A First-Timer's Guide to the National Encampment

What is the National Encampment?

The National Encampment is the annual gathering of the National elected and appointed officers along with the delegates from the Departments throughout the country.

The National Encampment is the ultimate authority in the Order and has the power to affirm or reverse decisions of the National Officers (including the Commander-in-Chief and the Council of Administration of the Sons, and the National President of the Auxiliary) as well as the Departments, Camps and Auxiliaries. Decisions made at a National Encampment only can be changed at a future National Encampment.

Who is the National Encampment?

For the Sons, each National elected officer, Past Commander-in-Chiefs, sitting Department Commanders, and Past Department Commanders and the allotted number of delegates from each department.

For the Auxiliary, each National elected officer, Past National Presidents, sitting Department Presidents and Past Department Presidents and the allotted number of delegates from each department.

What should I expect at the National Encampment?

Expect to have fun, make decisions, and take part in discussions on the future of the Sons and Auxiliary.

Thursday:

Thursday consists of some committee meetings and some pre-planning meetings, along with pre-arranged tours and gatherings of friends.

Friday:

Friday begins with the *Joint Opening* and *Joint Memorial Service* in which the officers of the Allied Orders parade into the meeting room and then participate in a solemn memorial service to our ancestors and to the members of our Orders who have passed on during the previous year.

The *Business Meeting* begins after the Memorial Service and breaks for lunch over the noon hour.

The afternoon *Business Meeting* for the Sons will continue with officers' reports. When registering for the Encampment, Brothers will receive a packet with printed reports, which will not be reread during the meeting. If the officer wishes to

summarize his report or add to it, he can do so when called upon by the Commander-in-Chief. Any recommendations from the officers' reports are all referred to the Encampment Committee on Officers Reports.

For the Auxiliary the afternoon *Business Meeting* will be the same as the Sons with the exception that all of Officers Reports and Department Reports are read to the entire Encampment.

Friday Night:

Campfire is held after the Business Meeting concludes and after there is time given for all to have dinner. During the Campfire there is usually some form of entertainment.

Courtesy Hour happens after the Campfire and is an opportunity for each Department to give gifts to and often make fun of the Commander-in-Chief and National President. It is all done in good fun and fraternity.

Saturday:

Saturday begins early with the *Sons of Reserve (SVR) Breakfast.* All members of the SVR, their guests, and those interested in the SVR are invited to attend. The morning *Business Meetings* picks up with the officers reports and continue into the Committee Reports.

Also, during the Saturday *Business Meeting* each of the Allied Orders will send a *Visitation Committee* to each of the meeting of the other Orders to bring them greetings, love and wishes for "a harmonious Encampment." This is a legacy passed down from the Encampments of the Grand Army of the Republic.

After a lunch break the *Election of Officers* will take place. When the election is called for there will first be a complete report from the Credentials Committee, determining who present is entitled to vote and the exact voting strength of each Department. After this the doors will be barred and no one will be permitted to enter the room until voting has been completed. After the elections have taken place the doors will be unbarred and the *Installation of Officers* will take place.

The newly installed Commander-in-Chief and National President will close the Business Meetings of the National Encampment.

The *Allied Orders Banquet* is the final event of the National Encampment. All business having been completed, it is entirely a social period with good food, good companions and good conversation.

After the banquet there is a *Open House* to meet the new Commander in Chief and National President which is normally held in a courtesy room from the hotel.

The last thing is to say "see you next year!" to all of your new-found friends in the Allied Orders.

Please remember to have your membership card and delegate credentials with you at all times. When you re-enter any of the business meetings you may be required to show these to be seated.