

## Section 13 - Attending the Annual National Congress

### "What to expect, what's expected of you"

1. Once you have made the decision to attend a National Congress, please inform the State Society Secretary. If this is prior to the Tennessee Society Annual Membership Meeting in April, you should make sure that you are included as a member of the delegation. PLEASE NOTE: Slots for the delegation are limited by the number of members reported on the Annual Report. If you are not sure that you are going, please sign up as an alternate delegate- so that someone else can sign up as a delegate; he may need the tax deduction!
2. If you have made the decision to attend the National Congress after the State meeting, please make sure that you have your dues paid membership card with you. The head of the delegation can certify you as a delegate if there are slots available at the Congress. Please be patient. It's an involved process to certify someone at the Congress site.
3. The next step is to register for the National Congress with the National Society. The registration form for the Annual Congress is printed in the Spring Issue of the **SAR Magazine**. This should be forwarded to National Headquarters with the registration fee. One should keep in mind - No pay / No play. You must be registered in order to participate in the Congress activities. This includes the right to vote in any elections – only delegates can vote. If you have been selected as a delegate, the State Secretary should have sent to you a two-part slip of paper that “Certifies” you as a delegate. Upon arrival at Congress, please register at the registration desk or credentials desk to be certified as a delegate. **Keep the return slip of paper with you - you will need it to cast any written ballots that may be required.** You will also need to retain this in your income tax records as proof that you served as a delegate.
4. The National Congress traditionally starts on Saturday Night with a reception provided by the host State Society. This is an informal get-together with a cash bar. Coat and tie is the normal wear unless otherwise notified – sometimes in very hot locations, shorts and sports shirts are suggested, but this will be made clear in Congress materials. There are usually optional activities on Friday and Saturday, but that is entirely the delegate's choice about whether to participate.
5. Sunday Afternoon is the Memorial Service. At some Congresses there may be some short meetings in the morning (such as a Trustees' Meeting), but the main activity of the day is the Memorial Service. This is held in the afternoon. If you are a member of the Color Guard, you should

seek direction from the National Color Guard Commander about how to escort a flag to the Church. The Church service is nondenominational and lasts about an hour. Dress for non-color guard members is coat and tie. Dinner that evening is on your own.

6. Sunday evening is the Joseph S. Rumbaugh Oration Contest Finals. Many fine speeches from outstanding young Americans can be heard at this Contest. If the State Society has a candidate, you should go to support him/her.
7. Monday is the start of the Congress. The Council of State Presidents' Breakfast is held at 7:00 a.m. on Monday morning. Sometimes local State Societies or Districts coordinate their own breakfasts. (See the head of our delegation, if there is one available for you to attend – reservations are required in advance.) The opening of the Congress begins at 9:00 a.m. If you are in the Color Guard, you should be in uniform to help advance the colors for the opening. Color Guard members should be in contact with the National Color Guard Commander to learn how to participate. There are generally speeches of welcome from local government officials and heads of other genealogically based organizations as well as the Preliminary Report of the Credentials Committee. One should also be aware that the RULES OF THE CONGRESS are adopted by the Congress; they are also printed toward the back of the program - READ THEM. They change sometimes, and you can avoid some embarrassment by understanding them.
8. At noon is the Youth Awards Luncheon; this is included in your Congress Package. Reservations are required in advance.
9. In the afternoon of the Congress' first day there are usually two items that you need to be aware of - several important meetings that you may be involved in - and interesting Committee meetings. There may be a Genealogy or Membership workshop that you can attend, **but, if you are the President, Immediate Past President or President-elect - you must attend the Council of State Presidents' meeting.**
10. The evening activity is Recognition Night for the National Society. This includes presentations of the year's current Minuteman Award recipients. There is also the awarding of numerous State and Chapter Awards.. Sports jackets and ties are appropriate. Formal wear is expected of the participants in the Minuteman program, but not of observers. All Minuteman Award recipients are requested to wear White Dinner Jacket.
11. Tuesday is the second day of the Congress. Once again there may be a breakfast that you can attend. Reservations are required in advance for the Southern District meeting. Otherwise you are on your own. Tuesday

morning's main activity is the General Session of the Congress with all the reports by the Former Presidents General, General Officers, and National Committee Chairman. There is usually a lady's luncheon that is hosted by the President General's wife with a tour in the afternoon. Reservations are required in advance. During the afternoon session, Nominees for General Office are introduced. Balloting begins at 3:00 p.m.. That evening's activity is the President General's Banquet with the presentation of the President General's Awards. Black or White Dinner Jacket with Decorations or Continental Uniform is the appropriate dress.

12. Wednesday is the last formal day of the Congress. Breakfast is on your own. The General Session handles the unfinished business of the Congress, elects the National Trustees, certifies the Election of General Officers.

13. Lunch is on your own followed by a Tour of the City or some significant place, provided you have made reservations in advance. The President General's Installation Banquet is the evening's activity. Dress code is usually White Tie and tails for the head table, Black tux, White Dinner Jacket or Continental Uniform is the preferred dress. The new General Officers are installed and the new President General is permitted to wear the George Washington signature ring. After Dinner, the Congress is adjourned. The next morning members are free to return home except those serving on the National Executive Committee, who may have additional duties to perform. Some Congresses have additional add-on attractions for the following weekend. These are not included in your Congress package. Check your **SAR Magazine** for advertisements.

14. Note that in all cases where formal dress is addressed during the Congress, the standard Black Tuxedo or Color Guard Uniform is always acceptable for attendees.