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96th Fleet Reserve Association  
National Convention

Third Business Session

14 November 2024

Doubletree Hotel  
Annapolis, Maryland

1 (Called to order at 0900.)

2 NP HANDZUK: Shipmate Master at Arms,  
3 invite the shipmates into the meeting hall and  
4 close the doors.

5 MAA: Shipmate President, we may have  
6 stragglers.

7 NP HANDZUK: Very well. I have a gavel.  
8 (Applause.)

9 That was the first thing I put on my  
10 list last night when I went to the room.

11 Shipmates, this assembly will now come  
12 to order. Shipmate National Chaplain, would you  
13 please open the Bible? Uncover.

14 NCHAP BEHM: Shipmate National  
15 President, the Bible is open.

16 NP HANDZUK: Thank you, National  
17 Chaplain. Cover.

18 Please join me in saluting our flag.  
19 Hand salute. Two.

20 Shipmate at the mic.

21 JPNP ROBBINS: Shipmate National

1 President, Junior Past Robbins, delegate, 126. I  
2 am in the uniform of the day.

3 NP HANDZUK: Duly noted, Shipmate Junior  
4 Past, thank you.

5 All right, shipmates, we do have a guest  
6 speaker first up, so I'm going to start the  
7 meeting with the quest speaker either and then  
8 after his little speech, we will resume the  
9 business and we will have the next credentials  
10 report. PNP Jansky, would you please introduce  
11 our guest speaker?

12 PNP JANSKY: Good morning, shipmates.

13 ASSEMBLY: Good morning.

14 PNP JANSKY: Our guest speaker today  
15 enjoys a passion for history of the Second World  
16 War from a young age. Tragically his  
17 grandfather's brother was killed in action during  
18 that war. Andrew was taught about sacrifice from  
19 childhood.

20 Andrew enlisted in the U.S. Marines, he  
21 served as an infantryman, rifleman during

1 Operation Iraq Freedom and Operation Enduring  
2 Freedom. He spent six years in the Marine Corps  
3 and earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from  
4 Suffolk University in Boston, Massachusetts.  
5 Andrew continued to serve as a police officer and  
6 actively worked in Massachusetts law enforcement.  
7 In 2017 he earned a master's degree in homeland  
8 security from Northeastern University in Boston.

9 Andrew is the founder of Boston's  
10 Wounded Vet Run, a New England motorcycle ride  
11 dedicated to severely wounded veterans. For the  
12 last ten years Andrew saw the need to assist  
13 soldiers, Marines, airmen and sailors who  
14 returned from Iraq and Afghanistan with injuries.  
15 His nonprofit has been responsible for housing  
16 modifications, new transportation, financial  
17 support and basic living needs for some of  
18 America's most severely wounded combat veterans.  
19 No salary is collected from his nonprofit.

20 Andrew is the author based on a written  
21 experience and journey of The Rifle, giving heed

1 to World War II veterans, and his books are  
2 called Rifle, and The Rifle 2.

3 Please give a warm welcome to Andrew  
4 Biggio.

5 (Applause.)

6 (Andrew Biggio escorted to the rostrum.)

7 MR. BIGGIO: Good morning, everybody.

8 ASSEMBLY: Good morning.

9 MR. BIGGIO: Thank you for that  
10 introduction, Donna, and yes, I'm from the city  
11 of Boston. They're in mourning right now over  
12 the last election, right? So if you go up there,  
13 you will need a box of tissues for the new  
14 presidency.

15 The reason why I'm here today is --  
16 well, first of all, I'm just learning what the  
17 Fleet Reserve Association is with other Marines,  
18 Navy and Coast Guard. I recall having a Vietnam  
19 Navy vet call me a seagoing bellhop, and I never  
20 knew what was. As I look around today, it all  
21 makes sense now.

1           So you know, in Massachusetts we name  
2 our intersections after those killed in action,  
3 the roads. I'm not sure if every state does it,  
4 but in Boston it's very common. You can go from  
5 red light to red light and see John Paul Smith  
6 Square, PFC Frederick Douglas Square, things like  
7 that. And I had PFC Andrew Biggio Square in  
8 front of my house my whole life and my whole  
9 childhood, and my friends growing up used to say  
10 hey, that's your square, you know, riding by this  
11 intersection. I never truly understood what it  
12 meant and it wasn't until I was on that same  
13 front porch going to Iraq and going to  
14 Afghanistan that I was looking at PFC Andrew  
15 Biggio Square and knowing that the last PFC  
16 Andrew Biggio who left from that front porch  
17 didn't make it home, and I was named after him,  
18 and that was my grandfather's brother who was  
19 killed in action in Italy September 17th, 1944.

20           When I finished my military service and  
21 I got back from Afghanistan, here I was at that

1 red light looking at PFC Andrew Biggio Square, I  
2 felt survivor's guilt. Most people feel  
3 survivor's guilt if you lose a friend in war or  
4 you lose someone close to you on a battlefield,  
5 but to me it was looking at my namesake and I  
6 said to myself, what happened to that 19-year-old  
7 kid that didn't happen to me? Why am I alive and  
8 he's not? Why do I get to go enjoy drinking  
9 beer, eating steaks and having a family, and  
10 having kids and a life, go to college, and this  
11 19-year-old kid probably didn't even have a  
12 steady girlfriend, go to school. And how many  
13 other 19-year-old kids just like Andrew Biggio  
14 are still buried over in Europe?

15 I remembered my grandmother saying she  
16 kept all of Andrew Biggio's letters home from  
17 Italy in a shoebox under her bed. So one of  
18 those days I went under the bed, I pulled out  
19 that shoebox, and I must have pulled out the  
20 letters in the wrong direction because I started  
21 with the last letter first, which was a kick in

1 the gut. It saddened my heart really.

2           And this letter I'm about to tell you  
3 should have been sent to every high school across  
4 the country about sacrifice. And it said dear  
5 mom, I don't want to go back up this hill again.  
6 Can you mail me a gold cross to wear around my  
7 neck? It sounds like tomorrow they're making us  
8 go up this hill. Please send a gold cross when  
9 you can. Love, Andy. That letter was sent  
10 September 12th and PFC Andrew Biggio was killed  
11 September 17th, 1944 in the fighting on the Rhine  
12 outside the town of Vareggio.

13           How many kids across this country know  
14 what it's like to be on a battlefield begging  
15 your mother for a gold cross, sending that letter  
16 out knowing that letter's not going to get to her  
17 until a month after you wrote it. By the time  
18 she can reply and send a gold cross, it's  
19 probably another month. This is the kind of  
20 stuff that our youth needs to know about  
21 veterans, needs to know about sacrifice, needs to



1 know about history, what they went through to  
2 have what we have now as a country. Yes, it's  
3 not perfect, but a lot of people died for us to  
4 be where we're at right now.

5           And reading this letter, watching my  
6 great uncle beg for his life in a way, really  
7 crushed me. So I switched the shoebox around and  
8 I started at the first letter. It was a much  
9 more jovial letter. Dear mom, today we fired a  
10 brand new M1 Garand rifle in basic training.  
11 It's a new rifle. This thing's going to be  
12 better than the Germans, better than the  
13 Japanese. I love this thing. I'll let you know  
14 where I end up. And this was at Fort Jackson,  
15 South Carolina, and he was excited to tell his  
16 mother about this weapon system. I'm sure his  
17 mother was probably like oh boy, you know.

18           It is so funny. The military says we  
19 make a man out of you, but yet every letter he  
20 wrote home and every letter most of us wrote home  
21 to was to our mothers. This is a guy that had

1 two brothers and a father, but every letter I  
2 read, dear mom, dear mom, dear mom. And it made  
3 sense why my great grandmother never had a  
4 Christmas tree again after she found out her  
5 oldest son was killed in World War II.

6 But after reading that letter, I want to  
7 see this rifle, I want to feel what he felt, I  
8 want to connect with this long lost relative. So  
9 I went out and bought an M1 Garand rifle, yes,  
10 you can buy a rifle in Massachusetts.

11 (Laughter.)

12 So, and of course I buy this rifle and I  
13 take it to a family dinner the next day and  
14 everyone was like why did you bring a gun to a  
15 family gathering? I said no, this is not a gun,  
16 this is what Andy held, this is what he carried  
17 during the war. And it didn't, you know, it  
18 didn't resonate with them the way it did me.  
19 They weren't veterans, I was, I was in a certain  
20 branch and I was searching for closure in a  
21 certain way. My grandfather and, you know, at

1 this time it was 70 years after his brother was  
2 killed.

3           So I went back home and I said now what?  
4 I had my M1 rifle and I remembered, I remembered  
5 my neighbor Joe Drago had served in the battle of  
6 Okinawa during World War II. I said I'll take  
7 this rifle and I'll show him this rifle, he's  
8 somebody who will remember this. And at this  
9 time, you know, this was almost ten years ago  
10 when I started the project, I still didn't  
11 realize what was going to happen when I knocked  
12 on his door. I knocked on Joe Drago's door, he  
13 did not come to the door, he told me to come in,  
14 which was not like him, but this is how I  
15 realized I was in a race against time, the fact  
16 that he didn't answer the door and I walked into  
17 his boundaries, this is when I knew the World War  
18 II vets were disappearing before our eyes.

19           He was sitting in a recliner, his leg's  
20 atrophied, he was hunched over, and I said hey  
21 Joe, do you remember this rifle? And he grabbed

1 that M1 Garand out of my hands, shouldered it,  
2 starts waving it around the room, almost took off  
3 my face with the barrel, he was smiling from ear  
4 to ear. 92 years old, and he went from 92 to 19  
5 right in front of me as soon as I put that M1  
6 Garand in his hands.

7 We state there and we talked about April  
8 Fools Day 1945, the battle of Okinawa, for three  
9 hours. And suddenly I forgot about the stresses  
10 of being a police officer. Suddenly I forgot  
11 about the stresses of being a combat veteran.  
12 Suddenly I forgot about life stressors and I felt  
13 normal for this Friday. And it was more than  
14 just oh my God, I'm going to hear his story about  
15 blood and guts. He sat there and explained that  
16 the greatest generation wasn't so great, and we  
17 did some awful things in World War II, stuff that  
18 would put today's U.S. servicemen in jail, the  
19 things they did on the Pacific islands. In war  
20 it isn't always black and white, good versus  
21 evil.

1           And I felt myself normal, I felt like I  
2 didn't have to live in the shadows of the  
3 greatest generation. I didn't have to feel that  
4 my war sucked and your war was the greatest war  
5 of all time. And that's another reason why I'm  
6 glad I had this interaction with someone from the  
7 Pacific first, because I might have had a  
8 different reaction with those who fought in  
9 Europe, and that's a whole other scene.

10           But I said Joe, I want to remember this  
11 moment for the rest of my life, sign your name on  
12 my rifle please. And he didn't want to mark up  
13 such a beautiful weapon, that's what he first  
14 said, you know, I don't want to mark up such a  
15 beautiful piece, but he signed his name, Joe  
16 Drago, I Company, 22nd Marine Regiment, 5th  
17 Marine Division, Okinawa on the butt stock of  
18 that rifle. And when I left his house that day,  
19 I said that was the best experience, one of the  
20 best experiences of my life, I want to collect as  
21 many signatures as possible and hear as many

1 stories as possible. Today I stand before you  
2 with over 500 signatures on my M1 rifle here.

3 (Applause.)

4 It was important for me to represent the  
5 whole war on this rifle. I have Medal of Honor  
6 recipients, cooks, infantrymen, black tankers  
7 from World War II, Japanese Americans who fought  
8 in Italy, ex-prisoners of war, pilots,  
9 submariners, airborne, Normandy, D-Day, Anzio,  
10 Leyte, Luzon. I could keep going on and on and  
11 on. I wanted it to represent everyone that had a  
12 part in us being victorious during the Second  
13 World War. And it started an obsession, it  
14 really started off as a selfish project in a way  
15 because I wanted something cool to hang in my man  
16 cave. But it must have been maybe 20 signatures  
17 in, and I started realizing I needed to put pen  
18 to paper on some of these stories.

19 And the one that hit me the most, I was  
20 talking to a gentleman by the name of Clarence  
21 Fournier and I was in Gardner, Massachusetts, and

1 Clarence was with the 106th Infantry Division.  
2 And for those who don't know about the 106th  
3 Infantry Division, also known as the Golden  
4 Lions, they had one of the biggest surrenders  
5 since the American Civil War. Between seven and  
6 8,000 men surrendered at the Battle of the Bulge.  
7 They were only in country for about two weeks, a  
8 brand new unit sent to a place called the  
9 Ardennes Forest where no unit had been allowed to  
10 penetrate, no German tanks had ever come through  
11 there, and it was totally wrong, they were  
12 absolutely swarmed ten to one.

13           And Clarence had his shoes removed,  
14 brand new boots, he'd only been in country for  
15 two weeks, brand new boots, nice soles on them,  
16 brand new rubber heels, everything. The Germans  
17 removed the boots immediately and used his boots,  
18 and he had to wear an old pair of German boots.  
19 He couldn't even fit his feet into the boots. He  
20 had to take a knife and cut where the toes would  
21 be so his toes would protrude out, in December in

1 Belgium, by the way.

2           They loaded him on a boxcar train, and  
3 inside the train the men were stuffed so tightly  
4 that they couldn't even inhale and exhale with  
5 their chests, that's how crammed they were in  
6 this boxcar. And Clarence explained that all the  
7 men were petrified, there was no way to use the  
8 bathroom, they had to go to the bathroom on each  
9 other. And as the train began to pull out and  
10 move towards Germany, two American P-47s saw a  
11 big juicy German train and started strafing the  
12 train, and little did they know they were killing  
13 their own men, so it was insult to injury.

14           The men were able to get out of the  
15 boxcar, the Germans opened the boxcar. The  
16 Americans spilled out, those that were still  
17 alive, fell on the ground. And someone came up  
18 with the idea to form the letters POW with human  
19 bodies so the planes would stop shooting at them.  
20 And Clarence said when he was laying on the  
21 ground listening to the Pratt and Whitney engine



1 coming in on a P-47, the 47 pulled up, threw back  
2 the hatch of the aircraft, the canopy rather, and  
3 started waving his kerchief at the men, to  
4 recognize that they knew that they were POWs.

5 Clarence said I feel like I could reach up and  
6 touch the plane, that's how close freedom was.

7 Clarence Fournier told me his story  
8 bawling his eyes out at age 95 in his living  
9 room, and it changed my life. I had never seen a  
10 95-year-old man cry. After he signed my rifle  
11 his daughter grabbed me in the hallway and she  
12 said I just want to let you know that I always  
13 knew my dad was a hero, but that I never heard my  
14 father say that story. And that's when I said  
15 his own daughter doesn't know the story, how many  
16 people across the country don't know the story, I  
17 should probably start writing these stories down.

18 And now of course, there's been millions  
19 of stories written about World War II and there's  
20 been stories written about the 106th Division,  
21 but no one had told Clarence Fournier's story, no

1 one had ever told PFC Joe Drago's story, or PFC  
2 Andrew Biggio's story. It wasn't told after  
3 World War II, there was no -- a lot of people  
4 moved on with their lives and never attended a  
5 reunion or association, Clarence Fournier being  
6 one of those men. Most of the 106th Division  
7 veterans were put up in stalags, or German prison  
8 camps. Clarence was not.

9           For those who may -- I'm sure everyone  
10 in this room knows of the Bataan death march but  
11 there was also a Bataan death, march in Europe,  
12 when men from the 106th Division were marched  
13 across Germany to a prison camp, only to get  
14 there and find out that the Russians were right  
15 in the outskirts, and marched all the way back,  
16 80 miles in the freezing cold weather. Only  
17 about 50 of them survived, Clarence was one of  
18 those guys. He never slept under a roof his  
19 entire World War II experience.

20           By the time Patton's men had found them,  
21 he had lice all over his body, beard, everything.

1 His liberation is another amazing story.

2           The thing about these stories and what I  
3 wanted to do was not just tell another World War  
4 II book because millions of books have been  
5 written about World War II, but also try to leave  
6 our newer generation of veterans, Iraq,  
7 Afghanistan combat vets with how to live a  
8 successful life after combat as these men did.  
9 Yes, they weren't perfect, but a lot of them were  
10 able to live into the their 90s, into their  
11 hundreds, and how did they do it, what were their  
12 keys to survival. And one of them, one of the  
13 ones that I take away from it is stay involved,  
14 don't dwell on the past, don't plateau at your  
15 military service, keep going up, start a family,  
16 go to college, have a work, retire from work,  
17 once you retire start another job. And that's  
18 what I saw consistently in many World War II  
19 veterans, they never stopped one thing or the  
20 other.

21           You know, what's funny is that one

1 common thing when people ask me, what's the  
2 common theme you saw amongst all those World War  
3 II vets, 70 percent of the men and women that I  
4 was interviewing had never returned to their  
5 battlefields, which to me is mind blowing. Most  
6 of us have Rome, Italy, Paris on our bucket  
7 lists. These men that I interviewed had never  
8 returned to Normandy, had never returned to  
9 Belgium, never return to Holland, and I always  
10 said to myself, I wonder why. As someone who's  
11 from Boston, it's only a six-hour direct flight  
12 from Boston to Paris, seven-and-a-half hours  
13 Boston direct to Rome. What happened that was so  
14 awful that they never got on a plane and went  
15 back over to the reunions of associations and so  
16 on and so forth in Europe?

17           And then it occurred to me after I was  
18 writing the book, the therapy that my friends in  
19 Iraq and Afghanistan who may have lost a leg or  
20 lost an arm, or suffered PTSD, what if we take  
21 these World War II vets back, let's get on with

1 it. 700 bucks, I have no issue with that, what  
2 about you? Let's bring this guy back. Al  
3 Boudreau, he lost his leg at the Battle of Monte  
4 Cassino. He's 95, never been back to Italy. I  
5 asked him, I go Al, would you ever go back now?  
6 His family went to Italy in '80 but he refused to  
7 go. He says you know, most of these veterans now  
8 have outlived their spouse, some of them have  
9 older children, they're in their hundreds now.  
10 He was sitting at home. Would you go back to  
11 Italy now if we took care of you and got a  
12 wheelchair? Yeah, I guess I would. Cool, we're  
13 going.

14 I took my friend who lost his leg in the  
15 battle for Fallujah, a Marine, and I took Al  
16 Boudreau, 3rd Infantry Division, who lost a leg,  
17 and paired the two of them together along with  
18 myself and a videographer, and we went back to  
19 Italy and we found the location where Al lost his  
20 leg and we found his squad leader's grave that he  
21 hadn't seen ever. And Al was one of those men

1 who told me after I lost my leg, I found out it  
2 was official, I didn't want to go back home, I  
3 was too embarrassed to see my mother, I was too  
4 embarrassed to see my friends, I would come home  
5 maimed, and I just moved on with my life, and  
6 never went to a reunion, never joined an  
7 association. But the same soldier that took my  
8 leg killed my squad leader, his name was Ray.

9           And I think some people will say how  
10 could you not remember your squad leader's last  
11 name. World War II was a meat grinder, it was a  
12 replacement, replacements came and went all the  
13 time, especially with big battles. You joined  
14 your unit, you were replacing people, hey, you're  
15 going to be with A Company, 15th Regiment, 3rd  
16 Division, get out there. Well, the Battle of  
17 Anzio is the next day and you're injured and  
18 you're out of there. Some people were only there  
19 for two weeks.

20           And that's another thing why, you know,  
21 was interesting when I start writing about

1 Vietnam. You have Vietnam vets who saw quadruple  
2 the amount of combat as World War II. So Al only  
3 remembered his squad leader's name as Ray. He  
4 said he was killed, when I got to the hospital  
5 people asked who else I was with, there was no  
6 remains of Ray, but I was covering his brains,  
7 and they asked who else he was with.

8 So I look up, we're in Italy, we're at  
9 the cemetery, okay? 30,000 names at the American  
10 cemetery in Rome, it's the second largest foreign  
11 cemetery other than the Philippines, okay? And  
12 they have a folder with over 10,000 buried and  
13 over 30,000 Americans who were missing in action.  
14 So I look up all the Rays and Raymonds that have  
15 been in the Rome National American Cemetery,  
16 because if I can figure this out for Al, it would  
17 be great. And there was about 14 Rays and  
18 Raymonds. So then I broke it down by division,  
19 3rd Division, that left only seven Rays and  
20 Raymonds. Then I broke it down by regiment,  
21 perfect, they had three Rays and Raymond. Does

1 anyone have and idea of how I knew which Ray it  
2 was?

3 Ray James from Kentucky was killed the  
4 came day Al Boudreau lost his leg. He ended up  
5 being in the same regiment and the same company  
6 and the same division. And I didn't tell Al that  
7 I had found the grave, and we went walking  
8 through the cemetery, and I backed off. And it  
9 was a scene out of Saving Private Ryan. He  
10 grabbed -- remember, he was 95 years old. He  
11 grabbed that cross and held onto it and began to  
12 cry. And I had everybody in our group back off,  
13 I waited until we couldn't see anymore, and I  
14 went and got the tightest hug I'd ever got, and I  
15 knew he wasn't hugging me, he was hugging Ray.

16 I've gone on to spearhead over 20 of  
17 these trips, we've taken over 60 World War II  
18 veterans over the last five years, and it's been  
19 an honor to bring them back to Germany, Belgium,  
20 the Netherlands, Italy, Normandy, show them the  
21 foxholes, show them the homes that they sought



1 refuge in the day they were liberated and the  
2 stories of their liberation.

3 And that's the story of The Rifle, and  
4 I'd love to open up for questions, and thank you  
5 guys for having me.

6 (Applause.)

7 And the organization was able to  
8 purchase some books, I will be signing some books  
9 after, and the money goes back to the  
10 association.

11 It's been a hell of a journey and I'm at  
12 the end now and like I said, some people started  
13 mailing me M1 Garands, but was very unique was  
14 four months ago, a different kind of rifle showed  
15 up at my house. It was a Colt, 1965 Colt M16.  
16 The letter said my uncle was also killed in World  
17 War II, please don't stop doing what you're  
18 doing, honor Vietnam veterans next. And this was  
19 a \$7,000 gun mailed to my house. So after the  
20 new year I will be diving into Vietnam.

21 But yeah, I'd love to answer any

1 questions at all. Yes, sir, in the back.

2 SPEAKER: Good morning, Shipmate.

3 MR. BIGGIO: Good morning.

4 SPEAKER: My name's Jake, Branch 340. I  
5 want to thank you for being the voice and the  
6 memory of those who didn't make it home, those  
7 who didn't have the opportunity to open up to  
8 express the experience.

9 I want to share an experience I had when  
10 I had to go to the beach at Normandy for one of  
11 the ships we were on. I didn't know -- when we  
12 go to the cemetery, I didn't know what they  
13 called it, this is the cemetery, but I definitely  
14 knew why. All the headstones were facing in the  
15 same direction, and during that tour I got an  
16 opportunity to visit the beaches of Normandy,  
17 like you say, Saving Private Ryan, toured that  
18 cemetery, and they expressed to us that those  
19 markers were facing in the direction that they  
20 wanted to go back to, which was home, and I never  
21 knew that.

1           When you go to Arlington, they all face  
2 in the same direction, and I got to see where  
3 they mark the spot where they're going to put the  
4 flag. I never knew all that.

5           But what blew my mind even more and what  
6 was even more dramatic is they showed us the  
7 mountain that Marines had to climb in order to  
8 stop the machines and the mortars and the enemy  
9 from attacking the battleships. And you had two  
10 choices, you could either climb that fricking  
11 mountain and possibly lose your life, or your  
12 platoon sergeant was going to make you wish like  
13 you had.

14           I never knew that. You didn't have an  
15 option. I just want to thank my fellow  
16 shipmates, warriors and all of those others. I  
17 didn't ever acknowledge that fact that I  
18 experienced something that I never knew. Don't  
19 get me wrong, I wasn't rushing into the military  
20 but it was one of the better options that was  
21 available to me, and I learned so much more that

1 was associated and mind boggling and gratifying  
2 all at the same time.

3 I want to thank you from the bottom of  
4 my heart, the outlet of yours, and I thank you  
5 for your service.

6 MR. BIGGIO: Thank you, sir.

7 (Applause.)

8 What he's talking about, the Rangers had  
9 to scale it with ropes and a lot of them died,  
10 and I've actually brought back one of the first  
11 black soldiers that was assigned to the 758th  
12 Antiaircraft Battalion, a segregated unit, and  
13 what they did with these guys is they trained as  
14 antiaircraft, they were a combat unit, black  
15 Americans. But when they got to Utah Beach they  
16 said okay, cool, you're no longer in  
17 antiaircraft, you're now graves registration.  
18 And so Marvin Gilmore, who is now 99 and lives in  
19 Boston or, excuse me, he's a hundred now, he's  
20 had another birthday, when I brought him back to  
21 the cemetery in Norman, he'd buried a

1 considerable amount of those vets in a temporary  
2 cemetery, wooden crosses, and the memories he had  
3 of, like you said, making them face west towards  
4 the United States will always be forever  
5 ingrained in my head on that, and I had a  
6 wonderful life changing experience to see his  
7 point of view from World War II.

8 Yes, sir?

9 SPEAKER: I wanted to share with you  
10 something. I'm a composer and I play piano, and  
11 I wrote a song way back and then I played it for  
12 a patriot bike group that I belong to also, and  
13 they said you've got to get this thing  
14 copyrighted, you've got to get a singer to record  
15 it. So I played it for the patriots twice, and  
16 there was a lot of Vietnam veterans and they all  
17 came out of there crying because the words I came  
18 up with were so vivid, and I can't tell you what  
19 it was. Maybe it's probably better to say it  
20 that way. It goes like this.

21 I remember the time in our proud land

1 when all the young were dying in Vietnam. While  
2 the airports were crowded, my friend, back then,  
3 there were soldiers sir and sailors on a trip  
4 they did not want, while there's others in the  
5 street with long hair, and those crowded airports  
6 were always there. I can only hope that a day  
7 comes when the young will not have to leave this  
8 land, my friend. That's my song.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. BIGGIO: You know, my next book,  
11 I've already written a couple chapters on my  
12 experience with Vietnam vets. They were the  
13 first persons to greet me off the plane when I  
14 got back from Iraq at the airports. The airports  
15 today, from my understanding when they landed  
16 they had to hide their uniforms and put them in a  
17 bag, that's what happened, and so it's going to  
18 be an interesting project when I get into these  
19 Vietnam veterans.

20 And keep in mind, I became a Vietnam  
21 through the news, there's no other way to put it,

1 and I finally understood them. I watched them  
2 falling off C-130s, or actually I guess they were  
3 C-10 globe masters. But watching them fall on  
4 television threw me into what Vietnam veterans  
5 went through, there's no other was to share it  
6 with you. So I think it's important now to make  
7 sure I get to some of these guys that are  
8 disenfranchised, and now we're going to have to  
9 go through this again where so many died, they  
10 didn't get involved with organizations or groups  
11 because they were bitter about their service and  
12 how the government handled it.

13 I would love to answer any more  
14 questions.

15 SPEAKER: Can you hear me now?

16 MR. BIGGIO: Yes, sir.

17 SPEAKER: So I do a little volunteering  
18 for emergency response from time to time, and for  
19 what you're doing, if you were an infantry  
20 commander for an incident, the things the people  
21 working under you would want to know (inaudible),

1 so that's my question to you.

2 MR. BIGGIO: I'm sorry, where I'm at,  
3 the microphone -- could you tell me without the  
4 microphone? I can hear you.

5 SPEAKER: Yes. What are your unmet  
6 needs?

7 MR. BIGGIO: As a veteran or as of this  
8 project?

9 SPEAKER: Yes, all of the above.

10 MR. BIGGIO: Okay. You know, it's  
11 funny. Finance was the other thing. As she  
12 mentioned, I don't take a dime from veterans.  
13 I'm a Boston police officer, been 11 years, but  
14 in order to document these stories, in order to  
15 bring these men to Europe, you know, everything  
16 is finance. There are a lot of people that  
17 profit off veterans since the last century, since  
18 9/11, it's ridiculous. Six figure salaries for  
19 nonprofits that are barely helping veterans. All  
20 sorts of groups and stuff to help veterans with  
21 PTSD but don't go to, you know, traumatic brain



1 injury. Traumatic brain injury is one of the  
2 most misused words out there, but yet nobody does  
3 anything about it.

4 And so you know, all I can say is be  
5 careful, stay with the ones you know, the VFW,  
6 the American Legion, this organization here,  
7 people that are actually fighting for us on  
8 Capitol Hill. At the end of the day, our VA  
9 disability that comes once a month, our VA home  
10 loans, stuff that started after World War I,  
11 World War II. And that's another reason I keep  
12 going back is because they will be the next ones  
13 to fight, to make sure our voice is heard over  
14 the years. Veterans, especially disabled  
15 veterans need to be a protected class in this  
16 country. But again, you know, I hope I answered  
17 the question on that. It's just strong veterans  
18 organizations, people reaching out for us.

19 But at the same time, we don't need to  
20 be a charity case. We weren't drafted, we  
21 volunteered to be there, we wanted to be in Iraq,

1 we wanted to be a warfighter and wear the same  
2 uniform our grandfathers did. But one thing I  
3 would, you know, from my unmet needs doing this  
4 project is if anyone in here has social media,  
5 Facebook, Instagram, look up The Rifle. If you  
6 want to look up any of these videos where I  
7 brought veterans back to Europe, The Rifle on  
8 YouTube, you'll be able to watch.

9           That trip to Italy where I told you I  
10 had a videographer, I actually got an Emmy for  
11 best military documentary. And of course it  
12 turned COVID so they just mailed my Emmy to the  
13 house, so I didn't get to walk the red carpet and  
14 cry in the microphone, but it's The Rifle on  
15 Facebook, The Rifle on Instagram and The Rifle on  
16 YouTube, and you can go down the rabbit hole, and  
17 you can find my needs or my website, and donate  
18 and things like that, and purchase the books and  
19 what have you. But this is a hobby for me, it's  
20 therapy for me, and I've had many young veterans  
21 who have read my book and reached out to me.

1           Now the most important thing when I  
2 wrote this book wasn't that I wanted it to be a  
3 number one best seller, which it did become. It  
4 was do I have the approval of the men's stories I  
5 wrote, and do I have the approval of my fellow  
6 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. And I've had a  
7 lot of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans reach out to  
8 me and say they cried when they read the Al  
9 Boudreau story in the book, or great job, and  
10 then of course, that's another, and I've had I'm  
11 a World War II vet, I read your book, and after  
12 that those are the two most important.

13           Yes, ma'am?

14           PNP JANSKY: Do you have any stories of  
15 women veterans?

16           MR. BIGGIO: Oh yeah. Maybe I didn't  
17 mention when I told you I went to get signatures  
18 on the rifle, one of the oldest veterans to sign  
19 my rifle was a 105-year-old nurse from  
20 Charlestown, Massachusetts, Eva Wagner was her  
21 name. So I have nurses on this rifle who took

1 care of veterans after the Battle of the Bulge  
2 when we were shipping our wounded to England,  
3 they were taking care of the soldiers there. I  
4 have a physical therapist who served on New  
5 Guinea taking care of soldiers and Marines who  
6 were wounded, in Papua, New Guinea. Imagine  
7 being a female nurse sent to the South Pacific.  
8 I had a 106-year-old recruiter female that signed  
9 my rifle, a 1st Marine Division stenographer.  
10 So, there was so many amazing women who signed my  
11 rile and took part in the war effort big time  
12 too.

13 Yes, ma'am?

14 SPEAKER: We have a 103-year-old lady in  
15 Mountain Home, Arkansas. She did not go  
16 overseas, she was stationed in California and she  
17 was there when they were brought home from the  
18 war and when they returned to the war. She was a  
19 chaplain's assistant and she's still alive today,  
20 living in a nursing home. And she still, you  
21 know, teaches Sunday school and tells her story.

1 MR. BIGGIO: If I get down to Arkansas,  
2 I would love to meet her.

3 SPEAKER: I can give you a business  
4 card.

5 MR. BIGGIO: Please do, because you  
6 never know. Yes, sir?

7 SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

8 MR. BIGGIO: Oh yeah. So I have about  
9 90,000 followers on Instagram, but to me, those  
10 followers are from 15 years old to in their 40  
11 and they're getting, when I post a short clip of  
12 an individual or a photo and I indicate them on  
13 which veteran or what, our youth as you know have  
14 their phone in their faces, but what they're not  
15 getting in high school, at least I'm delivering  
16 it right there. So they're getting educated,  
17 they're messaging me, hey, I'd like to meet some  
18 World War II veterans, do you have any advice?  
19 Or can you put me in touch with Mr. John Smith  
20 who you posted on your story? And I tell them,  
21 do me a favor, where do you live? They'll say,

1 you know, Little Rock, Arkansas. I challenge  
2 you, go to your local nursing homes. I guarantee  
3 you're going to find a veteran there who wants to  
4 have their story told.

5 I'm finding myself by going to local  
6 nursing homes or assisted living, things like  
7 that, and I have been helping people on social  
8 media to message with veterans and what to do,  
9 and it spawned so many copycat projects, which I  
10 support in life, because they're doing their  
11 mission to get the veterans' stories out and  
12 raise awareness. So I'm big on helping and I  
13 don't mind if they're helping too.

14 Yes, sir?

15 SPEAKER: Shipmate, welcome home.

16 MR. BIGGIO: Thank you.

17 SPEAKER: Do you find in your  
18 conversations, we hear about 22 a day. Do you  
19 find other than what they were told when they  
20 were released by the military, my grandfather was  
21 told to get out, get a job, get married, live

1 your life, what made them strive through life to  
2 reach 95, 105, as opposed to the 22?

3 MR. BIGGIO: This is Rifle 101, this  
4 book I started with the traditional V for  
5 victory, World War II was great, here's some  
6 awesome true stories.

7 Rifle volume two was more controversial.  
8 I interviewed a World War II veteran about his  
9 life in prison. I interviewed a World War II  
10 veteran who cut his own wrists after Iwo Jima. I  
11 interviewed a veteran who lied about his service  
12 his whole life. I interviewed guys who committed  
13 war crimes. So I went to show a lot of the  
14 younger guys, hey, you screwed up when you came  
15 home, you made mistakes, don't worry about it,  
16 here's guys that also messed up and lived a long  
17 successful life.

18 The 22 a day, for those who don't know,  
19 that's the number of combat veterans that commit  
20 suicide. That's improving. So World War II  
21 veterans didn't commit suicide, they just shoved

1 it under a rug big time. They were alcoholics  
2 big time. They were domestic abusers. I know  
3 World War II veterans who became police officers  
4 after World War II, and if you were a drunk and  
5 beat up your spouse, they just got looked over  
6 and brushed off, you didn't get arrested for it.  
7 They had these serious problems but when you have  
8 a war like World War II where politically,  
9 socially, everyone is on the same page in order  
10 to win and everything's not perfect, the  
11 headlines protect you, the news protects you, the  
12 government protects you in order to shove it all  
13 under the rug. But many veterans came back from  
14 World War II and it was just not as promoted.  
15 That's why I had to go back and get these guys to  
16 find out there secrets.

17 And a lot of these guys had held those  
18 secrets and wanted to die with the secrets. I  
19 gave them an ultimatum. I said do me a favor,  
20 you're the oldest generation of veterans, World  
21 War II. What advice do you have for this younger



1 generation of veterans? You don't want to talk  
2 about it, but you have the ability to teach the  
3 younger veteran how to live a successful life  
4 after combat and what you did. These are the  
5 ones that are going to have to run the veterans  
6 community once you're gone.

7           So when I got to Volume 2 I wanted  
8 different stories, maybe a little more different.  
9 As a veteran and a police officer, I've seen  
10 veterans in their worst case ever, ever, but  
11 again, what I got them saying was staying so  
12 busy, keeping your mind off the negative, keeping  
13 your mind so busy you don't have time to dwell on  
14 the past, staying involved, staying active.  
15 Sitting on the couch and drinking alcohol and  
16 smoking weed every day and retiring in your 30s  
17 is not the answer, it's the unofficial kiss of  
18 death for a lot of veterans that come home and  
19 just quit. So I only say to tell people to stay  
20 busy. You don't have to be going to the gym  
21 pumping iron, but stay active. I'm being

1 removed.

2 (Applause.)

3 PNP JANSKY: He's not leaving just yet.  
4 Very good. I would like to let you know, the two  
5 master at arms are going to be passing the hat.  
6 I think that we should donate to Andrew's cause.  
7 If you like --

8 MR. BIGGIO: I will mention -- sorry.  
9 My last trip, the very last one, I'm bringing  
10 four World War II veterans this December to the  
11 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, and  
12 we're going to be meeting the king of Belgium,  
13 we're going to Bastogne where they've been  
14 invited by the mayor of Bastogne to throw nuts  
15 off the balcony, because that's what General  
16 McAuliffe told the Germans. So they're going to  
17 throw walnuts off the town hall into the crowds  
18 of people, so any and all donations will be  
19 appreciated. Thank you.

20 (Applause.)

21 SPEAKER: Shipmate National President, I

1 think we should close the Bible if we're passing  
2 the hat.

3 NP HANDZUK: Thank you. Uncover.

4 NCHAP BEHM: Shipmate National  
5 President, the Bible is closed.

6 NP HANDZUK: Thank you, Shipmate  
7 Chaplain. Cover.

8 As a reminder, shipmates, our guest  
9 speaker did indicate that he has autographed  
10 books out in the lobby if you're interested. And  
11 if I remember correctly, proceeds will be donated  
12 to the Fleet Reserve Association, or to his  
13 cause? To his cause.

14 Okay. And as another note, we stand in  
15 recess until 1000.

16 (Recess.)

17 NP HANDZUK: This assembly will now come  
18 to order. PNP Donna, would you please escort our  
19 guest speaker to the podium?

20 And this is from the convention  
21 committee?

1 PNP JANSKY: Yes.

2 NP HANDZUK: Okay. On behalf of the  
3 centennial convention committee we have this  
4 token of our appreciation, and we have one more.

5 PNP JANSKY: We may be a small  
6 organization but we are a very giving  
7 organization, and I'm proud to present \$985.

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. BIGGIO: Thank you, this is  
10 terrific, and you will see where this money has  
11 gone on social media and The Rifle Facebook page,  
12 The Rifle Instagram page. Starting December 11th  
13 we'll be in Belgium with five World War II  
14 veterans, one from California, one from North  
15 Carolina, one from Massachusetts, one from  
16 Minnesota, and another Marine with us, and you'll  
17 see all the live updates on where we go, what we  
18 do on the Rhine River in Germany, and Bastogne.  
19 Thank you so much, this is huge.

20 PNP JANSKY: Someone doesn't like uneven  
21 numbers, so we have another \$15 put toward it to

1 make it a thousand dollars even.

2 (Applause.)

3 MR. BIGGIO: Thank you, everyone, thank  
4 you so much. I will be out there on the next  
5 break to sign more books.

6 (Mr. Biggio escorted from the assembly  
7 hall.)

8 NP HANDZUK: Shipmate National Chaplain,  
9 please open the Bible. Uncover.

10 NCHAP BEHM: Shipmate National  
11 President, the Bible is open.

12 NP HANDZUK: Thank you. Cover.

13 SPEAKER: Shipmate National President.  
14 Shipmate at the mic.

15 SPEAKER: Shipmates, just a reminder,  
16 today is the last day for the vendors, so I know  
17 a lot of people who like to purchase like to wait  
18 until the last minute. Four o'clock we are  
19 starting to take everything down, so please see  
20 them when we break for lunch. Thank you.

21 NP HANDZUK: Thank you. I now declare

1 this third business session regularly convened.  
2 Shipmate Hatcliff, will you produce our  
3 credentials report?

4 S/M HATCLIFF: Shipmate National  
5 President, Hatcliff, delegate, Branch 59,  
6 chairman of the credentials committee, all around  
7 nice guy.

8 I present the credentials report dated  
9 November 14th at 0830. The credentials worksheet  
10 is located in the delegate kit, Annex X.

11 Authorized voting strength, 810.  
12 Branches represented by delegates, five two, 52.  
13 Votes represented delegates, 441. Branches  
14 represented by proxy, 78. Votes registered by  
15 proxy --

16 SPEAKER: Slow down.

17 S/M HATCLIFF: Branches represented by  
18 proxy, 78. Votes registered by proxy, 359.  
19 Branches not registered, four. Number of  
20 registered delegates, 113. The registered voting  
21 strength, 800. Votes not registered, ten.

1 Two-thirds voting strength, 534. Majority vote,  
2 401.

3 On behalf of the committee I move that  
4 the roll of the delegates hereby submitted be the  
5 official roll of the voting members of this  
6 convention.

7 SPEAKER: (Inaudible) 91, delegate,  
8 second.

9 NP HANDZUK: Thank you, Shipmate. On  
10 the motion, any questions? All those in favor  
11 indicate by signing eye.

12 (Chorus of ayes.)

13 Voting no?

14 SPEAKER: No.

15 NP HANDZUK: One nay. Motion carried.  
16 Thank you, Shipmate.

17 Okay. Two housekeeping notes. Number  
18 one, put your phones on vibrate, airplane mode or  
19 turn them off. Today it's \$45.

20 Second note, side bars. If you want a  
21 side bar, leave the meeting hall please. If you

1 are caught, the master at arms will give you one  
2 warning. If you get caught a second time, the  
3 master at arms is going to escort you from the  
4 meeting hall. We are here to conduct business,  
5 people need to hear what's going on. If you need  
6 to speak on to the issue at hand, come to the  
7 microphone, identify yourself and your branch  
8 please.

9 And as an observation, while we had our  
10 guest speaker, it was silent, you paid attention.  
11 Why not give the same courtesy to our speakers  
12 here at the convention please? I want to get  
13 this done today. Thank you.

14 All right. I have the script that says  
15 constitution and bylaws committee. Are you ready  
16 for your report? Do you want to come up here?

17 PRPNC POSEKANY: Posekany, Branch 14,  
18 delegate, chair of the constitution and bylaws  
19 committee. I was the chair and the members  
20 present at the convention meeting yesterday  
21 morning were Past Regional President Southwest



1 John Quesnel, Past Regional President East Coast  
2 Randy Phillips, National Vice President Maria  
3 Behm, Past Regional President East Coast Don  
4 Hoover, Past Regional President West Coast  
5 Richard Fetro, and Fred Bolz from Branch 269.  
6 The advisor was Past National President Tom  
7 Muccheck from Branch 269. Visitors at the meeting  
8 yesterday were Past National President and  
9 National Parliamentarian George Highland, George  
10 Boswell from Branch 162, Past Regional President  
11 Southeast Jerry Inger, Past Regional President  
12 West Coast Charles McIntire, Denise -- I couldn't  
13 read the writing -- branch president of Branch  
14 91, and Rick Broom from Branch 181.

15 I'd like to thank Past National  
16 President Tom Muccheck for taking the time  
17 yesterday morning to sit with me and go over some  
18 of these. We had two meetings each month except  
19 one month throughout the year to discuss things  
20 and to start going over these when we finally got  
21 the resolutions in. And so we were a little bit

1 ahead of the game, so it only took us an hour and  
2 a half yesterday. I appreciate his input and I  
3 appreciate the input, as does the rest of the  
4 committee, from Past National President George,  
5 recommendations and help in explaining them.

6           The same procedure that's been used for  
7 the past 30 years will be followed. I will read  
8 the pertinent resolved portion of the resolution  
9 at which time it becomes an issue automatically.  
10 No motion or seconding is necessary. The  
11 chairman will then read the various  
12 recommendations and give the rationale. After  
13 that, we will turn it over to the national  
14 president, I stand back and he can take the vote.  
15 Please remember, you will be voting on the  
16 resolution, not the committee's recommendation.  
17 The recommendations are simply recommendations,  
18 you can vote however you want. So you're voting  
19 on the resolutions, not the committee's  
20 recommendations.

21           Constitution and bylaws committee

1 Resolution 1 from the veterans service committee:  
2 Resolved, Article 8, Section 820(d) be amended to  
3 read: Duties of the committee shall be to  
4 oversee the FRA VSO program, providing education  
5 and outreach of same to the membership of the  
6 association, including the policies and  
7 regulations associated with this program. To  
8 report on the number and activities of FRA  
9 accredited VSO representatives performing VSO  
10 duties in each region. To solicit branches and  
11 shipmates to become involved in the departments  
12 of veterans affairs services on the local, state  
13 and national level, including VA regional  
14 offices, medical and VET centers, and to annually  
15 recognize outstanding service by a shipmate in  
16 service to veterans.

17 The certification is there in order.

18 The committee's recommendation on this  
19 would be to reject this. Our rationale was, this  
20 would be removing the VAVS portion from this  
21 committee and leave no committee with the duty of

1 overseeing the VAVS program. While it is true  
2 that both the VSO committee and HWR committees  
3 have similar if not identical reporting on the  
4 VAVS portion, this resolution does not provide  
5 for a continued oversight of the VAVS program.

6 We recommend that the VSO committee  
7 chair and HWR committee chair get together to  
8 coordinate resolutions needed to move the VAVS  
9 portion to the HWR committee and submit a  
10 resolution for consideration at the next  
11 convention.

12 NP HANDZUK: On the question. The  
13 committee has recommended to reject. Again,  
14 you're not voting on their recommendation, you're  
15 voting on whether or not to approve the  
16 resolution or not. So a yea vote will be to  
17 approve, a nay vote will be to disapprove. Are  
18 there any other questions, any other comments?

19 All those in favor of adopting the  
20 resolution indicate by the sign of aye.

21 (Chorus of ayes.)

1 All those opposed say nay.

2 (Chorus of nays.)

3 The nays have it, it has been defeated.

4 PRPEC MARTIN: Shipmate National  
5 President.

6 NP HANDZUK: Shipmate at the mic.

7 PRPEC MARTIN: Martin, delegate,  
8 chairman of VSO committee. I call for a rollcall  
9 vote.

10 NP HANDZUK: I need five. That's only  
11 one. Actually, since this is --

12 SPEAKER: Shipmate National President.

13 NP HANDZUK: Shipmate at the mic.

14 SPEAKER: (Inaudible) Branch 40. I  
15 second that motion.

16 NP HANDZUK: Shipmate at the mic.

17 SPEAKER: Ursula Grueznick, Branch 201,  
18 Texas, and I second it. Third it.

19 S/M BLOOM: Shipmate Paula Bloom,  
20 delegate from Branch 99. I fourth the vote.

21 S/M MURRAY: Murray, delegate, Branch

1 40, fifth.

2 NP HANDZUK: Okay. Shipmate at the mic.

3 SPEAKER: Shipmate National President,  
4 (inaudible, Branch 24, delegate. Can't we just  
5 do another voice thing?

6 NP HANDZUK: I can't do that, he's got  
7 five seconds to do a rollcall vote. All right.  
8 Mark your box for your rollcall votes. NED?

9 NED REID: All right, shipmates, we are  
10 going to do the voting. Make sure that you have  
11 your page. This is constitution and bylaws  
12 resolution number one, it was put out by the  
13 veterans service committee. Everyone understand  
14 what they're voting on?

15 We will start on the highest branch  
16 number and down to the lowest.

17 NP HANDZUK: Hang on a second there,  
18 NED. Shipmate at the mic.

19 PRPSC TALBOT: Talbot, delegate, Branch  
20 159. I'm a little confused. I would like a  
21 caucus time for opposing discussion on this,

1 because obviously I don't know what I'm voting  
2 on. If I'm the only one, I will just sit here,  
3 because I only have three votes for my branch.

4 NP HANDZUK: Shipmate National Chaplain,  
5 please close the Bible. You've got a caucus for  
6 ten minutes. Uncover.

7 NCHAP BEHM: Shipmate National  
8 President, the Bible is closed.

9 NP HANDZUK: Thank you, Shipmate  
10 National Chaplain. We stand in recess until  
11 1035. Do not be tardy.

12 (Recess.)

13 NP HANDZUK: Shipmate Master at Arms,  
14 invite the shipmates into the meeting hall and  
15 close the doors.

16 MAA: Aye aye, sir.

17 NP HANDZUK: Shipmate National Chaplain,  
18 please open the Bible. Uncover.

19 NCHAP BEHM: Shipmate National  
20 President, the Bible is open.

21 NP HANDZUK: Thank you, National

1 Chaplain. Cover.

2 NED, are you ready for a rollcall vote?

3 SPEAKER: Shipmate National President.

4 NP HANDZUK: We are -- the time for  
5 questions was when it was put on the floor. I  
6 will entertain -- what is it, Fred?

7 SPEAKER: I want to explain why, what  
8 the problem is between the VSO and VAVS. If the  
9 VSO passes, VAVS goes away.

10 SPEAKERS: No, it doesn't.

11 SPEAKER: Yes, it does, because there's  
12 no device to put it back in.

13 PRPSE RICHMOND: Richmond, chair of HWR.  
14 I found out about this not too long before the  
15 convention and we realized we can't do it.  
16 Apparently when this resolution was written, it  
17 was a very well written resolution and it should  
18 pass next year if it has an accompanying  
19 resolution for VAVS to come under the auspices of  
20 HWR. So we dropped the ball, I never saw this, I  
21 never heard anything about it this year, until



1 the convention. So I'm just saying it should be  
2 rejected until next year and with the VAVS moved  
3 to HWR, it should be no problem passing next  
4 year. That's all I have to say.

5 NP HANDZUK: Understood. All right. I  
6 guess we have to go through the rollcall vote  
7 since it had five seconds.

8 SPEAKER: Shipmate National President.

9 NP HANDZUK: Shipmate at the mic.

10 SPEAKER: Can the motion be revoked  
11 right now to cancel the vote, or do we have to go  
12 through the rollcall vote? I think we could  
13 proceed if we allow him to withdraw from the  
14 floor.

15 NP HANDZUK: This is true. If he  
16 withdraws his motion for a rollcall vote, it's  
17 going to take five seconds to reverse it. And I  
18 do understand what we're trying to do here,  
19 because this is one of my goals this year too,  
20 because I learned in the last two years, there is  
21 a distinct difference between the duties and

1 responsibilities of a VSO and a VAVS, and they  
2 have to be separated because of that. But to do  
3 so, we have to create resolutions to separate  
4 them, and it takes the collaboration of the two  
5 committees.

6 So what we're trying to do here is in  
7 essence compromise a little bit, bring it forward  
8 next year, and it strikes me from the feedback,  
9 there shouldn't be a problem passing it. So I  
10 ask PRPEC Martin if he's willing to withdraw his  
11 request for a rollcall vote.

12 PRPEC MARTIN: Shipmate National  
13 President.

14 NP HANDZUK: Shipmate at the mic.

15 PRPEC MARTIN: We would not be in this  
16 situation if it had not been for our previous NED  
17 separating the committee reports. Therefore, due  
18 to the fact that the chairman of hospital and  
19 welfare was not informed as he should have been  
20 informed by an individual of the VSO committee  
21 who was supposed to have written the second

1 portion of this thing, I'll withdraw the rollcall  
2 vote.

3 (Applause.)

4 NP HANDZUK: Okay, I don't need a  
5 second, I've been advised. So we're not going to  
6 take this up this year, now is the time as  
7 everybody knows.

8 Shipmate at the mic.

9 PRPNC POSEKANY: Shipmate National  
10 President, I'm just wondering, is the junior past  
11 here?

12 NP HANDZUK: The junior past is here and  
13 he did inform the assembly he was in the uniform  
14 of the day.

15 PRPSE RICHMOND: Shipmate Marty, I'll be  
16 glad to work with you on that issue.

17 PRPNC POSEKANY: Okay. We are moving to  
18 constitution and bylaws resolution number two, by  
19 the membership and retention committee. A very  
20 short be it resolved, that Article 4, Section  
21 401(e), Constitution and Bylaws, be deleted; and

1 the remaining Section 401 be renumbered; and that  
2 this amendment become effective December 31st,  
3 2024.

4 The constitution and bylaws committee's  
5 recommendation is to reject. It was a split vote  
6 within the committee and the rationale was this  
7 will not present the right model to FRA  
8 membership. We realize our veterans may be  
9 disabled and our motto of loyalty, protection and  
10 service literally means that we take care of our  
11 own. This may better define hardship as a  
12 financial hardship, and ensuring the branches do  
13 due diligence in screening members for this. We  
14 also need to do a better job of recognizing our  
15 own members that may be in this position by  
16 paying their dues, which would result in a net  
17 loss of \$20 per year for a branch to do so.  
18 Again, the committee recommends rejection.

19 NP HANDZUK: NED, do you have a comment?  
20 Okay. On resolution number two, you heard the  
21 committee. The vote, a yes vote is to reject it.

1 Oh. A yes vote means to delete as it was read, a  
2 no vote is to not. Do you understand?

3 PRPNC POSEKANY: Okay. The resolution  
4 is to delete Section 401(c) of the Constitution  
5 and Bylaws. If you vote yes, which means you  
6 accept this resolution, that means you want  
7 401(c) deleted. If you vote no, that means you  
8 reject this resolution and it remains as it is.

9 NP HANDZUK: On the motion, all in favor  
10 indicate by saying aye.

11 (Chorus of ayes.)

12 Opposed?

13 (Chorus of nays.)

14 The nays have it.

15 PRPNC POSEKANY: I'm going to try to go  
16 out of order here for just a little bit. We will  
17 go to constitution and bylaws resolution number  
18 five.

19 Constitution and bylaws resolution  
20 number five, Branch 274, High Sierra, Nevada.  
21 Resolved, that Article 8, Section 811(a) be

1 amended to read; this committee shall consist of  
2 one chairman appointed by the incoming national  
3 president, six members appointed by the national  
4 president for terms of three years, two members  
5 being replace or reappointed each year by te  
6 incoming national president. Members shall serve  
7 until relieved, replaced or resign with  
8 notification to the national board of directors.

9           What removed from that is that is  
10 something that in 2021, the delegates voted to  
11 have this amended to read that the junior past  
12 national president shall be the chairman of this  
13 committee, the incoming national president will  
14 appoint six members, et cetera. So what they did  
15 was they took that out and they want this  
16 committee to consist of one chairman appointed by  
17 the incoming national president and the rest of  
18 it is the same.

19           We're taking this up before resolution  
20 number three because it ties hand in hand with  
21 it, and since I don't have the written

1 recommendations here, the recommendation would be  
2 to reject this, and the rationale was because of,  
3 if you read what the NED states in his, in the  
4 membership, the delegate kit, they are salient  
5 points, all of which the constitution and bylaws  
6 committee had talked about through the year after  
7 receiving these, and this was done. It provides  
8 continuity, it does provide a fresh set of eyes  
9 each year, it eliminates any finger pointing or  
10 favoritism by the national president appointing  
11 somebody that they think will do the budget and  
12 finance the way they want it done. There was a  
13 recommendation from one of the audit teams and  
14 that is why this was broached in 2021 advocating  
15 a change to this. And as the junior past  
16 national president, that person sits on that  
17 current board of directors while they are the  
18 chairman of the budget and finance and audit  
19 committee, and will be able to provide instant  
20 immediate feedback to the national board of  
21 directors in their meetings, and take feedback

1 back to the C&BL and the budget and finance  
2 committee. So the committee recommends rejection  
3 on this.

4 NP HANDZUK: Any comment? On the  
5 question, are there any questions or comments  
6 regarding this resolution?

7 Shipmate at the mic, I'm sorry.

8 SPEAKER: (Inaudible), delegate, 91. It  
9 is also stated that the junior past president  
10 will remain on as an advisor, so that person is  
11 not going to be removed, so there is still  
12 continuity if they do approve it.

13 PRPNC POSEKANY: Resolution number five  
14 does not say that, resolution three does. That's  
15 why we would approach that after this.

16 NP HANDZUK: All right, shipmates. On  
17 the motion to adopt, all those in favor indicate  
18 by the sign of aye.

19 (Chorus of ayes.)

20 Opposed?

21 (Chorus of nays.)



1           The nays have it.

2           PRPNC POSEKANY: Now shipmates, we will  
3 go back in order. Constitution and bylaws  
4 resolution number three, 274, High Sierra, Reno.

5           Shipmate National President, the  
6 constitution and bylaws committee recommends you  
7 rule this not in order because it would be in  
8 conflict with Section 11(a).

9           NP HANDZUK: On the advice of the  
10 national parliamentarian, and I concur, as well  
11 as the chairman, I rule this out of order.

12           PRPNC POSEKANY: Shipmates, constitution  
13 and bylaws resolution number four, Branch 274,  
14 High Sierra, Reno, Nevada. Resolved: That  
15 Article 8, Section 807(b) be amended to read: In  
16 the absence of the national executive director  
17 from national headquarters, the line of  
18 succession will be appointed by the national  
19 board of directors. The national board of  
20 directors shall solicit the membership for a  
21 candidate to fill this position.

1           The constitution and bylaws committee  
2 recommends the national president rule this not  
3 in order. Our rationale, several reasons.

4           Section 1705(c), Article 5, the national  
5 board of directors will fill the vacancy of the  
6 national vice president and national executive  
7 director by appointing a successor who shall  
8 complete the unexpired term of office, whereas  
9 the statements in this resolution and the  
10 resolved clause do not address the issue of the  
11 temporary nature, the point being until the next  
12 national convention, to be published, et cetera.

13           This committee urges the national  
14 president, the national board of directors and  
15 the shipmates to observe the current Section  
16 807(b) as intended. This is not a line of  
17 succession for NED replacement, but it identifies  
18 a person at national headquarters to act as a  
19 point of contact for national headquarters  
20 personnel and shipmates if the NED is absent  
21 temporarily for any reason such as annual

1 vacation time, off attending to personal issues  
2 that day, et cetera. This could be better  
3 addressed by amending Section 807(b) to reflect  
4 this.

5 If it's the desire to make the  
6 appointment temporary in nature to last until the  
7 next national convention, then Section 705(c) is  
8 the correct section to be amended.

9 NP HANDZUK: I rule this resolution out  
10 of order.

11 PRPNC POSEKANY: Constitution and bylaws  
12 resolution number six, Branch 20, Groton,  
13 Connecticut.

14 Resolved, that Article 6, Section 607 be  
15 amended by adding, as soon as one candidate for  
16 office receives a majority of votes, the chair  
17 declares him or her elected and no further votes  
18 are cast for that office.

19 The constitution and bylaws committee  
20 recommends adopt. This clarifies the use of  
21 Robert's Rules.

1 NP HANDZUK: Shipmates, on the question  
2 to adopt, any questions? All those in favor of  
3 adoption, indicate by signing aye.

4 (Chorus of ayes.)

5 Opposed? It's unanimous.

6 PRPNC POSEKANY: Constitution and bylaws  
7 resolution number seven, Branch 20, Groton,  
8 Connecticut.

9 Resolved, that Article 6, Section 602(a)  
10 be amended to read, the FRA shall hold an annual  
11 convention, not to exceed four days duration.

12 The recommendation of the constitution  
13 and bylaws committee is to adopt.

14 The rationale is, the whereases provide  
15 all the reasons you need. The constitution and  
16 bylaws committee finds a constitutional  
17 convention unnecessary. The risings costs of  
18 attending conventions makes five-day conventions  
19 financially unrealistic for many of our  
20 shipmates.

21 NP HANDZUK: On the question to adopt,

1 any questions? All those in favor of adopting,  
2 indicate by a sign of aye.

3 (Chorus of ayes.)

4 Opposed? Approved.

5 PRPNC POSEKANY: Only a couple more  
6 hours to go here.

7 (Laughter.)

8 Constitution and bylaws resolution  
9 number eight, future planning committee.

10 Resolved, that Article 8, Section 802  
11 Constitution and Bylaws, FRA, be added to read as  
12 follows: The national board of directors is  
13 authorized to advertise the position of national  
14 executive director no more than one year prior to  
15 the end of the national executive director's  
16 term. In the event of a vacancy or upon receipt  
17 of information that a vacancy in the office of  
18 national executive director will occur, the  
19 national board of directors shall appoint a  
20 designated representative to advertise the  
21 position, review resumes and make recommendations

1 to the national board of directors. The national  
2 board of directors is empowered to hire the best  
3 qualified candidate.

4 And be it further resolved that this  
5 section of 802 be ordered so that this new  
6 section precedes Section 802(h).

7 The constitution and bylaws committee  
8 recommendation is to rule not in order.

9 Rationale, conflict with Section 701 of  
10 the Constitution and Bylaws. In order for the  
11 NED to be hired or a nonmember, Section 701(d)  
12 refers to the election of the NED or any national  
13 officer, and the whereas and intent on this says  
14 they need not be elected.

15 NP HANDZUK: I rule this not in order at  
16 this time.

17 PRPNC POSEKANY: Constitution and bylaw  
18 resolution number nine, future planning  
19 committee.

20 Resolved, that Article 7, Section  
21 701(c), Constitution and Bylaws, FRA, be modified

1 to read as follows: 701(c). Branches may  
2 nominate or endorse for national office any  
3 member of the Fleet Reserve Association who is  
4 eligible to hold office. The board of directors  
5 may nominate any qualified candidate for the  
6 position of national executive director.  
7 Nominations or endorsements shall be forwarded to  
8 and received by the national executive director  
9 in accordance with the provisions of Section 611.  
10 Nominations may be made from the floor of the  
11 national convention by any accredited delegate.  
12 To be eligible for the nomination, the nominee  
13 must either be present or furnish the presiding  
14 officer with a written acceptance of the  
15 nomination.

16 Resolved, that Article 7, Section  
17 701(f), (g) and (h), Constitution and Bylaws,  
18 FRA, be added to read as follows:

19 701(f). The national board of directors  
20 of the Fleet Reserve Association may put forward  
21 nominees for national office. Nominations or

1 endorsements shall be forwarded to and received  
2 by the national executive director in accordance  
3 with the provisions of Section 611, subject to  
4 altered processing in the event the NED recuses  
5 himself or herself due to potential conflicts of  
6 interest in evaluating nominees.

7 701(g). Nominees for national executive  
8 director may include members or nonmembers of the  
9 Fleet Reserve Association. Candidates for NED  
10 should have demonstrated professional experience  
11 and skills commensurate with performing senior  
12 executive administrative and management functions  
13 at national headquarters and in maintaining  
14 relationships with the national board of  
15 directors and other national officers.

16 701(h). In the event of two or more  
17 equally qualified candidates for NED, and in  
18 consultation with external professional advisors  
19 retained for the purposes of finding and  
20 reviewing candidates for NED, the candidate  
21 eligible for, or already maintaining membership



1 in the Fleet Reserve Association shall be  
2 favored.

3 Resolved, that this amendment become  
4 effective January 1st, 2025.

5 The constitution and bylaws committee  
6 recommendation is that the national president  
7 rule this not in order for the same reason it was  
8 last year, a conflict with Section 701(d)  
9 Constitution and Bylaws. In order for the  
10 national executive director to be hired or a  
11 nonmember, Section 701(d) would be deemed  
12 necessary to remove any elected national officer.

13 NP HANDZUK: And I rule it out of order  
14 at this time.

15 PRPNC POSEKANY: Constitution and bylaws  
16 resolution number 10, future planning committee.

17 Resolved, that Article 12, Section  
18 1201(h), Constitution and Bylaws, FRA, be  
19 modified to read as follows: Branches of the FRA  
20 shall use their best efforts to cooperate in the  
21 pursuit of their common mission with the Fleet

1 Reserve Association as embodied in the FRA  
2 bylaws. The FRA grants to recognized branches in  
3 good standing with the FRA limited license to use  
4 FRA's intellectual property, specifically the  
5 name Fleet Reserve Association, the acronym FRA,  
6 and any and all FRA logos or designs that  
7 represent the organization, including but not  
8 limited to the FRA swoosh logo and the FRA shield  
9 logo, collectively referred to as FRA  
10 intellectual property. Such license shall be  
11 renewed annually in conjunction with the annual  
12 branch officer report and terminated upon a  
13 branch's status with the FRA being altered, or  
14 upon the determination of the national board of  
15 directors.

16 Resolved, that this amendment become  
17 effective January 1st, 2025.

18 The recommendation of the constitution  
19 and bylaws committee is to reject. This in our  
20 opinion made no sense. Standing Rule 6 is where  
21 the branches have to request the national

1 headquarters to use the intellectual property for  
2 business purposes. 1201(h) is not what this is  
3 talking about. H, if you are a branch chartered  
4 in good standing, you can use the FRA  
5 intellectual property. If you want to use it for  
6 a business entity, you have to use Standing  
7 Rule 6. This one, by adding the term such  
8 license shall be renewed annually in conjunction  
9 with the annual branch officers report is the  
10 only thing added to this and in our opinion it's  
11 just adding something that doesn't need to be  
12 added because we've already seen branches are  
13 authorized to use the intellectual property if  
14 they're in good standing. This section here does  
15 not deal with business entity, which in our  
16 opinion is what they were looking for with this,  
17 so the committee's recommendation is to reject.  
18 This will be better served by adding this  
19 statement to the standing rule.

20 NP HANDZUK: You heard the comments and  
21 the opinion of the committee on the question.

1 All those in favor of adopting indicate by a sign  
2 of aye.

3 (No response.)

4 Opposed?

5 (Chorus of nays.)

6 The nays have it.

7 PRPNC POSEKANY: Constitution and bylaws  
8 resolution number 11, national board of  
9 directors.

10 Resolved, that Article 12, Section 1208  
11 be amended to read: Article 12, Section 1208,  
12 funds returned to the treasury. If a branch is  
13 not reactivated within 18 months of its  
14 deactivation, the finance officer shall transfer  
15 to the national treasury of the Fleet Reserve  
16 Association any funds of that branch which are  
17 held in escrow.

18 That is a deviation from the current  
19 three years, to make it 18 months, and the  
20 recommendation of the constitution and bylaws  
21 committee is to reject.

1           Rationale is this could possibly  
2 discourage a branch from reinstating due to the  
3 short timeframe.

4           NP HANDZUK: This resolution is not in  
5 order at this time.

6           Shipmate at the mic.

7           PRPSW QUESNEL: Shipmate President,  
8 Cornell, Branch 89. I believe originally he said  
9 the recommendation was to reject.

10          NP HANDZUK: And I rejected it. I'm  
11 sorry, you're right. I'm sorry.

12          On the question -- thank you, Shipmate,  
13 I kind of lost the clock too. To adopt, all  
14 those in favor indicate by a sign of aye.

15          (Scattered ayes.)

16          Opposed?

17          (Chorus of nays.)

18          The nays have it.

19          PRPNC POSEKANY: Constitution and bylaws  
20 resolution 12, national board of directors.

21          Resolved, Article 12, Section 1207 be

1 amended to read: Funds held in escrow. If a  
2 branch is reactivated within 18 months of its  
3 deactivation, all funds held in the national  
4 treasury shall be forwarded to that branch within  
5 30 days following the institution and  
6 installation of that branch.

7           The constitution and bylaws  
8 recommendation is that the national president  
9 rule it is not in order, because of the other  
10 section we just rejected.

11           NP HANDZUK: Due to the previous action  
12 this is not in order, so there's no need for a  
13 vote.

14           PRPNC POSEKANY: Constitution and bylaws  
15 resolution number 13, national board of  
16 directors.

17           Resolved, that Article 7, Section 701(a)  
18 be amended to read, the national officers of the  
19 Fleet Reserve Association shall be national  
20 president, national vice president, national  
21 executive director, president of each region,

1 junior past national president, national  
2 parliamentarian and national chaplain.

3 The constitution and bylaws committee  
4 recommends adopt.

5 Rationale is this clarifies the avenue  
6 for the finance officer to be hired, and pursuant  
7 to 701(c) the finance officer must be a member of  
8 the FRA.

9 The constitution and bylaws committee  
10 recommends adopt.

11 NP HANDZUK: On the question to adopt,  
12 all those in favor indicate by a sign of aye.

13 (Chorus of ayes.)

14 Opposed? Adopted.

15 PRPNC POSEKANY: Two more to go,  
16 shipmates, constitution and bylaws resolution 14  
17 from the national board of directors and 15, from  
18 the membership and retention committee. These  
19 two did not, they were on the official  
20 correspondence list sent out a month and a half  
21 ago, if the branch secretaries did their job the

1 branch officers should have reviewed these.  
2 There were copies on the table and the reason  
3 they were on the table was because they did not  
4 appear in the delegate kit, and we wanted to make  
5 sure you had copies in front of you.

6 NP HANDZUK: Shipmates, it's ten minutes  
7 past for the luncheon. I realize we're behind  
8 schedule, but I've got to recess for this  
9 luncheon. All I'm going to tell you is be  
10 prepared for a long afternoon. We will continue  
11 to complete this committee's report when you get  
12 back from lunch.

13 Shipmate National Chaplain, please close  
14 the Bible. Uncover.

15 NCHAP BEHM: Shipmate National  
16 President, the Bible is closed.

17 NP HANDZUK: Thank you, Shipmate  
18 National Chaplain. We are in recess until 1300.

19 (Adjourned at 1115.)  
20  
21



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