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.	Latin America	100%
2.	South Dakota	94.56%
3.	South Carolina	94.41%
4.	Hawaii	93.28%
5.	New Hampshire	89.04%
6.	Florida	88.27%
7.	Wisconsin	87.91%
8.	Ohio	87.35%
9.	Virginia	87.17%
10.	Maryland	86.87%

Statistics as of 03 March 2025

BE THE ONE

Inside *YOUR* SAL Newsletter this Month

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Membership Training and Development Report

ANEC Mike Pook (MN), Contributor to *The Millennium*

American Legion Family attends the 91st annual Lincoln Pilgrimage in Illinois

If you were going to experience something unbelievably memorable, then you should consider going to the Lincoln Pilgrimage in Springfield, Illinois held on Abraham Lincoln's Birthday each year. The Department of Illinois has hosted the Lincoln Pilgrimage for 91 years. It's only two days of activities and remembrance as we gather to honor our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln. Springfield has over fifteen Lincoln-related museums, the tomb of our 16th President, and much more to visit. There is a lot more to do in Springfield than you can't fit it into two days!

Submitted Photo: American Legion wreaths placed to honor President Lincoln at his tomb

The Lincoln Pilgrimage in Springfield has been conducted by Post 32 every year since 1935, making it the longest running annual event honoring his birthday. "This annual pilgrimage is now an American Legion Family tradition, and one that would please President Lincoln were he to join us today. Our family is reunited once again," said Sons of The American Legion Squadron 32 Commander James Peters, Jr. The Detachment of Illinois hosted the Tuesday, February 11 reception with the National SAL Commander as the keynote speaker.

"Lincoln's promise to take care of our veterans is reflected in the great works of the Sons of The American Legion," Joseph Navarreté said. "The Sons' mission is to support our veterans, as well as their families. We have done so through record donations to the Veterans and Children Foundation and the Child Well-being Foundation."

Sons of The American Legion National Commander Joseph Navarreté said that the SAL is committed to delivering on Lincoln's legacy.

The Lincoln Pilgrimage hosting department is The American Legion Department of Illinois.

Continued on Page 4 ...

Facebook Photo: National Commander LaCoursiere, National President Ward, and National Commander Navarreté braving the snow to rub Lincoln's Nose for good luck at Lincoln's Tomb in Springfield, IL— something some 200,000 visitors do each year.

Joseph Navarreté (NM), SAL National Commander

National Commander's Message

The Washington Conference started off with a new standard in the Sons of The American Legion Wreath Laying Ceremony. The Sons embarked on a historic event that included the entire Legion Family, when four buses left the Hilton Hotel to lay wreaths at various memorials. A visit to Washington, DC is a deeply moving experience, as the city is home to some of the most significant landmarks in American history. Our visit was to honor the sacrifices made by countless Americans. It was a chance to connect with the past, reflect on the present, and gain a deeper appreciation for the values and freedoms that shape the nation.

"Each site offers a profound moment of reflection, allowing us to pay our respects and remember the immense courage of those who fought for our freedoms.."

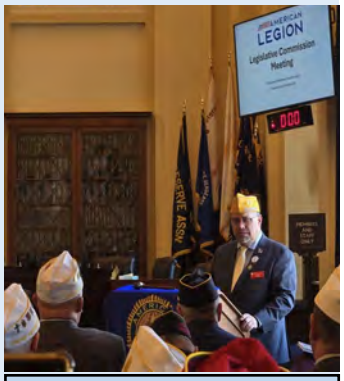
-National Commander Navarreté

Editor's Photo

Visiting the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the World War II Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and the Korean War Memorial is an incredibly humbling experience, honoring the sacrifices made by countless service members. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier serves as a solemn tribute to those who gave their lives without recognition, while the World War II Memorial, Vietnam Wall, and Korean Memorial stand as powerful reminders of the bravery and sacrifices made during those pivotal conflicts. Each site offers a profound moment of reflection, allowing us to pay our respects and remember the immense courage of those who fought for our freedoms.

Facebook Photo: Commander Navarreté at the Vietnam Wall

Editor's Photo: SAL Wreath after being placed at the Tomb of the Unknowns



Facebook Photo: Commander Navarrete speaking at the Legislative Commission Meeting

Supporting our veterans is crucial, as they have made significant sacrifices in service to our country. By advocating for the needs and well-being of our veterans, we ensure that their contributions are honored and that they receive the resources and care they deserve. It is important to continue engaging with our legislators, urging them to back organizations like The American Legion, which works tirelessly to improve the lives of veterans and their families. Our ongoing support and advocacy help make a meaningful difference in their lives.

Let us continue to support our Legion Family, and always remember...

Todo es Posible con Dios y Familia - Everything is possible with God and Family.

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

"Butch's Bullet Points"

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their Dreams!" - Unknown

As we enter the month of March, we are officially just half way through the current American Legion Family administrative year. So let's take a look at some paperwork that must be submitted in the next few months ... as they say, "No job is finished until the paperwork is done!"

All donations for the Veterans and Children's Foundation as well as the Child Well-being Foundation are due by May 31st of this year.

If you have not yet submitted one, each Squadron must complete a Squadron Data Report which will allow for online renewals and better communication (due by April 15th each year).

Now is also the time to begin filling out the Squadron Consolidated Report Form! It is your opportunity to list and brag about your accomplishments since your 2024 Detachment convention get these turned in right after your detachment conventions).

This paperwork is really easy to do. Remember what Bill Gates said..."I choose a lazy person to do a hard job, because a lazy person will find an easy way to do it."

As we move into the dream of an early Spring, let us not forget to continue to work on membership. Keep reaching out to those that have yet to renew and we will make our goals before you know it! As proud possessors of a priceless heritage, we SAL members continue to honor our forbearers' legacy by serving veterans, supporting youth programs, and promoting patriotism across the United States. Our dedication ensures that the values and sacrifices of America's veterans are remembered and respected for generations to come. Our membership will affect our future service to these ideals! Some people want it to happen, some wish it would happen, others make it happen!

"The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand." -Vince Lombardi

Our "job" at the moment is bringing in those last few members to reach your 100% target. We can and will set new membership records again this year! What a great way to show The American Legion Family that we believe in their mission and that we will continue to "Honor our Heritage" supporting our veterans and our communities. Membership does not happen by luck! President Gerald Ford once said... "The harder you work, the luckier you are, and I worked like hell." We are just under 72,000 members needed to reach the 400,000 membership goal! We are approximately 3% ahead of where we were last year at this time! This goal will be met!!

Keep up the good work! Be a SON and Get'r DONE!

American Legion Photo: Wreath Laying Ceremony at the National WWII Memorial

Bernie Kessler (OH), Chairman
National Legislative Commission

DC Wrap-up

On Sunday, February 23rd, members of 31 Detachments of the Sons of The American Legion assembled at the Washington Hilton prior to meetings of the National Legislative Conference and proceeded on a bus tour of War Memorials and to Arlington National Cemetery. Accompanied by members of our parent organization, members of The American Legion Auxiliary, and the Samsung Scholars, we were a group that turned heads as we made our way to the WWII, The Vietnam Wall, and to the Tomb of the Unknowns.

We were nearly 180 strong individuals who were well dressed, respectful of our surroundings, understanding of why we were there, and willing to share our message with anyone who asked. There are videos and photos posted on social media and I encourage you to watch and share with your friends, so that they might understand our message.

On behalf of your National Legislative Commission, I want to thank National Commander Navarrete, our National Vice Commanders, past members of the Legislative Commission, and all of you who made this day of remembrance an unforgettable experience.

American Legion Photo: Attendees at the Arlington Wreath Laying are addressed by the Tomb Guards of the US Army 3rd Infantry Regiment, "The Old Guard"

Legion.org

Legion Family Lays Wreaths ahead of the Washington Conference

The annual wreath laying ceremonies in conjunction with the Washington Conference started as primarily a way for the Sons of The American Legion to honor and remember those veterans who gave their life for the nation's freedom.

It has gradually grown to be a Legion Family event, exemplified by the approximately 200 members of the Legion Family who gathered Feb. 23 to lay wreaths at the memorials on the National Mall and at Arlington National Cemetery.

It's "amazing" to see, said SAL National Commander Joseph Navarreté.

Editor's Photo

"Seeing our Legion Family coming together and the amount of people we're seeing (out here), it's truly historic, and it goes to a testament that we need to continue to always remember those who sacrificed the most for us, and why we're in our organization," Navarreté said.

Navarreté was especially appreciative of the dual Legion and SAL members who wore their SAL caps on Sunday. "They sacrificed and they were there and they earned it, and to see them also honoring their why made a big difference. It's all about our heritage," he said.

Watch the video produced by The American Legion highlighting the 2025 wreath laying program

"It's moving to see the turnout we get on a Sunday," said Detachment of Pennsylvania Alternate NEC Scott Baker.

The contingent of Legion Family, accompanied by recipients of the Samsung American Legion Scholarship, laid wreaths at the World War II Memorial, the Vietnam Memorial, and the Korean War Memorial on the National Mall. They then bused to Arlington National Cemetery.

Editor's Photo

Sunday's ceremony wasn't the first time Navarreté was part of a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; he joined American Legion National Vice Commander Gary Leach and American Legion Auxiliary National President Trish Ward for a wreath-laying last Veterans Day.

But the emotions were still there on Sunday, he said.

"A lot of times, it's hard to hold back the tears (when you lay a wreath)," Navarreté said. "I've been coming up for over 10 years now, laid several wreaths, but it's hard to fight back the tears a lot of times because you can see it and feel it, just being in the area, and then being around all of the rest of us, the Legion Family, where we have similar goals, we all sense it together."

"A very moving ceremony," said Detachment of Pennsylvania NEC Joe Wysochanski. "You're just overwhelmed by the power of it."

American Legion Family attends the 91st annual Lincoln Pilgrimage in Illinois *(continued from Page 1)*

During the February 11th reception, membership awards based off of the highest membership percentage from the start of the membership year until the third weekend in January are the highlight.

Jeff Horn, Department of Illinois Adjutant said, "The jacket awards started in 2016. This year in 2025, there were 13 departments represented at the Lincoln Pilgrimage. Also this year, 36 jackets were awarded between the Departments that participated and our Detachment." This year's awards include a front zipper blue sweat shirt, breakfast tickets, and some cash (plus a free night stay at the designated Lincoln Pilgrimage hotel in Springfield). The Commander of the winner must be also present at the program to receive their awards.

On the national level, The Sons of The American Legion also have several membership awards available. The Blue Brigade Award goes to members who have enrolled 30 or more new members within the past year to the Sons; this is a national award and all jackets are custom made and embroidered. There is also individual Recruitment Award given out to any SAL member who recruits 5 new members to the Sons of the American Legion. This form is filled out and sent to the Region chairman who is listed on the form. Don't forget to send a copy to your Detachment Adjutant so you can be considered for the recruiter of the year award. Most members should be eligible for the "I GOT ONE' award pin for their cover.

The Lincoln Pilgrimage is held on Abraham Lincoln's Birthday of February 12th each year in Springfield, Illinois … so make your plans to attend next year, and plan to spend an extra day or two to enjoy Lincoln's legacy.

Facebook Photo: Contributor ANEC Mike Pook (MN) rubbing Lincoln's nose

Photos on this page pulled from various posts on Facebook

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

Editorial: March and April are busy months

We left New Jersey for the Washington Conference Wreath Laying Program in February with snow still on the ground … it was 12 degrees one of the days before we had left. On Sunday the 23rd, the weather was so nice at Arlington National Cemetery that we didn't need jackets—it was almost 60 degrees, and cloudless. Perfect weather and a great deal of participation - lots of Sons … and sun.

Yeah, I was the only kid at the event who actually got a sunburn.

But I digress … my point is that the weather is changing, which means Spring has Sprung!

I guess Punxsutawney Phil was wrong.

Spring also is when many of our events kick into high gear, so in following up with a great idea from Past National Commander (PNC) David Faust (WI), *The Millennium* will be doing our best at highlighting Legion events well before they happen so our squadrons and detachments can make plans to be involved.

- **15 March is American Legion Birthday**. Our parent organization will be turning 106 years old on 15 March. Even thought that's a lot of candles, you should do something as a Son to honor our veterans and the Legion on their birthday. Celebrate with a cake, hold a public event, post your history or create something with pictures from your Post family's past, the options are endless. The point is to celebrate.
- **Buddy Check Week**. As the website says, ***"it's as simple as a phone call."*** Though these checks on our fellow members and our vets should be happening anytime, the week of American Legion Birthday, by resolution, is a week we should focus on this. Buddy Checks are not membership or fundraising calls; they are simple check-ins with veterans in the community to see how they are doing and to learn if the local post family can help with anything.
- **29 March is National Vietnam War Veterans Day**. In 2017, President Trump designated every 29 March as a day to honor our Vietnam veterans. Possible ways to commemorate this are by holding a ceremony, hosting a luncheon, or doing something special for our heroes who didn't get the homecoming they deserved. If nothing else, just focus on telling all of those who served in Vietnam "Welcome Home."
- **April is American Legion Children and Youth Month**. For more than 80 years, the Legion has supported today's young people by observing April as Children and Youth Month. During this month, American Legion Family members are encouraged to show their local communities our dedication to young people by supporting child health, education, family support and more. Here is a great article with links on Legion.org from last year. You can also use this month to engage your younger members by running the 10 Ideals Program or the Five Star Program.
- **26 April is American Legion Family Day**. This day which is a core priority of our National Children and Youth Committee falls this year on 26 April, and per legion.org "posts are encouraged to open their doors to members of their community for the day to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of Legionnaires, Sons of The American Legion members, Legion Riders and American Legion Auxiliary, and to bring awareness to the organization's "Be the One" initiative to reduce the rate of veteran suicide."

There are plenty of other upcoming days and events which should be on your squadron's radar … https://www.legion.org/information-center/calendar is a fantastic resource which lists a good deal of them.

And, as always, don't forget to write up what you do and submit it to *The Millennium*, Legiontown.org, or your local media outlets. Tag your photos with #SALSTRONG. We have to do our part as Sons of The American Legion to promote in every way possible this great organization.

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

THE MILLENNIUM

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All information must be submitted no later than 12:00 noon the twentieth of each month and must be made electronically by emailing the editor at rusty.myers@ymail.com

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SAL NATIONAL ADJUTANT
Anthony W. Wright (PA)
SAL NATIONAL VICE-COMMANDERS

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Southeast:	John Lawrence (LA)
Central:	Harl "Butch" Ray (IL)
Midwest:	Mike Monserud (IA)
Western:	Dan Ashley (AZ)

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Opinions expressed by authors are their own, and do not necessarily represent those of the Publisher or of the Editor.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS. Our goal is to promptly correct errors. Please email the Editor to report a mistake, error, to request a clarification. Please reference the edition, page number, and title of the article in question.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Corrections:

Per Jeremy Revell (VT), the Squadron Commander of the Year application differs from what was published in February, in that a member can hold another office in addition to squadron commander, and the due date is one month prior to Spring NEC. That application is available here.

Distribution Schedule:
Check your email inboxes for the SAL Newsletter / *Millennium* on these dates (subject to change):
March 12, 2025
April 9, 2025
May 14, 2025
June 11, 2025
July 9, 2025
Aug. 13, 2025
Sept. 10, 2025

Obituary by Pippin Funeral Home

TAPS: PNVC James Noble (NJ)

American Legion Photo

James A. Noble of Camden Wyoming, DE, suddenly passed at 66 years of age on Saturday, February 8, 2025.

Jim served as a Corrections Officer for Hudson County when he lived in New Jersey. When he retired as an Armed Security Officer, he and Debbie moved to Delaware where he found his true calling through his service and brotherhood with the Camden Wyoming Fire Company. He loved every minute of the time he lived in Delaware and touched so many lives during his time here.

Jim was a proud member of the Camden Wyoming Fire Company where he served as a Delaware State Fire Police Officer, Company Vice President, Company Chaplain, and member of the Board of Directors. He was also a proud member of the Delaware State Fire Police Association and Kent County Fire Police Association.

He was active in Masonry. Jim was a Distinguished White Apron Masonic Brother of Peninsula Lodge 99 (Bayonne NJ) and a member of Union Lodge # 7 (Camden Wyoming).

Jim was a 32nd degree Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret.

He also was a member of Nur Shrine (Delaware) and former member of Salaam Shrine.

Jim was a member of the Scottish Rite, Valley of Northern New Jersey and Past Chieftain of the Knights of St Andrews.

He was a Charter Life member of Sons of the American Legion, Bayonne (NJ) Squadron 19, Jim held many offices and was Past Squadron Commander, Past County Commander, Past Detachment Commander, Past National Vice Commander and Past National Chaplain. He was also the Past Director of the American Legion Riders of Bayonne Post 19.

Jim was an Ex-Chief and along with his wife Debbie, was one of the Founding Members of the Bayonne Fire Canteen, a volunteer rehab group serving the Bayonne Fire Department and surrounding departments.

He was Past President of the Knights of Fire Motorcycle Club, Jim also belonged to the Red Knights in Delaware.

Jim was a huge fan of the Dallas Cowboys and was known for always having a bottle of Diet Coke in hand! He also loved antique cars and enjoyed attending local car shows.

Jim lived his life in service to his community, his family, his friends and anyone in need.

He is predeceased by his mother Gertrude (Noble) Arbucci and father Emil Segond.

Jim is survived by his wife of 34 years Debbie Noble, who Jim lovingly called Chipmunk, brother-in-law of Janet (Paul) Edinger; Tom (Judy) Young, Anthony Newman and Melissa Newman, cousin to John (Sharon) Botteri, uncle to nephews Robert Young, Michael Masucci, George Edinger and David Edinger and nieces Olivia Edinger and Ashleigh Newman. Also he leaves behind his beloved dogs, Dallas and Bella and cats Puss and Jade.

Obituary by Hodroff-Epstein Memorial Chapel

TAPS: Lou "The Photo Guy" Michaels (MN)

Hodroff-Epstein Memorial Chapel Photo

With a sparkle in his eyes and a camera around his neck, Lou "The Photo Guy" Michaels (born Feldman) has snapped his last photo on February 5, 2025.

Born on November 27, 1943, in the bustling city of Detroit, Michigan, Lou was a charismatic soul known for his quick wit and relentless dedication to his craft. He was a master of turning ordinary moments into extraordinary memories with the click of his camera shutter.

Lou, affectionately known by his friends as "Fred," "Bagel," and "Papa," had a knack for making everyone laugh. His infectious humor was as captivating as his photography. Lou was a man of many talents, but photography was his true calling. He was the proud owner of a successful photojournalism business in Saint Paul, Minnesota, where he resided. Beyond his career, Lou was a dedicated member of many organizations, including the American Legion, VFW, Jewish War Veterans, Winter Carnival, National Photography League, Legion Riders, Oddfellow, and Kiwanis. He was recognized for his hard work with a Certificate Of Appreciation from The fifth district American Legion Family and a Certificate for general studies from Macomb Community College.

When Lou wasn't capturing the world through his lens, he was indulging in his plethora of hobbies. He was an avid coin collector, Netflix enthusiast, history buff, and ham radio operator. One could often find him sharing a cup of joe with his morning coffee club. He was also a devoted attendee of various conventions. But what mattered most to Lou were the simple pleasures in life, his family, and his cats.

Hodroff-Epstein Memorial Chapel Photo

He is survived by his loving wife, Tamara Michaels; his daughter, Holly Foster; and his grandchildren, Alexandrea Feldman and Averie Foster. He was also the proud great-grandfather to Averie Foster. He now joins his parents, Joe and Lillian Feldman who preceded him in death.

As we remember Lou, we are reminded of the verse from the Jewish scriptures, "A good name is better than good oil" (Ecclesiastes 7:1). Truly, Lou's name will forever be associated with laughter, love, and beautiful imagery.

Editor's Note: Lou worked as a photojournalist with "The Millennium" since its inception in 2023, and before that submitted photos to PNVC Jeff Vrabel's "Round Up". Lou was a great guy, and always was full of stories ... and he will be missed by the entire staff.

Tyler Vance (VA), Chairman, 100th Anniversary Ad-Hoc Committee

100th Anniversary Committee

Dear Members,

It is an absolute honor and privilege to serve our incredible organization as the newest Chair of the 100th Anniversary Committee for the Sons of The American Legion. As we prepare to celebrate a century of service, our mission is clear: "To Honor and Celebrate a Century of Serving America's Veterans." This mission reflects our enduring commitment to supporting veterans, their families, and our communities.

Our vision, "To Honor the Past and Prepare for the Future," provides a broad and inspiring roadmap for how we can fulfill this important goal. Together, we have the opportunity to commemorate our proud history while building a foundation for the next 100 years of service and dedication.

The year 2032 will mark the 100th anniversary of the Sons of The American Legion, a milestone that allows us to celebrate our shared legacy and achievements. While the centennial may feel like it's a long way off, now is the time to begin planning celebrations, projects, and initiatives that will ensure this historic occasion is one to remember. Whether you are part of a squadron, district, or detachment, every member can contribute to this once-in-a-lifetime event.

As we prepare for our centennial, there are other significant milestones to keep in mind along the way.

Are you aware that our nation is approaching another major milestone? On July 4, 2026, the United States will celebrate its semiquincentennial; 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This remarkable anniversary offers a perfect opportunity for SAL squadrons and detachments to reflect on the sacrifices of those who fought to secure our freedoms and celebrate the principles that continue to guide our nation.

Many cities and states are already planning events to mark this historic occasion, and your squadron or detachment can join in! This is a chance to connect with your community, organize meaningful programs, and showcase the vital role the Sons of The American Legion play in honoring veterans and promoting patriotism.

To find out more about events and initiatives happening in your area, visit America250's State and Territory Commissions page. Many states have already begun creating programs, and they are eager to include additional events. Once your squadron or detachment finalizes its plans, be sure to reach out and have your activities added to the America250 calendar. I imagine many of your Departments are already planning something so make sure to reach out to them as well.

As we embark on these historic celebrations, your creativity, enthusiasm, and dedication are key to their success. Think about how your squadron or detachment can contribute:

- Host a community event honoring veterans and their contributions to America's freedom.
- Partner with local organizations to organize parades, educational programs, or service projects.
- Reflect on the history of the Sons of The American Legion and showcase your own squadron's legacy. Many have been around for almost 80-100 years! Flaunt your history!

Together, we can ensure that these anniversaries, the 250th for our country in 2026 and the 100th for the Sons of The American Legion in 2032, will inspire future generations and solidify our legacy of service.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our mission and for everything you do to support our veterans, their families, and our great nation. Let's make these celebrations unforgettable!

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA and R) Update

***The Millennium* in February carried a submission by Bruno Williamson (IL), National VA and R Chairman, where he wrote about the current federal hiring freeze, and how the affect regularly scheduled VA volunteers. At that point, the onboarding process for those new volunteers was also frozen.**

Not long after that newsletter was published, Chairman Williamson was proud to report that *"Effective today, Thursday, February 13, 2025, CDCE (Center for Development & Civic Engagement) can resume onboarding new regularly scheduled volunteers. As a reminder, regularly scheduled volunteers are one type of without compensation appointment within VA."*

In February's "Spotted by a Son", we asked if you could find "Ol' Abe!". We received probably 25 emails in two hours from all around the country, which means you're reading this and playing along!

The newsletter email went out at 9:38am, and by 9:45am we had a winner…

Jen Maksin, mother of Squadron 742 (Fairview, PA) Young SAL 5-year old Taw Maksin

Be on the lookout in the mail—National Commander Navarette has provided us with some of his National Commander's Pins to send to the winner each month.

Make sure that you keep an eye out on the last page of The Millennium each month for the "Spotted by a Son" graphic hidden within the newsletter. But be quick in writing the editor—you can see this time Jen found it seven minutes after the newsletter went out!

ABOVE: Submitted Photo: Our February "Spotted by a Son" Winners—the Maksin family from the Department of Pennsylvania. Dad Mark, an SAL from Squadron 742 and Director of Riders Chapter 742; mom Jen of ALA 742 who also serves as Chapter 742 secretary, and 5-year old Taw showing off his 2024 "Snapshots of Service" Award.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

NEXT MEETING MARCH 18TH

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

MARCH 2025

NEXT TARGET DATE - MARCH 12TH - 80%

AMERICAN LEGION BASIC TRAINING

THE AMERICAN LEGION'S OFFICIAL TRAINING PROGRAM FOR OFFICERS, MEMBERS, LEGION COLLEGE APPLICANTS AND THOSE WHO SIMPLY WANT TO EXPAND THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THE NATION'S LARGEST VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION IS NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE.

REGISTER TO TAKE THE SELF PACED TRAINING HERE:

HTTPS://REGISTER.LEGION.ORG/ALEI

SQUADRON COMMANDER OF THE YEAR

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
SQUADRON COMMANDER OF THE YEAR
NOMINATION FORM

NOMINATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY THE DETACHMENT ADJUTANT AND RECEIVED AT NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS 30 DAYS PRIOR TO SPRING NEC

THE NOMINEE SHALL BE A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING IN THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION.

DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP THROUGH ACTION AND INVOLVEMENT IN SQUADRON ACTIVITIES THAT BENEFIT HIS COMMUNITY.

MUST OBTAIN 100% SQUADRON MEMBERSHIP OR BETTER BY MARCH 15TH (AMERICAN LEGION BIRTHDAY).

LEGION.ORG/SONS (PUBLICATIONS & FORMS)

INDIVIDUAL RECRUITMENT AWARD

EARN YOUR 2025 MEMBERSHIP RECRUITER PIN AND PROUDLY DISPLAY IT ON YOUR COVER BY RECRUITING FIVE NEW MEMBERS!

LEGION.ORG/SONS

PUBLICATIONS & FORMS

RENEW NOW!

MEMBERS NOT RENEWED FOR 2025 ARE NOW EXPIRED.

SCAN ME

LEGION.ORG/SAL-RENEW

Jason Miller (MD), Detachment First Vice Commander

Maryland's SAL Mid-Winter Conference

The Detachment of Maryland held their Mid-Winter Conference in Ocean City on January 31st-February 2nd and welcomed SAL National Commander Joseph Navarreté and Trailing Candidate for SAL National Commander Thom Skelley.

Jeff Thorne Photography: Sons getting ready for the Plunge

The event started out with the Maryland American Legion Family participating in the Polar Plunge supporting the Special Olympics Maryland. Collectively, the American Legion Family participants raised over $41,000! Additionally, as we do every year the Detachment made a donation in the amount of $15,000 supporting the Special Olympics Maryland Bowling Tournament.

Friday evening our Detachment Youth participated in the indoor plunge and presented a check supporting Special Olympics Maryland in the amount of $1,000.

Jeff Thorne Photography: National Commander Navarreté speaking at the Youth Academy

Saturday morning, our Detachment youth and youth officers held their meeting and youth academy learning about the United States Constitution and made cards which were presented to Veterans attending the weekend event.

Members across the state attended mid-term training which included information for DEC members, awards and forms, as well as Be The One veteran suicide awareness training.

Saturday evening our annual Raymond Edwards Memorial Children & Youth Draw Down was held. Our weekend concluded Sunday with our Winter DEC.

In addition to everything else, an additional $66,000+ was raised and or donated at our draw down and Winter DEC.

The entire American Legion Family had a great time, and as our Detachment Commander Mike Obremski states, "Sons Having Fun Getting it Done!"

Jeff Thorne Photography: Detachment Commander Mike Obremski braving the cold water

Shawn Hardy, "The Echo Pilot"

Pennsylvania Sons provide new rescue saw to help firefighters

The Rescue Hose Company has a new rescue tool thanks to Sons of The American Legion of Greencastle American Legion [Squadron] 373.

Photo, The Edge Pilot: Sons donate a Stihl rescue tool to the Rescue Hose Company

"The community continues to step up and support our department," says a post on the fire company's website.

The Stihl MS 462 R C-M rescue saw has a blade that will cut through a variety of materials, including wood, metal, tin and several layers of roofing, according to William Hull, Rescue Hose Co. president.

"This saw has been placed in service on our rescue squad and will be utilized for various firefighting and rescue situations," the fire company said in a news release.

It can be used, for example, to cut through a roof to provide ventilation, clear the smoke and help firefighters attack a fire, Hull said.

He also noted it can be used to cut through steel rollup or garage doors to provide accesss.

The fire company's old rescue saw was probably 25 years old, Hull said. It had reliability and maintenance issues.

Ace Hardware worked with the Sons of the Legion to secure the saw at a good price with proper blades.

Annual Squadron Data Report (SDR)

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 208 (Kerrville, TX) held a bowling tournament with I Strike Sports. The Tournament had a great turnout and raised $1,357.50

Harrison Lee Squadron 283 (Livonia, NY) presenting Maxwell Kozak a check for $2,000 towards his Eagle Scout project. Max is an 11 year member of the Squadron.

Squadron 91 (Chandler, AZ) supporting Mikey's League by sponsoring a hole in their golf tournament

Squadron 274 (Lusby, MD) has a huge turnout for their corn hole tournament

Detachment of NY Commander Gaither Espey signs up and pays for Squadron 1280 (Cassadaga, NY's) newest member.

Squadron 86 (Grey, ME) hosts a Chili and Chowder Cookoff with 20 entries and 76 judges.

Squadron 371 (Welston, OH) brings together students and coaches from Welston High School to help stuff Easter eggs in preparation for their upcoming annual Easter egg hunt.

Squadron 605 (Dallastown, PA) participated in the Flag Line along route of the funeral procession for West York Borough Police Officer Andrew William Duarte.

Squadron 1 (Titusville, FL) makes a donation to Boy Scout Troop 481 for their help at the SAL Car Show

Squadron 95 (Curtis, NE) performing colorguard duties

Squadron 414 (Sutton, MA) holds their 3rd Annual Adult Pinewood Derby

From legiontown.org

A Tennessee SAL member going places

Squadron 104 (Sevierville, TN) Sons of The American Legion member Landon "Reed" Bull is a remarkable young man, and in his 18 years he's accomplished more than some will in their lifetime. Reed is currently a freshman at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) in Johnson City, attending on a prestigious Roan Scholars Leadership Program scholarship.

In November 2024, he attended Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature (TISL), a college-sponsored club designed very similar to Boys and Girls State. While there, he had to present a bill to a mock House and Senate for the club. The bill he presented (if implemented) would ensure quality end-of-life care for our veterans through the Tennessee State Veterans Homes system. It was fortuitous that his bill caught the attention of Tennessee Secretary of State Tre Hargett,

Legiontown, USA photo: Landon "Reed" Bull with Tennessee Secretary of State Tre Hargett

who invited Reed along with East Tennessee Vice Commander (DVC) James McLaughlin to Nashville to meet with him in his office to discuss this matter further, which they happily did on Jan. 17, 2025.

While there, Reed presented Hargett with a proposal for a bill based on a real case where an honorably discharged veteran in the last four months of his life was denied the care he desperately needed and deserved. I'll forgo the full story as this isn't a wag-the-finger type of article, but this proposal was one Reed decided on himself after soliciting advice from several Legionnaires, especially one of his mentors McLaughlin. The proposed legislation (if passed and implemented) in the Volunteer State would go a long way to ensure that every honorably discharged veteran in Tennessee would get the end-of-life care needed, be treated with the utmost of care and given the dignity they deserve. Certainly, as Legionnaires, we can all appreciate the hard work this young 18-year-old is putting into veteran care, and we should all double down on our efforts to recruit for Boys and Girls State. After all, Reed realized how much he cared about our nation's veterans while attending Tennessee Boys State in 2023, held at Tennessee Tech in Cookeville.

I would be remiss if I didn't brag on some of his other accomplishments. While a senior at Seymour High School in Sevier County (home of Dolly Parton), he served as student body president and played on the golf team. He also served as the 2023 National Senior Beta Club president, elected by his peers from all 50 states.

From legiontown.org

New Jersey SAL Squadron 105 holds flag education class

SAL Squadron 105 of Belleville, N.J., held their first flag education course on Feb. 3 at the Post Hall on Washington Avenue. The feedback from everyone who participated was very positive, stating that they all found the information presented very valuable ... and useful.

Legiontown, USA photo: Elsmore, left, and Myers, right, show the class how to fold the flag

The class participants were from the Post 105 Family, as well as from the Wolf Den of Nutley's Pack 141 Cub Scouts.

" ...Understanding why and how it [the flag] is to be displayed and retired is important as an American," noted den leader Pete Hoisick when asked for feedback. "Knowing the respect the flag gets and deserves helps build pride in the flag, the people who have defended it and our country."

Detachment Adjutant Rusty Myers was the presenter. He developed the program, which discussed flag history, taught the U.S. Flag Code, flag retirement ceremonies and how to fold the flag - which ended with a Frequently Asked Questions session where many misconceptions about flag care and respect were debunked.

"Flag etiquette is something that doesn't get taught anymore like it used to," stated Myers at the class. "As long as you leave here with one or two things you didn't know, we did our job."

The class started by delving into the history of the American flag – by talking about the flag's lineage from its roots in the Sons of Liberty Flag in 1770s America, all the way through its most recent iteration in 1960 when the last two stars representing Alaska and Hawaii were added.

It followed with everything about the Flag Code ... talking about how the flag is supposed to be displayed, how it is and is not allowed to be used, and how it is supposed to be honorably retired. The Sons also purchased literature to hand out – so everyone left the class with copies of the Flag Code and the booklet "Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette."

The American Legion itself was primarily responsible for the Flag Code being developed in 1923.

The highlight of the class, though, was teaching how to fold the flag. Myers and SAL Essex DEC James Elsmore folded the large casket-sized flag, as Wolf Den Leader Hoisick read what each one of the 13 folds of a flag stand for. The 'students' were also handed 8"x12" grave flags, which they folded and took home.

Hoisick's son Ramsey said afterward that his "favorite part was learning how to fold the flag," he also said he would like to participate in and see the flag burning ceremony for retired flags at Post 105.

*These two articles were pulled from **Legiontown, USA**. Check out that site to see what's happening around the country, and write up your story and submit it to legiontown.org.*

Mike Cotten (DE), Chairman, National Membership Training and Development Committee

MT&D Report

Training is a critical core to the success of any organization or company. The MT&D Committee is working to create and offer mini courses directed at leadership and membership development. These will be used to create online courses available to all who cannot travel to Indianapolis for the Spring or Fall NEC meetings.

Submitted Photo: Regional Training in Boston

This Spring NEC (May 2- 3) we will be offering a class on myLegion.org training from the perspective of the Sons of The American Legion on Saturday from 8-12.

This class is provided at no cost, and there is no stipend for attending.

Commanders training will continued to be offered at National Convention. This session is held Friday morning at the National Convention. This class is open to all. Only the current commander will get a stipend and the Detachment needs to provide their Officer list to the National organization at least 30 days prior to the convention.

MT&D is supporting the new National Regional Information Conferences. Partnering with the American Legion Auxiliary and their success with their National Mission Training, The American Legion and Sons of the American Legion provided one day training sessions in Denver, and Boston this past November and February respectively. MT&D Vice Chairman Shawn Davis (MN) co-hosted these sessions, along with PNC J.R. Hall (MD) in Denver and PNC Cliff Smith (MA) in Boston.

These Regional events offered a day of solid training at a more convenient time and location for SAL members that cannot make the trip to Indianapolis. These sessions have a capacity for 20 members and involve some facilitation and a lot of discussion to help members learn from our leader's experiences as well as each other. We hope this will continue through the next administrative year. Please keep an eye out for announcements for when and where these will be scheduled. HINT: Keep an eye on the American Legion Auxiliary National Mission Training schedule for 2025 – 2026.

MT&D is creating numerous presentations to develop SAL members moving up through the ranks of the organization as a national standard to supplement the SAL Handbook. These training modules are under review by Internal Affairs Commission. Once approval is given and development is done, we hope to have them released as SAL membership training and available on-line through myLegion.

Training is essential for success!

Excerpts from Legion.org

The National Regional Information Conference in Boston

The American Legion held its second National Regional Information Conference in Boston on Feb.1, where Legionnaires and Sons of The American Legion members received training on the organization's mission, operations and programs. The training was held in conjunction with the Auxiliary's Mission Training at the Hyatt Regency Boston Harbor hotel.

Submitted Photo: Regional Training in Boston

The daylong National Regional Information Conference featured sessions on legal, Be the One suicide prevention, youth programs, running an effective meeting, post operations and membership retention. The first training was held last November in Denver. Those in attendance at the Boston conference ranged from post members to department leadership as the conference is designed for any Legionnaire and Sons member to learn valuable training and connect with Legion Family members to share ideas and best practices.

As a new post officer, John Ryan found the training informative and helpful.

"I've been a passive member of the Legion for quite a few years," said Ryan, the junior vice commander for Post 2 in Bristol, Conn. "I rarely attended meetings or events and just paid my annual dues. This year I decided to actively participate in my post. I attended this meeting in the hopes of deepening my knowledge of how a post functions and to learn more about the Legion overall. I was proud to see others from across the northeast wearing their caps and garb. I attended alone but immediately felt comfortable with my comrades. I joined a few Legionnaires at the table and conversations were easy. The breakfast and lunch were outstanding, and I was proud to represent the veteran community. Each presentation was new learning for me, so I found it valuable. I particularly appreciated each presenters experience and equally appreciated the contributions of other members who shared."

Thirty-four members from the Department of New Jersey American Legion, Auxiliary, Junior Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion attended the training. Other attendees shared:

"The training was given by top quality trainers and was presented in an upper level fashion. Really enjoyed the day, and learned a lot!," said Scott Conner, senior vice commander for the Department of Massachusetts. "As a department officer involved in training and membership, it gave more insight to why we do what we do, and the need to pass it on to the districts and posts. The best (training), except National American Legion College, that I have been to."

"It was all very helpful to hear how other posts do things, especially with running meetings and post operations. Secondarily, I valued the opportunity to network with other Legion members."

"Every time I listen to the national judge advocate, I pick up more information pertaining to the Constitution and Bylaws interpretation that were not clear prior."

Facebook Photo: NJ Legion Family in Boston

Wayne Madson, Sr Vice Commander Detachment of Illinois

The Detachment of Illinois has been hard at work

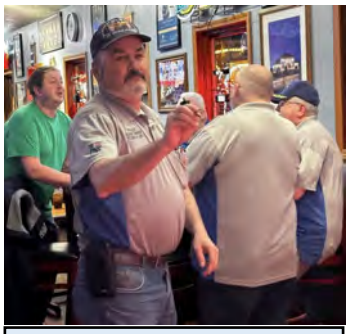
The Detachment of Illinois has been going nonstop since New Years.

Every January the American Legion Family leadership visits 18 Districts in Illinois for our Membership Caravan over a 10 day period. This year we were fortunate to have SAL National Commander Joseph Navarrete join us for three days.

Submitted photo: SAL Membership Display during the Illinois American Legion Family Caravan

The purpose of the Caravan is to energize our Posts, Units, and Squadrons for membership and to meet our Leadership.

February is The National American Legion Pilgrimage to the Tomb of President Abraham Lincoln, Held every year since 1935 this event is sponsored and organized by Springfield Post 32. We are proud that the General Chairman for this event is our own Jim Peters, Jr., who is also the Squadron Commander. Eight Departments were in attendance to join us for a ceremony at the tomb as well as our mid year membership awards ceremony. We were honored to have Legion National Commander James LaCoursiere Jr., American Legion Auxiliary President Trish Ward, and National SAL Commander Joseph Navarrete in attendance for this two day event. A highlight of the program is having leadership place wreaths at President Lincoln's tomb on his birthday. This event is a wonderful opportunity to meet with Family members from other Departments to exchange ideas and network as well as share some camaraderie.



Detachment Commander Rick Allen at the Dart Tournament.

March marked our first annual Detachment Children and Youth Dart Tournament held at Springfield Post 32. This event was well received and attended with funds raised for C&Y programs.

Detachment Commander Rick Allen's Homecoming will be held following the Spring DEC on March 29th. Commander Navarrete will be in attendance for a tour of the Danville VA facility as well as attending the DEC.

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

"Mentoring Moments"

Photo courtesy Photography by Jeff Thorne, National Convention 2023

One of the functions of the Sergeant-At-Arms is to watch over the membership for flag etiquette. If someone is not rendering honors, the Sergeant-At-Arms should politely instruct the member or guest in the proper procedures. The Sergeant-At-Arms should tell members, guests, and comrades to never to walk or pass between the flags. Always walk around the outside of the flag when going behind the Commanders table.

Sandy Lipman (MI), Vice Chairman, National CWF Committee

Defining the KPI's of The American Legion Family

Did the title of this article catch your eye! Did you find yourself searching everything you know about the Legion Family and not knowing what a KPI is? You have not forgotten anything!

In the business world, the acronym KPI stands for Key performance indicators. They are a set of quantifiable measurements used to gauge a company's overall long term performance. In an organization as vast and diverse as the Legion Family the term KPI goes far beyond the monitoring of Performance! So let's look at the four KPI's that should be applied across our fraternity:

KEEP PEOPLE INTERESTED: Thinking the members will continue as Legionnaires because of the principles the legion stand for isn't enough! It's up to leadership to plan and execute events and activities that will assist in retaining current members, attracting new member and reengaging former members!

KEEP PEOPLE INFORMED: Communication is key to everything in our life, including the legion Family. Members can't be expected to attend meetings, celebrations, fundraiser etc., if they don't know about them. Make sure information shared with our members and the public are accurate and sent well in advance, and make sure any important details are included, especially for an event that requires a reservation!

KEEP PEOPLE INVOLVED: Leadership of the Legion family does not have to do everything. Find ways to engage members in organizing, running, and supporting our activities.

KEEP PEOPLE INSPIRED: We legion family members should provide additional avenues of support to all of our Legion family charities. As well as our veterans homes and hospitals. WE should strongly support our Children and Youth Programs! We should set the example of fraternalism for others to follow. Don't be hesitant to remind your fellow members of how the lives of others are improved everyday by the activities of our Legion Family!

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
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THE MILLENNIUM
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To:

This Month, On The Back Cover …..

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

Monthly Special to *The Millennium*: "American Oddities" … A Special Monument for America's first Traitor

Located in Saratoga National Historic Park in New York State is a monument of mystery.

It is a monument dedicated to the memory of America's first and best-known traitor.

The unusual monument bears no name. The monument is unusual in still another way. The monument consists of only a left foot military boot and the epaulets of a U.S. Army General.

The monument does not say so, but it was erected in honor of Benedict Arnold, the brilliant American revolutionary general who sold out to the British.

General Arnold was wounded in the left foot during the battle of Saratoga in October 1777. It was the first military victory for the American Army.

In 1779, General Arnold went over to the enemy, but his memory is commemorated in the unusual monument of his left foot, wounded on the field of American honor.

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 American Legion Birthday, see if you find this blue seal