 Saint Lawrence Drive
Ballwin, MO 63021

There are several projects, programs, and events occurring at posts across the state. Please follow AMVETS Department of Missouri on Facebook along with individual AMVETS posts across the Department.

Other: None currently.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Johnson,
NEC Department of Missouri

AMVETS
(American Veterans)

4647 Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.amvets.org