SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

A newsletter of Sons of The American Legion

THE MILLENNIUM

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Top Ten Detachments Membership Percentage

1.	Hawaii	91.79%
2.	South Carolina	88.52%
3.	South Dakota	86.55%
4.	Wisconsin	84.95%
5.	Maryland	82.34%
6.	Florida	82.30%
7.	New Hampshire	82.20%
8.	Ohio	80.93%
9.	Louisiana	80.74%
10.	Virginia	80.54%

Statistics as of 03 February 2025

BE THE ONE

Inside *YOUR* SAL Newsletter this Month

Editorial: Your Guide to The Washington Conference and your Visit to DC this month

California: The LA Wildfires and How You Can Help

National: NVC's Central and Midwest report in, as does the Membership Committee, VA and R, and Veterans and Children Foundation

Sons on Social Media

Vermont: Celebrating 20 Years of Spreading Christmas Cheer

Tennessee: Legion Family at work during the Hurricane Helene

Legion.org, 07 Jan 2025

SAL National Awards: Don't Miss out on these Application Deadlines

Some important deadlines are coming up for Sons of The American Legion; here are the details and deadlines for awards - **forms for these awards and more are available here.**

Squadron Commander of the Year Award: Nominations for this award must be submitted by the detachment adjutant and received at National Headquarters by the opening of May's Spring NEC meeting. Nominees must be a member in good standing in the SAL; hold only the office of squadron commander at the time of nomination; demonstrate leadership through action and involvement in squadron activities that benefit his community; and must obtain 100% squadron membership or better by March 15.

Jeff Thorne Photography: Martin Widmer (NJ), left, receives the Marvin P. Nay Award at the 2024 Convention in New Orleans

Marvin P. Nay Veterans Employment and Education Outstanding Contributor Award: Nominations for this award must be received prior to the May Spring NEC meeting of the Veterans Employment and Education Commission meeting. The award will be voted on at that meeting and presented at the National Convention in August. Nominees must be a member in good standing in the Sons of The American Legion engaged in the fundraising, distribution of funds or goods, and/or volunteering at an event deemed beneficial to veterans' employment and/or education, to include homelessness. A detachment may submit more than one nominees, and an SAL member may nominate himself.

All-Time High Honor Ribbon Request: Pursuant to Resolution F3-85, the All-Time High Detachment Honor Ribbon (Red) will be awarded at National Convention to a Sons of The American Legion detachment which has exceeded all previous years' membership. The form should be reported to National Headquarters when an all-time high for membership occurs for the applicable membership year.

Charles B. Rigsby Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Volunteer of the Year Award: Squadrons should submit their nominee to the detachment adjutant during the detachment convention once the nominee form has been attested by the squadron or post commander. The appropriate detachment officials should select one nominee for award consideration and the detachment adjutant should forward the nomination form to National Headquarters no later than 30 days prior to the National Convention to be considered.

George B. Evans Grassroots Veterans Advocate of the Year Award: This award recognizes an SAL member in good standing who has performed outstanding service and made significant contributions in time and effort to grassroots veterans' advocacy work. An award may be presented each year to a member who takes on a bold leadership role by building relationships with elected officials who directly impact public policy; by actively taking the message of the national Sons of The American Legion to key media outlets; and by developing strong grassroot initiatives. Nominations may be submitted by an individual, squadron, district or detachment and are due by July 20.

More on Membership Awards, and Media and Communication Awards, on Page 3.

Russell "Rusty" Myers III (NJ), Editor, "The Millennium"

Editorial: Make the Most of our Conference in DC

We put an article in *"The Millennium"* last month about the upcoming Washington Conference, but I'd like to expand on that. Last year was my first time attending, and I'd love to share why this has become one of my favorite events to participate in as a Son.

The event happens at the end of February each year, where members of The American Legion and Legion Family make their way to our nation's capitol to meet with lawmakers and discuss the Legion's legislative agenda and priorities, concluding with the National Commander appearing before Congress. This year is the 65th Conference.

American Legion photo: 2024 SAL's in Washington

Americanism, though, is the primary focus of what the SAL does at the Washington Conference through their annual wreath laying program. Each year, the two National Commanders and National President place a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns, plus the detachments place wreaths honoring those who have served and sacrificed at the memorials along the National Mall. It's a moving experience, to say the least. **This year's schedule is in blue on Page 3.**

Editor's Photo: NJ 105 in Washington

But beyond that, Washington, DC is filled with things to do relevant to our history and to being the seat of government—so you should take full advantage of being there and get in as much as you can. Plus, it's a great time to enjoy it with family and friends—especially kids.

Last year, two of my fellow Sons from my home squadron in New Jersey and I hopped an AMTRAK for the three-hour ride down the Northeast Corridor. With the three of us never having attended the Conference, we weren't quite sure about what was going on—but from what we had read, it looked like a cool experience. We went early on Saturday—a day early—and left on Monday night. That gave us three days in the city.

Having been down to Washington to visit the museums and memorials with family since I was a kid—and since then doing it with my children—I was appointed play the role of tour guide. We arrived at Union Station before lunchtime, and took a Metro to Arlington National Cemetery to walk the grounds on our own before we did so with everyone else.

If you are a seasoned public transit person used to taking trains, or should this be your first time, rest assured … Washington, DC's Metro system is quite easy to figure out. We traveled everywhere that weekend either by subway or Uber.

We had previously done research about specific internments at Arlington which we wanted to visit (you can look up individual memorials or markers here). Of course we would visit the Tomb of the Unknowns, but we also visited some of our state's heroes buried there—PFC Henry Svehla, a Medal of Honor recipient from Belleville, NJ, GySgt John Bassilone from Raritan, NJ, a memorial to the Four Chaplains (one of which is from Kearny, NJ), and the monument to the USS Thresher which had a serviceman from Nutley on it. We brought a few SAL Challenge Coins with us, and placed one on each marker after observing a moment of silence.

"Breathtaking – there is no other way to describe it other than breathtaking" noted Richard Vlasakakis, Essex County Adjutant and member of NJ Squadron 105.

There is a lot of walking involved, and a good deal of hills—so anticipate your visit to Arlington to taking a few hours. You should also think about doing it independent of the Sunday wreath laying so you can see as much as possible. There is also a Tram.

Beyond Arlington, the National Mall is filled with places to visit. Stretching over two miles from the Lincoln Memorial on the west end to the U.S. Capitol on the east end, The Mall is lined with endless memorials and museums. The Sunday events place wreaths at the World War II and Vietnam War memorials, but there is also the Korean War Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial (don't forget the small often overlooked museum to the left when you walk in), the US Capitol (you can schedule tours online at www.visitthecapitol.gov), the Washington Monument, and the handful of other memorials just steps off of the Mall—the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, Thomas Jefferson Memorial, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, and the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial (behind the Air and Space Museum).

Completed in the Fall of 2024, there is the World War I Memorial located a block or two from The White House in Pershing Park on 15th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.

This isn't even to mention The National Archives where the founding documents rest, and other places like Ford's Theatre and the Supreme Court.

The crown jewel of any trip to DC isbe the museums, though—which are all free. The Smithsonian Institute is made up of 17 DC-area museums, plus the National Zoo (which is not at all close). Our Belleville contingent truly enjoyed time at the Air and Space Museum (which requires you register for a timed-entry pass), and the "Price of Freedom" exhibit at the National Museum of American History.

Editor's Photo: "Price of Freedom"

About 30-miles south of downtown Washington is another Air and Space Museum, located in Chantilly, VA. The Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center is located near Dulles Airport, and is HUGE—with a space shuttle, an SR-71, and the Enola Gay B-29 at the location.

First and foremost, the Washington Conference is about the American Legion's legislative priorities; I write this "tour guide" with embedded links because I hope you will taking full advantage of all Washington, DC has to offer as well. We hope to see you there!

Legion.org, 07 Jan 2025

SAL National Awards: Don't Miss these Application Deadlines (cont'd)

Some important deadlines are coming up for Sons of The American Legion awards; Here are details ... **forms for these awards and more are available here.**

Blue Brigade Award: Any SAL member who signs up 30 or more new members into the Sons of The American Legion by July 22 is eligible for this award.

Individual Membership Recruiter Award: Any SAL members who recruits five new members into the Sons of The American Legion during the current membership year is eligible for this award. Award forms must be submitted by June 30.

Individual Membership Recruiter Award Pin, 2025

SAL Media and Communication Awards

Snapshots of Service Award: Submitted photos must be based on the Four Pillars of The American Legion — Americanism; Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation; Children & Youth; or National Security — and be in a digital JPG or TIF format. Submissions also will become the property of the SAL; must not have a right of restriction; must contain Sons with their covers or identifiable clothing on during the activity or event and a brief history of the event. Entries must be submitted from a squadron, with a maximum of three photos per category, and submissions must be from the current time period (Aug. 1, 2024 to 30 days prior to the National Convention). **Click here for the application.**

Videos of Service: Video submissions must contain an SAL member or members wearing SAL covers or SAL-branded clothing participating in an activity or event that falls under one of three categories: program support; community engagement; or membership and recruitment.

The video must be no longer than five minutes in length and have been posted on social media. Judged on quality, content and branding. **Click here for the application.**

Legion.org

American Legion Media and Communications Contest

The Media and Communications Contest is open to the entire American Legion Family to showcase their work promoting the organizations in various media channels.

Find out more at **https://www.legion.org/information-center/media-communications-contest**

There are seven categories for submissions:

- websites
- publications
- visual media
- social media campaigns
- editorial/news writing
- editorial/informational writing
- and public relations/community outreach.

Entries are broken into four divisions to select – departments/districts; over 750 members; 250-749 members; and up to 249 members.

You may enter submissions in one or multiple categories. Each submission will cost $5. All entries must have been published during the 2024 calendar year.

Enter the contest by visiting **legion.org/media-communications-contest.** Deadline for submissions is April 15.

Winners in each category receive a plaque and are considered for the Innovation Award and Chairman's Award (a "Best in Show" honor), which include a plaque and a $50 Emblem Sales credit.

Innovation Award: This rewards innovation in media. Nominees may submit for this but don't have to for consideration. Judges will consider the award winners and other nominees to select a winner that demonstrated true innovation.

Chairman's Award: A "Best in Show" award. Nominees don't submit specifically for this. The judges consider award winners and select one that goes above and beyond the others.

Media & Communications Commission members and National Headquarters staff select the category winners, which go before the entire commission for approval.

If you have questions, please email **dispatch@legion.org**.

Washington Conference Schedule:

Sunday, 23 February –
Wreath Laying Program

Meet at Washington Hilton Hotel
1919 Connecticut Avenue, NW,
Washington DC, 20009

8:45a: Receive tickets for lunch, bus seat, and Arlington Tram tickets by Detachment
9:00a: SAL National Commander Joseph Navarrete will address attendees. Pictures of Wreaths with SAL National Commander Navarrete can be taken between 8:45 and 9:15 am.
9:10a: Board busses and load wreaths. Busses will leave from lower level of hotel **promptly** at 9:15 am
9:35a: Arrive at the World War II Memorial; wreath laying, ceremony, and group photos
10:30a: Depart the World War II Memorial
10:45a: Arrive at Vietnam Wall Memorial; wreath laying, ceremony, and group photos
11:30a: Lunch
12:30p: Depart the Vietnam Wall/Korean War Memorial area; arrive at Arlington National Cemetery and tour of Tomb Guards Quarters if available
1:15p: Wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of The Unknown Soldier, followed by prayer and group photos
2:30p Depart Arlington Cemetery
3:00p: Arrive back at the Hilton

Monday, 24 February –
VA&R, VE&E and Legislative Commission meetings following American Legion's meetings (9a-2p) in the Hilton Concourse

Tuesday, 25 February –
8:00a: "Know before you go" brief at the Hilton Concourse International Ballroom East and Center
All Day: Legislative staff meetings

Wednesday, 26 February -
10:00a: National Commander testimony to Congress—Capitol Hill, Cannon Caucus Room, 390 CHOB

Harl "Butch" Ray (IL)
National Vice Commander (NVC)

"Butch's Bullet Points"

"As your friend, I promise to be in three places for you. In front of you to cheer you on … behind you to always have your back ... and beside you so you will never be alone..." - Unknown

Aw, February! The month of African-American History, romance, presidential birthdays, Groundhog Day, the Super Bowl, and struggling to keep our New Year's resolutions going!

The word February comes from the Latin word februa, which means "to cleanse." You know the old out with the old, and in with the new kind of thing! So that means that it is time to try something new to further our mission! So as we are focusing on what Squadrons can do, here are a few "February" ideas...

How about throwing a "dues dinner party" for all of your members that have not yet renewed their dues? Invite them to the post to let them know that you care for and about them (a nice valentine tie-in don't you think?). Or, take Valentine Cards to veterans unfortunate enough to be in a nursing home, or a shut-in, or at your local VA or state veteran's home.

> ***""... let's go, my fellow Sons! Go out and do something GREAT!"***
> ***-National Vice Commander Central***
> ***Harl "Butch" Ray (IL)***

February would also be a good month to begin plans for planting a "Victory Garden", and then later in the year donate all of the vegetables and produce to a local food pantry.

How about a "Wild West Party" to bring old and new members in to celebrate February 2, 1848 when the U.S. paid Mexico $15 million dollars for the territories that became the states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Texas.

Or host a "Leap Day Birthday Party" on February 28th because the odds of being born on February 29th are about 1 in 1,461. See how many "leapers" or "leaplings" you have in your community!

And for us "Baby Boomers" have a "British Invasion Party", as it was in February 1964 The Beatles made their first American television appearance on the "Ed Sullivan Show." Over 73 million Americans watched!

February 4th is "National Eat Ice Cream for Breakfast Day"! Organize a drive through and hand out (or sell) Ice Cream sandwiches!

February 8th is "National Boy Scout Day", the lists go on, and on, and on...

There is really no end to the number of ways a squadron can have an event to work membership, or to raise funds for an American Legion or community project. This is what the Sons of The American Legion were created for … to serve our communities, our children, and our veterans!

The great boxer Muhammad Ali once said that "Service is the rent you pay for your room here on earth." Service to community, state, and nation is who we are ... It is what we do. It represents all the opportunities to serve under the guiding Four Pillars of The American Legion. This service is what we represent and what is read into the US Congressional record each year for the information Posts and Squadrons submit in our consolidated Post and Squadron reports. We are after all a veterans service organization ... The American Legion Family is the largest and I believe the greatest veterans service organization out there!

"Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve." - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

So, let's go, my fellow sons! Go out and do something GREAT!

THE MILLENNIUM

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Southeast:	John Lawrence (LA)
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SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Veterans Crisis Line
DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

Mike Monserud (IA),
National Vice Commander (NVC)

NVC Midwest Region Report

Did you know that along with the Spring and Fall NEC meetings, there are also events around the country you are able to attend? I have heard that members want more training ... and training not always in Indianapolis. The SAL has been hosting regional trainings now for a while, even establishing new ones. This year we have conducted training in Denver, Colorado, and another one in Boston, Massachusetts. There are also many other regional training courses that are held. I just left the Wild Willy's Western Rendezvous in Las Vegas; the Southeast, Northeast, and Central Regions all also host one. The Midwest is in the beginning stages of having their own. These courses allow you to travel within your regions, and allow you to network in those regions. If you are looking to go outside your area, you are more than free to do so. There is a lot of great training going on throughout the year … so why not attend a function, meet some new people, and go to an area where you can also take in some views and even have a mini vacation. By attending these training sessions, we can enhance the knowledge we can take back home and deliver directly to the local squadrons.

Excerpts from www.alpost283.com

The American Legion Stands with Pacific Palisades

Post 283 is committed to supporting the Pacific Palisades community in the aftermath of the devastating Palisades Fire in January. As one of the few remaining public buildings in the area, our facilities will serve as a hub for relief efforts - offering 24-hour access to utilities, meeting space, and communications for residents, first responders, and relief organizations. This vital work ensures immediate recovery support and long-term rebuilding for those affected. You can help by volunteering, donating, or partnering with us to provide critical services to our neighbors in need. Together, we can lead our community through this challenging time.

You can go to the Post 238 Fire Resource Hub at **https://www.alpost283.com/fire** for more.

As the Pacific Palisades seeks to rebuild, we stand with our community during these challenging times. Post 283 is here to provide support, resources, and information for those impacted by the devastating Palisades Fire. Whether you need financial assistance, recovery guidance, or a place to regroup, our doors will be open to help as soon as possible.

To donate to the Post and help with their disaster relief fund, click here.

Donations can also be made to the National Emergency Fund to help those impacted by the wildfires at legion.org/emergency.

From a letter distributed by PNC's Gene Sacco (CA) and Byron Robichaux (LA) about helping the victims of the LA Wildfires:

Since there are so many SAL members living in the small community of Palisades that have had their family's lives destroyed by the fire, over 17 that we know of, I am trying to put together a relief fund to help them. Their homes, schools, places of worship, stores and businesses have been burnt to the ground.

The estimate is 5,000 homes have been destroyed. I have talked to many and they are in shock and still don't know what to do. Local, state and federal help is coming in slow and their insurance companies are telling them they must wait 7 to 14 days before filing claims.

The Detachment of Georgia has already raised $1,000 for our SAL victims, and the Detachment of California is in the process of voting to fund the relief fund. I am wondering if all of you can compel your detachments and get some donations out of your detachments and squadrons to help these poor souls. **Donations can be made through Ronald Regan Pacific Palisades Post 238.**

Facebook photo: Squadron 283 (CA) filling up storage units with supplies for victims of the wildfires

Chris Balsley (AZ), ANEC

Wild Willy's Western Rendezvous

Over the weekend of January 24-26, 2025, members of the Sons of The American Legion embarked on a meaningful journey to Las Vegas, Nevada, to attend Wild Willy's Western Rendezvous, an event focused on Americanism training. Hosted at the Tuscany Suites, the event was led by National Vice Commander Dan Ashley, and brought together Legion Family members dedicated to strengthening their commitment to patriotism, service, and leadership.

Adding to the significance of the weekend, Arizona Department Commander Manny Beltran joined the SAL not only for the event but also for the journey home, further demonstrating the unity and collaboration between The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion.

A Journey of Camaraderie and Leadership. The trip began with several meaningful stops along the way. SAL members visited Arizona American Legion Post 12 in Wickenburg and Post 14 in Kingman, where they were warmly received by fellow Legionnaires. Before reaching their destination, the group also stopped at American Legion Post 40 in Henderson, Nevada, where they were able to connect with local members and discuss ongoing initiatives.

At the Tuscany Suites in Las Vegas, Wild Willy's Western Rendezvous provided attendees with valuable leadership training centered on the principles of Americanism. With National Vice Commander Ashley leading the sessions, members gained insights into enhancing their efforts within their local communities. Commander Beltran's presence added another layer of leadership and inspiration, reinforcing the importance of collaboration between The American Legion and the SAL in advancing their shared mission.

A Memorable Journey Home. Following a successful weekend of learning and camaraderie, the journey home included additional stops that highlighted the bonds of the Legion Family. The group visited Dolan Springs Post 88 before enjoying lunch at Meadview Post 103, where they had the opportunity to engage with local Legionnaires and strengthen relationships within the organization.

The trip was more than just a training event—it was a testament to the dedication and spirit of the Sons of the American Legion. With NVC Dan leading the way and the support of Arizona Department Commander Manny throughout the event and return trip, the members returned home energized and inspired to continue their mission of service, patriotism, and support for veterans.

As the Sons of the American Legion look ahead, events like Wild Willy's Western Rendezvous serve as a powerful reminder of the impact they can make when they come together in pursuit of a common cause.

Facebook Photo (below): The 2025 Arizona SAL Delegation at Wild Willy's Western Rendezvous in Las Vegas on January 24-25th. It's the unofficial gathering of the Western Region which happens every year.

Dan Wyatt (SD), Squadron 25

South Dakota's Madison Squadron 25 "Supermarket Sweep"

Submitted photo (Wyatt)

Madison Sons of American Legion Squadron 25 met on March 12, 2024, and at that meeting discussion was held on raising some funds to support local SAL activities.

Squadron Americanism Officer Dan Wyatt brought forth to the meeting a "Supermarket Sweep" fundraiser idea that was reminiscent of the old TV series. Wyatt had already spoken to the owner of the Madison Sunshine Foods grocery store, Dan Roeman, and he was more than willing to be the host location.

Submitted photo: Gary Eggert, "Supermarket Sweep" winner, moving so fast he's blurry!

Details were discussed and finalized. Basically, a four minute shopping spree, one push cart and whatever you could fit inside [No Tobacco or Alcohol]. Tickets were sold for $10 a piece, or three for $20. The winner had the option to choose whomever they wanted to run the shopping spree.

The Lead on the project was Wyatt and Squadron Adjutant Don Weidler. It was decided to roll the raffle out at the Madison "DownTown Madtown" municipal event, a series of music concerts held on Main Street on Tuesdays in July and August. The Sons share a booth with Post #25 American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary. Also, Facebook was used to promote awareness.

Posters, banners, and tickets were obtained from the Dakota State University Print Shop. Sales were made by squadron members to the general public at DownTown MadTown, at the Prairie Village Jamboree, and at local store events.

Sales ended the night of the American Legion Poultry/Bingo event. The drawing was held live on the main stage, with Mr. Gary Eggert as the winner.

The inaugural SAL Supermarket Sweeps was held at The Madison Sunshine Foods on January 15th at 3 pm.

Gary Eggert, did his own running. He filled up his shopping cart with $1209 groceries. It was very well received by store staff and several patrons in the store. Post #25 members Dan Fritz, Jay Liable, Matt Westall, Kim Verhey and Dan Wyatt assisted in clearing lanes, time keeping, and taking photos. It was an amazing and hectic four minutes.

After the event finished, in speaking with Garry Eggert, he thanked us and commented that this was the best $20 he ever spent. The store manager was also pleased with the publicity the store received.

The Madison Sons of The American Legion looks forward hosting the fundraiser again in the years to come, as we believe interest will only grow. The fundraiser raised $1,700 which the SAL will use for supporting area veterans and their families, promoting patriotism and Americanism at the area schools, and working with and supporting programs which benefit our youth such as an After Prom party, local United Way, Summer Lunches, and the Community Food Pantry.

Questions on how to get this started? Contact me at the following.

Dan Wyatt
PO Box 83, Madison, SD 57042-0083
dakotasarge@gmail.com

Submitted photo: Gary Eggert running through Sunshine Foods scrambling to fill his basket

Programs and Planning

PNC David Faust (WI) has supplied a list which he has generated to highlight upcoming events and programs— much of which is available in the **Squadron handbook**.They are all listed by program type, so you and your squadron can get a jump on planning events. Look for this each month.

March (plan in January)

Americanism	**5-Star Program -** Legionism
Americanism	**County Government Day Programs**
Veterans Affairs	**15 March: American Legion Birthday**

April (plan in February)

Youth (C and Y)	**April is Children and Youth Month**
Americanism	**5-Star Program -** Leadership
Americanism	**10-Ideals Program -** Courtesy and Reverence

ANEC Mike Pook (WI), Staff Contributor "The Millennium"

"Mentoring Moments"

Editor's Photo

Passing between the Flags

Once the colors are posted and the meeting starts, there is an invisible line that exists between the two flags at either end of the Commander's table. No one or thing can pass over this line out of respect. This invisible line is "Hallowed Ground." During a meeting, you should not step between or pass things across this area for any reason. The area between the two flags is considered a symbol of the ones who fell in fighting for our sacred cause.

John Migs via Legiontown.org

NY's 8th District SAL helping homeless veterans

Legiontown, USA photo

8th District SAL 1st Vice Commander Diman Smith, 8th District SAL Commander Joshua Spinler, and leading candidate for Department of New York commander John Miga presented a Walk-a-Thon check to the Buffalo VA Medical Center on Jan. 9. The New York Walk-a-thon was featured as the front page article in January.

Sandy Lipman, Detachment of Michigan

Michigan Legion Family Conducts School Flag Presentation

Submitted Photo (Sandy Lipman) - left to right— PDC Dan Tyack, 3rd Zone Commander and dual member Mike Fitzgerald, and board member and Squadron 63 Son Pat Donahue

The 18th District SAL association is committed to putting a flag in every classroom in Oakland County, Michigan, This program is now twelve years old and they continue to find new homes for our countries flag.

Michael Wojciechowski via Legiontown.org

Evanston, IL: "The grass IS greener on the other side"

On Nov. 2, the Civil Air Patrol helped Post 42 and Squadron 42 members clear the storage yard of weeds and grass. The cadets helped weed, rototill the soil, level the soil, install a weed barrier, position bricks and pavers to prevent weed growth, and facilitate people being able to use and access equipment from the storage shed inside. The shed itself houses picnic equipment including a grill, two griddles, a snowblower, show shovels and other outdoor tools belonging to Post 42.

Legiontown, USA photo

Civil Air Patrol Commander Col. Charles Compton, Capt. Bill Klosa, SAL Squadron 42, and post board members Jim Farley and Michael Wojciechowski all helped coordinate with the cadets as they performed a majority of the work. Capt. David Kaput is also an SAL member, and helped coordinate the event the work beforehand. Home Depot Chicago ASDS Representative Amanda Suarez was instrumental in helping them donate materials for the Lean-To canopy for tank and chair storage.

The Civil Air Patrol usually meets at the Post 42 hall at 1900 hours Tuesday to teach young men and women the basics of military service and is the Auxiliary of the US Air Force.

LEGIONTOWN

It's easy to get published so we all know what you do -
Submit a brief release with photos:
www.legiontown.org/

Important Web Links

The National Public & Media Communications Committee has created this Important Web Links document for our members, as well as for all members of the American Legion Family, to use to get to some of our most important websites.

SAL National Web Site
https://www.legion.org/sons

Publications and Forms (SDR, Handbook, Awards and much more)
https://www.legion.org/about/american-legion-family/sons-of-the-american-legion/publications-and-forms

Subscribe to Newsletters (requires signing into MyLegion.org)
https://mylegion.org/PersonifyEbusiness/My-Account/Opt-In-Out

Newsletter Digital Archives
https://www.legion.org/library/258352/50-years-sons-american-legion-newsletters-now-available

Be The One
https://www.legion.org/betheone

Voter Voice
https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home

Membership Reports
https://www.legion.org/about/american-legion-family/sons-of-the-american-legion/membership-reports

Future Meetings
https://www.legion.org/about/american-legion-family/sons-of-the-american-legion/sons-of-the-american-legion-meetings

MyLEGION.ORG TRAINING VIDEO SERIES

Learn the ins-and-outs of the myLegion platform, and how it can help you and your Sons manage membership in these videos produced by National Headquarters.

https://vimeo.com/showcase/8339635

Rob Barry, Commander
Detachment of Colorado

Veterans & Children Foundation

The VCF AdHoc Committee has been created by our National Commander with the goals of getting the word out to the nation, and making his challenge become a success ... and we have hit the ground running! The main goal is to make every detachment aware of the challenge from our Commander, and to offer resources and our assistance if needed.

There is one thing that the SAL is incredibly good at… MAKING MONEY! Our National Commander has called us to action, and we will answer by doing what we do best. While setting up fundraising events, remember what the Foundation is for. It will give temporary financial assistance as a one-time grant to families in need, but also funding the vital training for our service officers. Include your service officers in these fundraising events and help get the word out about what is available to our veteran community. By educating our business leaders and American Legion Family members on the benefits of VCF, the checks will write themselves!

We will soon be visiting Washington, DC, and some of us will be on Capitol Hill sharing the legislative priorities with our senators and representatives once again. One of these priorities is passing a law against "claim sharks" that are taking advantage of our veterans. We need to train more service officers to help our veterans, at no cost, to process their VA claims - our veterans have earned this privilege, and their claims should never cost a penny. I would like to personally thank all service officers for their hard work and dedication to our veterans and their families. Watching this direct impact is what fuels my fire as a committee member, and a Son.

The VCF is changing lives for the better. We as a family can do our part by donating just $1 per member. As the Commander has put it, the challenge is on! Do your part in helping make his challenge a reality.

You can download the VCF Information Brochure here.

Jeremy Revell (VT)
National Membership Committee

Celebrating 20 Years of Spreading Christmas Cheer

The second weekend in December means one thing to Squadron 19 in Bristol, Vermont: spreading Christmas cheer. On this Saturday each year, the Squadron and other volunteers from the Post 19 American Legion Family and beyond load up a bus filled with goodie bags for delivery to aging veterans and senior homes in our five-town area. For our 20th year, we delivered about 60 bags, though the beginnings were much humble.

Submitted Photo

Started in 2004 by our dear departed friend, SAL member and Adjutant Chris Rockwood, the goal was to brighten the day of a veteran who was homebound due to a recent injury. The event has carried on … from a few cars driving from place to place, it grew to include a school bus, transport vans, and today in cooperation with Elderly Services, Inc of Middlebury, VT, one of their transportation buses. At the peak we delivered around 100 bags to people to help brighten their Christmas season.

Santa, Mrs. Claus, and a gaggle of elves are always aboard ready to sing a short song, deliver goodie bags, and hugs. Many times there are smiles ear-to-ear, and other times there are tears rolling down faces ... either way we're there to let them know they're not alone and there are people that care. Squadron 19 does many things throughout the year, from helping at the Post to working with Boy Scouts, our local church, community and veterans organizations - but this is the one we are most proud of and we continue this in honor of our friend Chris who made a decision to "Be The One" years before it was a driving program in The American Legion.

Legion.org

Participants of Boys and Girls State may qualify for $10,000 Scholarship

High school juniors who attend an American Legion Boys State or Auxiliary Girls State program this summer and are a direct descendant (or legally adopted child) of a military veteran may be eligible for the Samsung American Legion Scholarship.

The Samsung American Legion Scholarship is available for high school juniors who participate in the current session of American Legion Boys State or Auxiliary Girls State and are a direct descendant (or legally adopted child) of a U.S. military veteran who served honorably on active duty during a period of war (April 6, 1917-Nov. 11, 1918; or Dec. 7, 1941, until a date as determined by Congress).

The 2025 Samsung American Legion Scholarship application is online. Apply here.

All applications must be submitted using the online application system. Scholarship applicants must complete and submit their online application prior to 11:59 p.m. (local time) of Day 1 of their respective American Legion Boys State or American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program.

The scholarship awards up to $10,000 for undergraduate studies (e.g., room and board, tuition and books). Each applicant is selected according to his or her involvement in school and community activities, academic record and financial need.

A Boys and Girls State participant from each state is selected as a finalist for the Samsung American Legion Scholarship. During the American Legion's Fall Meetings in October 2025, the Committee on Youth Education will select the scholarship winners. All scholarship recipients will be notified of their award.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

NEXT MEETING MARCH 18TH

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

FEBRUARY 2025

NEXT TARGET DATE-FEBRUARY 12TH-75%

CONSOLIDATED SQUADRON REPORTS

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION | **CONSOLIDATED SQUADRON REPORT**

JUNE 1, to MAY 31,

AMERICANISM

CHILDREN & YOUTH

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

THE CONSOLIDATED SQUADRON REPORT (CSR) IS PERHAPS THE MOST CRITICAL DOCUMENT A SQUADRON CAN COMPLETE. CSR INFORMATION IS COMBINED WITH OTHER SQUADRONS IN CREATING A FINAL REPORT USED BY THE AMERICAN LEGION, FORWARDED TO THE U.S. CONGRESS, AND USED TO APPLY AND VERIFY AWARDS AT NATIONAL CONVENTION.

NOT ALL SQUADRONS PARTICIPATE IN EVERY PROGRAM; LEAVE THOSE FIELDS BLANK. THE KEY IS TO REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES YOUR SQUADRON PARTICIPATED IN FROM JUNE 1ST TO MAY 31ST.

ALL DETACHMENT/DISTRICT/SQUADRON DONATIONS AND ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE REPORTED INDIVIDUALLY TO YOUR DETACHMENT ADJUTANT. THE CSR WILL REQUIRE INPUTS, SUCH AS THE NUMBER OF VETERAN HOMES VISITED OR VOLUNTEER HOURS CONTRIBUTED TO A PARTICULAR PROGRAM. OTHER PROGRAMS, SUCH AS THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUND (NEF), ENTER THE NUMBER OF DOLLARS DONATED OR SPENT IN WHOLE NUMBERS.

IT IS PREFERRED CSR'S ARE FILLED OUT AND SUBMITTED ONLINE VIA MYLEGION.ORG. SQUADRON ADJUTANTS AND COMMANDERS HAVE ACCESS TO COMPLETE AND SUBMIT THE ENTIRE FORM. CSRS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT LEGION.ORG/PUBLICATIONS AND LEGION.ORG/SONS/PUBLICATIONS.

PLEASE PRINT OUT THE FORM AND COMPLETE EACH PAGE BY HAND. MAKE SURE IT IS LEGIBLE AND MAIL TO THE DETACHMENT AND RETAIN A COPY FOR THE SQUADRON'S RECORDS. CHECK WITH YOUR DETACHMENT FOR THEIR DEADLINE DATE; IT MAY BE DIFFERENT THAN THE NATIONAL DEADLINE.

DETACHMENTS AND DISTRICTS SHOULD FORWARD A COPY BY SCANNING AND EMAILING THEIR CSRS TO CPRANDCSRFORMS@LEGION.ORG OR BY USPS TO THE ADDRESS PROVIDED.

FORMS CAN BE FOUND AT LEGION.ORG/SONS (PUBLICATIONS & FORMS)

VOTER VOICE

YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

THE AMERICAN LEGION'S LEGISLATIVE DIVISION USES VOTERVOICE AS ITS GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY PLATFORM FOR CONNECTING AMERICAN LEGION MEMBERS AND ADVOCATES WITH THEIR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. VOTERVOICE ALLOWS THE AMERICAN LEGION TO CONTACT EVERY MEMBER OF CONGRESS ON LARGE, NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS, AS WELL AS TARGET SPECIFIC MEMBERS ON KEY COMMITTEES THAT PERTAIN TO THE AMERICAN LEGION'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES.

SIGN UP BY SCANNING THE QR CODE

RENEW NOW!

2024 MEMBERSHIP CARDS ARE NOW EXPIRED.

SCAN ME

LEGION.ORG/SAL-RENEW

Bruno Williamson (IL)
National VA and R Chairman

VA and R Report

Before I get into a program that one of our commission members is working on this year, I would like to talk about a recent issue and an upcoming event at our VA's nationwide.

First off, you have all heard about the recent federal hiring freeze. This usually is not a great concern for us, but this freeze is different from years past—this time around VA volunteers are now involved in the hiring freeze. I am sure your first thought is ... *what?* We are volunteers, we do not get paid, we are EWOC's (employee without compensation). Though technically right, volunteers who work four hours or more a shift receive a meal stipend. And, it has been brought to my attention that to onboard a Regularly Scheduled (RS) volunteer, a VAVS Representative or Deputy Representative costs VA $1,000. The paperwork, training, blood tests, background check, finger printing, badging, and for some positions a physical exam all add up - and add up all the volunteers across the country, well that turns into real money.

So, how does this affect us? If you are currently a RS Volunteer or a Rep/Dep, it is business as usual. If you have VA assignments, continue ... we are not affected. The same goes for our Occasional (OCC) volunteers, you do not go through the onboarding process as you volunteer a couple of times a year - so, please continue with your events. But as of right now, the VA cannot accept any new RS volunteers or Rep/Deps. This all said, we can still take applications for RS volunteers and for Rep/Deps. Those applicants can be partially on-boarded and when the freeze is lifted, they can complete the process. I will say that in conversations with VA Central Office (VACO), they are trying to get an exemption for VA volunteers. Trust me, I understand how frustrating the last few years have become volunteering at our VA's. First it was the COVID, and the VA removed volunteers from serving for quite some time—with many volunteers not coming back. And just as we are getting back to "normal", we have the new rebadging process that I explained in my last article. Now we have a hiring freeze. Please do not let this deter you from serving those who have served us, because my brothers at the end of the day our mission as Sons of The American Legion is what President Lincoln told us in his second inaugural address: *To Care For THEM Who Shall Have Borne The Battle. (Yes, I changed one word.)*

Salute Week is also fast approaching at our VA system - seven days to say Thank you. Here is the who, what, where, and why from the VA.

The purpose of the National Salute to Veteran Patients Program is to:

- **pay tribute and express appreciation to Veterans**
- **increase community awareness of the role of the VA medical center**
- **encourage citizens to visit hospitalized Veterans and to become involved as volunteers**

The week of February 14 each year is your opportunity to say thank you to a special group of men and women ... the more than nine million veterans of the US armed services who are cared for in Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers, CBOC's, outpatient clinics, domiciliaries, and nursing homes. During this National Salute, the VA invites individuals, veterans groups, military personnel, civic organizations, businesses, schools, local media, celebrities, and sports stars to participate in a variety of activities at their medical centers. The activities and events include special ward visits and Valentine distributions, photo opportunities, school essay contests, and special recreation activities and veteran recognition programs.

The week also provides an opportunity for the community to become acquainted with the volunteer opportunities within the VA medical system.

So, if you have the chance during those seven days, see what the VA closest to you is doing … you can drop by for a few minutes to say thank you.

Commission member Eddy Seegars from Texas is also promoting Camp Hope—here is his report on this little-known program.

Camp Hope is peer-to-peer counseling for PTSD sufferers. Studies have shown that peer-to-peer work has the highest of success rates when one veteran is sharing with another veteran, and thereby helping counseling each other. Because of that, they created this camp outside of Houston with the help of a local radio commentator who promoted it for several months on his radio program. They got the program set up, and they have had an enormous success rate as far as getting PTSD survivors back into society functioning, doing well, and coming on board as helping becoming counselor themselves. It has been just a wonderful success ... so much so that they are starting to spread out a little bit more, and opening some more camps. They are also looking into opening female veteran camps now as well - and when we say camps, it is more a dormitory style place where everyone is there together. Counselors can be there for the residents, and the residents can be there all the time ... and if they have a problem, they can get immediate help and have somebody right there with them. On a Texas state VA tour, I was able to visit the female veteran's facility in Waco.

The holidays have come and gone, and our veterans in all facilities get a little lost in the shuffle until the next big holiday. Try to remember them and visit if you can.

Annual Squadron Data Report (SDR)

ANNUAL SQUADRON DATA REPORT (SDR)
20___ Membership Year

Completing an annual Squadron Data Report (SDR) is necessary to inform your Detachment and National Headquarters of pertinent information regarding your squadron and, most importantly, membership renewal information. It must be forwarded to your Detachment & National Headquarters **no later than April 15th** in order for information to be processed for the first renewal notice.

Click here to download the form.

The Sons on Social Media: A snapshot of the SAL around the country

Squadron 293 (Purceville, VA) holding their Chili Cook-off. Check out these cool awards on this spicy and delicious day!

Squadron 238 (Safety Harbor, FL) holding their 4th annual mini-golf tournament, raising money for Hero to a Child and Special Olympics

Left to Right—SAL National Adjutant Wright, National Commander LaCoursier, Legionnaire Liu Chin-Yuan of Taiwan , and SAL National Commander Navarrete at the American Legion's Salute to Heroes Inaugural Ball in Washington, DC on 20 January 2025

Squadron 112 (Benson, NE) receiving CSR Awards for best C&Y and VA&R report.

Squadron 86 (Grey, ME) holding a bowling fundraiser to raise funds for their Headquarters Memorial Wall.

Squadron 4 (Wichita, KS) approaching businesses to donate items for their February 22 Valentine event fundraiser to help homeless veterans.

Squadron 337 (Genoa, IL) young Son Theodore proudly displaying their 100% Membership Award at a squadron meeting

Detachment of Vermont with National Vice Commander Robert Manzo on a visit to the state

Squadron 20 (Woodsville, NH) donates $1,900 to Haverhill Youth Sports to cover insurance costs

Detachment of Wisconsin Commander Allen Watry gives a presentation about A.L.F. Dog Program

Squadron 502 (Castana, IA) receiving their charter

Post and Squadron 551 (Onarga, IL) present The Iroquois West Rifle Club with a check for $1500.

Bryan Hine, Adjutant and NEC Detachment of Tennessee

Tennessee Legion Family at work during the Hurricane Helene

Receiving plaques at the Detachment of Tennessee's Mid-Winter Conference for "Selfless Service and Dedication", Squadron 21 members Caleb Jenacaro and Patrick McLaughlin were recognized for their relief efforts during Hurricane Helene. 1st District Tennessee Commander Scott Foulks and Post 49 Commander Paulette Baldwin were recognized as well.

Starting on September 27th, 2024, Caleb Jenacaro and the Parrottsville Volunteer Fire Department participated in the 183 swift water rescues that were conducted in response to the flooding from Hurricane Helene. Jenacaro is a member of Squadron 21 Rogersville, as is Patrick McLaughlin. McLaughlin participated in the same rescues, though with the Cocke County Swift Water Rescue Team.

Submitted photo (Hine): Squadron 21 members Patrick McLaughlin, left, and Caleb Jenacaro, right, receiving plaques at the Tennessee Mid-winter Conference

Parrottsville FD, along with Jenacaro, performed rescues in the Parrotsville community, along with assisting Del Rio Fire Department along with other departments in Cocke County, Tennessee. Their operations lasted for more than 36 hours, with a good portion of that time being directly in the water. Patrick and his team did much of the same—including rescuing nine people trapped standing on the hood of a car. Hurricane Helene was a horrible initiation to the Swift Water Rescue Team for Patrick, having only completed the training one month prior, having joined the team two weeks prior to the hurricane.

During this time Parrotsville Fire Department even lost one of their apparatus when their brush truck was engulfed by the rushing waters of the flood. When this happened, it was Caleb who had to go get the firefighters. The actions of Parrottsville and Caleb Jenacaro greatly contributed to the fact that Cocke County only lost two residents to drowning through the entire disaster.

Jenacaro and McLaughglin are both members of Riders Chapter 21 as well; Jenacaro also serves as the 1st District Riders Chairman and is the Chaplain for the Detachment of Tennessee.

The "Cowboy Commander": American Legion 1st District Tennessee Commander Scott Foulks, who is a member of the SAL as well, has been totally dedicated to accounting for all Legionnaires since Hurricane Helene, immediately working in Cocke, Carter, Washington, Unicoi, and Greene Counties. However, in the Northeast corner of Tennessee, with so much destruction the struggle to account for every Legionnaire loomed large. Phone lines and cell towers were completely down across all of Johnson County, and this made the task next to impossible. Undeterred, Commander Foulks organized teams to go knocking on doors to check on membership … even going as far as to using side-by-side off-road vehicles and even horses to travel on what used to be roads. Earning the nickname "Cowboy Commander" around the Department, he went above and beyond to make sure every Legionnaire and Legion Family member was safe. He continues to work in the District daily to ensure our Legionnaires are getting what they need. His work ethic and dedication are the true definition of selfless service.

Facebook.com

Maryland Squadron donates to Operation Second Chance

On Saturday January 10th, members of Sons of The American Legion Squadron 239 in Cascade, MD visited Heroes Ridge at Raven Rock to present a donation to Operation Second Chance (OSC) . Squadron 239 is very active in the community, annually raising more than $50,000 to donate to veterans and various community organizations. To raise this money, the squadron runs bingo, open to the public, at Post 239 the first Sunday of most months.

OSC is a veteran's charity based in Germantown, MD. OSC operates 275-acre Heroes Ridge at Raven Rock, located in Sabillasville, MD, as a retreat center for veterans and their families. All retreats are all-inclusive and are provided free-of-charge; OSC also provides financial aid, groceries, formula, and diapers to veterans in need. Check out operationsecondchance.org.

Facebook photo: left to right - SAL 239 member Larry Sanders, SAL 239 Cmdr. Butch Wilhide, OSC founder and CEO Cindy McGrew, SAL 239 major fund raiser Frank Scheib, OSC employee Lisa Riffle, Maryland 2nd Vice Cmdr. John Davies, Detachment Cmdr. Mike Obremski.

GRASSROOTS INFORMATION

Interested in what The American Legion is advocating for in Congress on ***The Veteran's Role in Supporting the Military?*** Check out our information paper in the Legislative Toolkit. This is a great starting point for a conversation with your elected officials!

As part of our ongoing Grassroots efforts, LegDiv staff is available to provide ***Grassroots Training*** tailored to the hosting Department's needs. If you are interested in hosting a Grassroots training event, please contact grassroots@legion.org or ejohnson@legion.org.

Register for Action Alerts today at https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register

Randy Timms (WI), Staff Contributor "The Millennium"

The Passing of a Legend

What makes a legend? By definition, a legend is an extremely famous or notorious person, especially in a particular field—so by this very definition, Marvin Northway was in a class of his own. He was a gentle, kind, caring, and compassionate soul that worked tirelessly for veterans and their families from the Greendale American Legion Squadron 416.

From the day that Marvin joined the ranks of the Sons of The American Legion to his last breath, he never wavered in his ability to make you smile and feel welcomed. With only 8 years of being a member, he quickly rose in popularity, always eager to help. He served in the capacity of Membership Chairman as 1st Vice Commander, Finance Officer, and District Finance Officer. With his declining health and loss of vision, he was forced to relinquish some duties, but he never stopped helping where he could.

Submitted photo

Current Finance Officer for the 4th District Andrew Minch recalled his first meeting with Marvin. "When I first met him", he stated to me, "We will do better and revitalize this membership, and he did. He kept bringing me new member after member."

Fourth District Vice Commander Terry Barrington noted "I asked him to help with 416 and revitalizing 416. He did it. He just took off. We let him loose and he did what he set off to."

Barrington recalled the time he transferred Marvin into the squadron. He asked what squadron is the other fastest growing squadron in the state, which began a friendly competition between squadron 416 and Kenosha Squadron 21.

1st District Vice Commander and Squadron 21 Commander Michael Hellquist took on this challenge—and having never met each other before, a rivalry began. "What started as a friendly competition turned into a real friendship that I was hoping to last much longer." Michael recalled. "I received a message from Terry Barrington, asking what I was doing for membership, and we would bounce ideas off each other. We would just sit and discuss friendly combined ventures, and how we can work together. After Marvin and I each received our Blue Brigade awards, Marvin reached out to me to invite me to his squadron meeting so we could finally meet. I was more than happy to oblige his request and meet my competitor and new friend."

Marvin and Michael are the only two recorded Blue Brigade award winners from the State of Wisconsin.

Submitted photo: left to right—SAL's Michael Hellquist and Marvin Northway wearing their Blue Brigade jackets

When word went out that Marvin's health had taken a sharp and quick turn, Commander Terry Barrington reached out to the family to get permission to visit him as quickly as possible. The family was quick with a resounding yes. We were all getting dressed and ready to walk out the door when word was given of Marvin's passing.

As news spread, several colleagues and friends gathered that same morning at Greendale 416 to honor Marvin's memory and his greatness. Join us all in raising a toast to Marvin Northway and his legacy for the Sons of The American Legion.

Expand your knowledge of the nation's largest veterans service organization online!
Take The American Legion Extension Institute's Basic Training Course
https://register.legion.org/alei

Joseph Mayne (MN), Past National Commander

"My Why"

I envy those SAL members who were moved to join because if the nobility of the service their forefather had in military service. They often carry pictures of them or even their dogtags. They have stories of the selfless service during their time in the armed forces or even some medals they were presented with for acts of heroism. My journey to my membership in the SAL are less than dramatic. It actually was at the demand of an angry mother who, by dragging me by the ear, shamed me into being a charter member when I was 16 years old.

While my father did serve at the end of WWII in the US Army, I don't know much of what he did. I didn't know him long enough to get the stories. I know he was involved with The American Legion but it was before I was born or old enough to remember.

After spending 8 years in Boy Scouts I had finished at 16 and was looking forward to getting involved with organizations that had young women in them. That was my self serving motivation. Scouting had none.

When my mother informed me of a Sons of The American Legion squadron being formed in our town, she strongly suggested I become a member. I just as strongly gave her my objection. There were no girls!!!

She quickly informed me of The American Legion's sponsorship of my Scout troop, the support of our marching band, the opportunities of Boys State, the Scholarships they offered, the fact that I was paid to play bugle at funerals they held. After a loud exchange and a monumental loss of face by me, my ear was twisted and away we went down to the Post. That is "My Why", I'm a member of the SAL.

Be it about the veteran who you are a member through, a story, or something humorous, email the editor at rusty.myers@ymail.com and tell us about "Your Why" in what we hope to be an ongoing series.

Tag Your Photos
#SALSTRONG

ANEC Mike Pook (WI), Staff Contributor "The Millennium"

Honoring Our Heritage: Wisconsin's Richard A. Bennett

A proud U.S. Army Veteran signs up his newly born son, Richard, to Sons of The American Legion Squadron 57 in Elgin, Illinois. That was on October 8th 1940, when the dues were 25 cents a year. Joe F. Bennett served in the US Army in WWI, where he was discharged a second time as a Sergeant. He was a member of the American Legion Post 57, in Elgin, Illinois, where he was an active member of the Drum and Bugler Corps Band for many years.

The Sons of The American Legion
OFFICIAL MEMBERSHIP CARD
No. 18608
This is to certify that RICHARD ARTHUR BENNETT
IS A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING FOR THE YEAR INDICATED HEREON IN THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION SQUADRON ATTACHED TO POST NO. 57
LOCATED AT ELGIN, Illinois
CITY STATE
NOT VALID UNLESS COUNTER-SIGNED BY THE MEMBER
1942
SQUADRON ADJUTANT OR FINANCE OFFICER

Submitted photo (Pook): Bennett's 1942 SAL membership card

Richard was the only son, as he has two older sisters and one younger sister. Richard listen to his mother's colorful stories as she worked in show business before settling down and having a family. Richard started working in his father's printing company as a teenager, and by age 18 was working full-time alongside his father. There he learned all the dirty jobs of printing, as he worked his way up in the business. Upon his father's death, Richard took over managing Bennett Printing. However, this was not Richards true calling for his life's career, though he kept the family business going strong and sold it in 2012.

Submitted photo (Pook): Bennett, left, with NEC Chris Sherman

Richard is one of the few people still alive that can say that he had been water skiing on Devils Lake with a motor boat. Devil's Lake is a Wisconsin State Park, which was established in 1911 with several "cottages" located on the shores of the lake. Richard's family had Number 70, which was located on the north east side of Devil's Lake. Today there is a picnic area and parking lot near their cabins location. They never could sell their cabin as the State of Wisconsin bought out their rights, and the Bennett owned it for 60 years. Also interesting, on the south side of the lake Henry Ringling built a cottage, which was known as the south Side Lodge in 1918. Ringling then had to build a road to get to it, as steam boat was the only mode of transportation to get there. Later, a rail road line was developed. The original cabins were purchased by the state, and were grandfathered in to have motor boats on the lake. Only four cabins remain today on the southwestern shoreline, and only electric motors are allowed on the lake.

Perhaps Richard's mother's show business career stories influenced him more than anyone really knew. In 1964, Richard became a Professional Show Clown—named "Raz-Bo" - and was a regular for circus' and parades. Over the years, Richard traveled across the country and met many interesting people, including befriending Larry Fine of "The Three Stooges." Richard retired from show business in 1980, and went back to the career he started in 1962 through 1964. He also still had the vision to develop land with scenic view for housing. So from 1980 to 2023, Richard was a land developer and a house flipper—all the while keeping up on his membership within the Sons of The American Legion. It was soon after 2018 that Richard, now a 77 year member of Squadron 57 in Elgin, transferred his membership to Wisconsin's Squadron 491 in Cazenovia. As he had moved from Elgin to Baraboo, WI. This is the area that his family cabin had been in, and where he had so many fond memories. Ringling Brothers had also opened up a Circus Museum in Baraboo, WI.

Submitted photo (Pook): left to right—WI PDC David Fuller, Bennett, and NEC Mike Pook

Submitted photo (Pook): SAL Richard A. Bennett of Wisconsin

Richard is an active member of his squadron, and attends the monthly meetings. These meetings fall on the third Wednesdays of each month—Richard also attends the Legion meetings afterward. He volunteers to help out at the many meals served, often bussing the tables and dishwashing. Richard also donates food, and even cooks at home for the meals. About five years ago, Richard donated a large outdoor sign to advertise the American Legion Post. While he owned Bennett Printing, Richard donated all sorts of printed goods to the squadron and the post.

Richard is not one to sit idle for long, as he not only has a vision but has the motivation to see a project to the end. Richard also enjoys painting on canvas, and displays his work throughout his Baraboo home. Richard also takes pride in his collections, such as his WWI museum, his circus clown memorabilia, and his car collection … one of which, a convertible, drives in local parades in representing the Sons of The American Legion. In December 2024, Richard helped to assemble goodie bags for school kids from 1st to 12th grade with his Legion family.

In 2025, Richard A. Bennett is an 84 year continuously member of the Sons of The American Legion, still at the Detachment of Wisconsin's Squadron 491 Cazenovia. His membership literally started on the day he was born - October 8, 1940 - making Richard the oldest continues member of the Sons of the American Legion in the State of Wisconsin!

If your Detachment has SAL Members with 80 plus years or more of continuous membership, please let us know. We love to highlight their Heritage through their membership in another edition. You can email ANEC Pook at mikepook@yahoo.com.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
A newsletter of Sons of The American Legion
THE MILLENNIUM
Sons of The American Legion | PO 1055 | Indianapolis, IN 46206 | www.legion.org/sons

Postage Here

To:

This Month, On The Back Cover …..

NVC Harl "Butch" Ray (IL)
Contributor, "The Millennium"

Monthly Special to *The Millennium*: "American Oddities" … Little Known Facts

- The smallest state in the Union, Rhode Island, has the longest name. The official name of the state is, "The State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations."
- Five U.S. Presidents have worn beards. They were Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James Garfield, and Benjamin Harrison. All five were Republicans.
- Four U.S Presidents sported mustaches. They were Chester Arthur, Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, and Howard Taft. All were Republicans except Grover Cleveland.
- There are more miles of railroad in the United States than in all of Australia, South America, Asia, and Africa combined.
- John Quincy Adams was the only baldheaded man to become President of the United States.
- Water was first piped into the White House in 1884. An elevator was installed in 1881, and the White House was wired for electricity in 1891.
- Up through 1972, seventeen Presidents of the United States were sons of farmers. Four were sons of ministers, four were sons of lawyers, three were sons of merchants, and nine Presidents came from poor families.
- You can fit 212 Rhode Islands in the State of Texas!

Be on the look out ……. "Spotted by a Son"

Every month, The Millennium will hide a small picture or graphic inside the newsletter—first one to find it who email's rusty.myers@ymail.com will get their name published in the next newsletter and will receive a prize!

This month, in honor of President's Day on February 17th, see if you find "Ol' Abe!"