

NATIONAL COMMANDER SPARWASSER

Serving our veterans is and has been one of Cmdr. Sparwasser's major objectives since joining the Sons. He has served the Detachment of Maryland as Detachment Commander, First, Second, and Third Vice Commander, Publications Chairman and Convention Chairman, Assistant Adjutant, VAVS Commission Chairman, Pride Staff, VAVS Hospital Representative, and Chairman of Member Training and Development.

Before his election as National Commander, Bill served nationally as National Management Institute Vice Chairman, Community Affairs, Public Relations Committee, Chief of Staff to the National Commander, Administrative Assistant to the National Commander, National Historian (1997-1998), three term National Assistant Adjutant, and Eastern Area National Vice .

New Jersey proudly recognizes this leader and thanks him for his leadership. im

JOHN N. (JAY) GILLMAN, VC CANDIDATE

Jay has been a member of the Sons of the American Legion for eight years. He gained his eligibility through his father John P. Gillman who served in the Korean war. Jay has served Squadron #370 as chairman in many committees that include Sick Call and Relief, Constitution and By-Laws, and Veterans Rehabilitation. The Constitution and By-Laws for Squadron #370 were written while he was chairman of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee. He has also participated in many fund raising events for the Legion Family of Post #370. Jay has worked his way up the chairs to where he has served as Squadron Commander for the years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002.

On the County level Jay has served the Sons of the American Legion Camden County Committee as Chaplain, Senior Vice-Commander, Commander and is presently serving as Adjutant. Jay has also served as chairman of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee where the original Constitution and By-Laws for Camden County were written.

On the Detachment level, Jay has served as Sergeant-at-Arms and Chaplain. He is currently serving as Detachment Vice-Commander where he has helped Squadron #115, Beverly, and Squadron #286, Pine Hill, reorganize. Jay also helped in the formation of Squadron #262, Audobon. He is also the chairman of two committees, Detachment Commander's Project and Constitution and By-Laws. Jay has also served as chairman of Religious Emphasis and the Detachment Commander's Project for the year 2004-2005.

Jay has been married to his wife Jane for thirteen years. They are currently living in Magnolia where Jay has been a life-long resident.

If elected to the office of Detachment Vice-Commander, Jay will continue the promotion of membership growth and making visitations to his assigned counties. These are a must and a priority for the continued growth and prosperity of the Detachment of New Jersey.

LEADING CANDIDATE EARL R. RUTTKOFSKY

Earl is a 22 year life member of Sq. 34 Tecumseh, Michigan. He is eligible through his father Earl E. Ruttkofsky, a WWII Army veteran now deceased.

Earl's family has always been a part of the American Legion Family. His wife Beverly, daughters Angela and Amy, son Joshua, son-in-law Eric, and grandchildren Elizabeth, Ashley, and Ethan are members as are his mother, brother Rick, and sisters Mary and Dolores.

Earl's priority is getting back to the basics of helping veterans. He believes this can be achieved by changing the way the local community feels about veterans, improving contributions to the VAVS program, educating Blue Caps, promoting visits to veterans, and working to enhance the legislative process. pm

PATRICK GALLAGHER, VC CANDIDATE

I have been a member of Neptune Squadron #346 for 17 years. My eligibility comes from my father John P. Gallagher, P. C., and my Grandfather Christopher Gifford, P. D. V. C. I take pride in being the third generation member of the Legion family. My family consists of my parents John & Janice Gallagher, my older brother Charles, his wife Ruth, their two children Charles Jr. and Frank. My sister Dorothy and her husband Agustin, and my twin sister Doreen.

I am employed with Able Ambulance Company as an Emergency Medical Technician. I am a volunteer with the Hamilton First Aid Squad and Hamilton Fire Company.

I have had the opportunity to hold many offices on the Squadron, County and Detachment levels.

On the Squadron level I have held the positions of Past Vice Commander, Historian, Chaplain & Sergeant-at-Arms.

I have served on the following committees on the squadron level Color Guard, Fundraising, Life Membership, and Membership.

In Monmouth County I have held the offices of Detachment Executive Committeeman, Past County Commander, Past Vice Commander, Past Membership Chairman, and a member of the Executive Board.

At the Detachment level I am currently serving my Second Year as the Detachment Convention Chairman and the Vice Chairman of Membership. I have served on the By-Laws Committee. I have completed the Basis and Advanced Course of S. A. L. College. I have also been an instructor at S. A. L. College.

I completed the Detachment Commander's course at the N. E. C. in the Fall of 2005.

For seven years I was involved with Boys State as both a runner and a statesman.

I will be an asset to the Detachment of New Jersey bringing both my knowledge and enthusiasm for the S. A. L. I will "Make it Happen!"

MICHAEL ARNER, COMMANDER CANDIDATE

I would like to introduce myself to you. I'm Michael Arner, and I am running for Detachment Commander. I am eligible through my father Russell Arner, who served honorably in the United States Navy in the WWII Pacific Theater.

I have been a member of Squadron 338 in Leonardo for 24 years where, in 1992, they honored me by electing me as Life Member. There I have served in many capacities over the years including two non-consecutive terms as commander.

At the county level, I have served as adjutant, vice commander, DEC, and commander. I have been on Monmouth County's CWF Committee for many years. I am still serving as its chairman. At the detachment level, I have served as vice commander twice--once back in the late 90's, then once again this past year. At the national level, I have an appointment to the Child Welfare Committee.

If elected, I have some ideas that I would like to pass along to the Detachment. They center on improving attendance at meetings and helping the membership grow.

CARL ALBERN, NEC CANDIDATE

My name is Carl Albern, Jr., and I am seeking your support for the office of National Executive Committeeman.

I am a 16-year member of the Sons of the American Legion with a 10-year involvement with the Detachment of New Jersey. Over these ten years I have served on, and successfully chaired, many committees in the Detachment of New Jersey. They include the Budget Committee, Internet Committee, Detachment Commander's Project, Public Relations, Community Affairs, SAL College and Constitution and Bylaws.

I am currently serving my third year as Adjutant and second year as Alternate Executive Committeeman for the Detachment. In 2004, I was appointed to the National Community Affairs Committee by National Commander Deacon, and re-appointed in 2005 to this committee. In 2005, I was invited to attend the National Management Institute in Indianapolis, and attended for the second year of the three-year course in May.

I feel that my 10 years of experience with the Detachment and its members and six years of National meetings and Conventions have well-prepared me for this position as the Detachment representative to the National Organization. I am well able to present the issues from National to Detachment, and present New Jersey's viewpoint on such matters. I encourage and welcome any questions you wish to ask me about my running for this office.

THE EDITOR'S DESK

I regret every announced candidate did NOT submit a biography. The paper makes no endorsements. Each bio like the Commander's Message was unedited. It reflects him, his skills, his beliefs. Consider if each candidate is/is not the best choice then vote your conscience. The best candidate deserves to win.

I'd like to thank Pat., Ed, and Luc Marsden, Gary Nelson, Joe Gillman, Frank Joisi, Jim Lightcap, Mike Arner, Joe Colontone, and Steve Rodriguez for their articles.

GARY P. NELSON, NEC CANDIDATE

Gary's eligibility in the Sons of the American Legion is through his father Russell, a World War II Army Veteran and 60 year member of the American Legion.

Gary's experience and success has been shown on all levels of the Sons. On a squadron level he is a Charter and Life member of his squadron, three-time Commander, past Adjutant, Finance Officer and currently Judge Advocate. Under Gary's leadership, his squadron is one of the most decorated in the state.

On a County Level, Gary is a two-time past County Commander and a past Adjutant. During his reign as Commander, he almost doubled the membership in two years and was very influential in starting up several squadrons in his county. Also, during his term, the Bergen County Legion Family Holiday Party was conceived and the Annual Donations to Boys & Girls State. During his term he established the first S.A.L. scholarship called Chick Betcher Memorial Scholarship.

On a Detachment Level, Gary has been a two-time Vice-Commander responsible for getting three County Organizations started and many squadrons going. He has chaired Ways and Means to an all time record sales of pins, chaired basic S.A.L. College which he taught and attended both Basic and Advance S.A.L. College. Gary has also been on the Membership Committee and has been asked to talk about recruiting membership in many counties and squadrons.

Gary had the high honor of being Detachment Commander for the record year 2004-2005. Under Gary's leadership, New Jersey S.A.L. had an all time high in membership, all time high in donations to Special Olympics, Detachment Commanders Project and Child Welfare being # 1 in contributions and # 1 in per-capita in the Eastern Region. Also the Detachment Newspaper won several awards and in Hawaii Gary had the honor to bring home the # 1 Squadron Award for Americanism in the Nation, back to his own squadron.

Presently in the Detachment, Gary Chairs Ways & Means and National Homeland Security. He is on the Internal Affairs Committee and the Detachment Commanders Advisory Committee. He also taught in both Basic and Advanced S.A.L. College.

On the National Level, Gary has gone to all Spring & Fall N.E.C.'s for the past five years, including all of the past five National Conventions. In 2005 Gary represented this Detachment as Delegation Chairman. Gary has also gone to the Detachment Commanders Course and presently just finished his first of three years in the N.M.I.

Gary's experience, understanding and willingness to get the job done will make him a great N.E.C., getting the Detachment's wishes expressed and voted in National and to bring back all information to our Great State.

Gary believes that if you wear the cover, you must do the job. Every job that Gary has done, he has excelled in. For this reason, we would like you to vote for him in Wildwood on June 9, 2006.