SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

A newsletter of Sons of The American Legion

THE MILLENNIUM

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We are only 3,091 members short of the 400,000 all-time membership goal!

Top Ten Detachments Membership Percentage

1.	Oklahoma	114.12%
2.	Latin America	112.50%
3.	South Carolina	108.16%
4.	South Dakota	107.96%
5.	Mississippi	105.69%
6.	Rhode Island	105.09%
7.	Florida	105.04%
8.	Idaho	103.33%
9.	New Hampshire	103.15%
10.	Virginia	102.96%

Statistics as of 30 June 2025

BE THE ONE

Inside *YOUR* SAL Newsletter this Month

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Special to The Millennium—Mike Monserud (IA), National Vice Commander

American Legion Law Enforcement Career Academy of Arizona

After attending the American Legion Law Enforcement Career Academy of Arizona, I discovered a program that needs National attention. This is a program that is sponsored by the Department of Arizona American Legion and the Arizona Department of Public Safety State Troopers. A program that is open to 14- to 19-year-olds, which saw 46 young women and men graduating ...the future of law enforcement and service in the military.

It's a program that has as director an SAL member, Matt Griffis of Arizona, who is also assisted by two other SAL members. This shows SAL leadership at work, proving that the Sons lead from the front. Cadets rise at 5am for a run, and then post the colors before heading to breakfast. After that, the days were filled with activities that included defensive tactics, DUI arrests, traffic stops, alluding, and many aspects of law enforcement that included visits from the SWAT team, EOD, and even the Arizona DPS helicopter landed for the cadets to explore.

It wasn't all exciting police work, as the cadets also learned how to make their beds, shine boots, shut off lights, and clean. They learned discipline, ethics, structure, and were pushed beyond their limits to become a better person for it. They began before 5am and most nights it was after 10pm before they were allowed to go to bed. I saw the cadets evolve and become a better version of themselves with more confidence each day.

With the ALLECA Class 2025 motto of ***"Train to Lead, Driven to Serve",*** I believe I was able to witness our future leaders being developed by the Arizona DPS and the Detachment of Arizona. The instructors came from varied law enforcement agencies throughout the state to help develop our young future leaders, which they all should be commended for. ALLECA Director and SAL National Sergeant-At-Arms Matt Griffis' motto was "Move with a Purpose" ... and I am here to tell you that by the end of the week, the cadets were doing just that.

ALLECA is a program of Americanism, and I encourage other detachments to look at developing a program that emphasizes the youth of our country. These are the ones who are going to come behind us and advocate for the veterans that served this nation.

After conversations with the cadets, I heard all the future aspirations of these young individuals.

Continued on Page 4 >>>

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

The Millennium: One Year Later

I'm going to use my editor's privilege here to write quite a bit, so please bear with me.

One year ago, I assumed—albeit reluctantly—the editorship of this newsletter following the sudden passing of PNVC Jeff Vrabel, the founder of *The Millennium*.

I received a call from Past National Commander Joe Mayne (MN), where he had asked me if I was interested in taking over as editor. I don't remember much of the call, other than him saying "you know, you can say no if you want…"

I told him I would think about it for a few days and get back to him. It was in the middle of my Department Convention in Wildwood, NJ, so I talked to a few of the detachment folks who had become mentors and friends to pick their brains.

Advice ranged from "you don't know what your getting yourself into", to a very funny quip from someone who knows him joking that "Joe Mayne is a guy you don't say no to." Having very little print experience, I thought long and hard about it.

I knew this would be a big nut to crack. Jeff left some huge shoes to fill … he was very passionate about the organization and about producing newsletters, and had all of the connections and contacts within the national organization to get this done every month. I knew it would be a ton of work. I knew sometimes finding content would be like pulling teeth. I knew very few people outside of my home detachment. But, the opportunity to do something I would have never seen myself doing, and the chance to make a difference in the larger organization, were things which seemed very attractive.

To say I was apprehensive to say "yes" is an understatement.

By the end of the week, I agreed to taking on the position …. and one year later, I can say unquestionably that this has been one of the most rewarding experiences I have had with the Sons of The American Legion.

Don't get me wrong, it has been a great deal of work—but I've enjoyed all of it.

I've worked for, with, and alongside some amazing people, who have all been nothing but supportive and helpful. They've provided the guidance and resources necessary to pull this off every month, and I'm nothing but thankful for that.

From the aforementioned PNC Joe Mayne, to Public and Media Communications Commission (PMCC) Chairman Kevin Chaplin (VA), to Andy Proffet (IN) with National Headquarters Media and Communication, to National SAL Liaison Kevin Mook (IN), all the way through our national commander and his staff officers, I've had some incredible people who are unbelievably supportive of this newsletter endeavor.

The Millennium staff has been nothing short of spectacular—their names are all at right—writing monthly articles, submitting stories from their detachments and regions, and feeding me information on amazing happenings on the ground floor of the SAL from across the country. NVC "Butch", for example, is a wealth of knowledge and serves as a terrific inspiration to use *The Millennium* as a tool to help our squadrons and detachments grow and prosper.

Perhaps the biggest thank you, though, should go to you—the readers and the squadrons—for not just reading this each month, but for the great things you do to serve our vets, our kids, our communities, and our country. YOU are the motivation to make *The Millennium* happen.

Our volunteer staff holds monthly editorial meetings, and this month was perhaps the best one we have had yet. We discussed everything from story count for this month, to upcoming articles and series, to the direction we all see the newsletter taking. PNC Cliff Smith (MA) joined in to talk about membership and camaraderie, and we talked about story ideas revolving around a "how-to" series which would assist squadrons in streamlining how they do business. This discussion grew into talking about the fundamentals of our collective success as an organization, and I found that unbelievably valuable.

Butch had talked about how helping squadrons understand the right way to do things helps them succeed, and how some of the more successful squadrons, districts, and detachments are those which are more regimented; he noted that "...in that regimentation, you define mission, and this is what we are all about." Words, actions, and tradition matter, and that is how we better serve our veterans.

Assistant Editor Randy Timms (WI) then said one of the most impactful statements I've heard yet … **"there is success in that tradition."**

So be on the lookout over the next few editions for stories about the importance of things like running a professional meeting, about the importance of ceremony, and about the meaning of things like officer's installation—plus the importance of getting involved outside of your squadron or county.

This all goes back to where this article started … these are all people and ideas I would have never had been exposed to if I didn't jump into the unknown and take on this position of editor. My point is, do something that is out of your wheelhouse—get involved in things within the SAL that are outside of your comfort level. Do something new which forces you to learn and grow. My journey is an example … I took on something I was terribly unsure about, and a year later I have no regrets about doing so. I hope in reading *The Millennium* you have gotten as much out of it as I have in editing it. Thanks for reading!

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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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.

Mike Cotten (DE), Chairman, Member Training and Development

MTD Report

At our Spring NEC we had a good turnout with 22 participants for myLegion training "SAL" Version.

Squadron 27 (Apache Junction, AZ)'s Gary Manwell and team Arizona did a great job with the presentation and we will expect to continue this class at the fall NEC.

MTD will offer Detachment Commander training at our National Convention in Tampa. This training will be offered on Friday morning Aug. 22 starting at 08:00 and finishing at 12:00; please check your program for room assignments. This class is open for all to attend, but only the incoming Commander will receive a stipend from National. Please make sure that your Department has submitted to National your Detachment Certified Election of Officers, and please check with Brian Compton that they have received it. We will sign-in the Commanders based upon that list.

We will offer again NEC training and mylegion training at the Fall NEC. Pre-registration is not required.

We are also currently working on processing SAL leadership training materials for future on-line classes. Many training modules have been submitted to Internal Affairs for further review and comment.

We are pleased to announce the 2025-2026 Regional family training "NRIC" dates and locations have been set: January 31, 2026 in Indianapolis, and February 7, 2026 in Atlanta. We participated with this family event last year in Denver and Boston with great response from our attendees. Please look for the flyers and sign up on line. It is a great gathering with lots to learn.

National provides "Training Tuesdays" on-line training through my legion, where different topics are covered each week. There is also a extensive video library of past training materials that you can download at your convenience.

Some very important training that is available through mylegion is the Legion Basic course. It takes about 2 hours to review the material, and at the end after you take a test to get a certificate of completion. I suggest any squadron and detachment officer complete this course, as it will give insight and background into our organization.

Our committee meets on Zoom the 1st Monday of every month and we are always looking for more training materials.

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

MTD Monthly Zoom Meeting
1st Monday of the Month, 7pm Eastern

https://legion.zoom.us/j/91247106660?pwd=GKjkTPbKL63yTPQeQ7aU93hBEHWJq6.1

Meeting ID: 951 6984 3801
Passcode: 557995

888 475 4499 US Toll-free
877 853 5257 US Toll-free

62nd Annual National Membership Workshop:
"Let's build the future of The American Legion—together."

8-9 August 2025 - Indianapolis, IN

Registration deadline 18 July 2025

The American Legion's 62nd National Membership Workshop is 8-9 August in Indianapolis at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel.

Attendees will break into groups to hear presentations on the Legion's Be The One suicide prevention initiative, membership recruiting and retention, welcoming new members, legislative priorities, veterans outreach, post/district revitalizations, and more.

This is a great opportunity to learn how to grow the organization.

Registration can be done through the following link:

https://register.legion.org/membershipworkshop

Red Group – Foundational Growth & Belonging Track
Focus: Introduction to Legion culture, values, and baseline responsibilities. Building pride, clarity, and basic skills. Seminars on Meaningful Membership, Build Your Post's Value Proposition, Membership Growth, and Digital Tools,.

Blue Group – Member Engagement Track
Focus: Learning how to liaison different, existing committees at the post and leverage resources to better retain members. Seminars on Digital Tools, Membership Relationships, Communication Tools, Member Engagement Action Plan.

Yellow Group – Recruitment & Retention Track
Focus: Strengthening Posts and Districts through strategic partnerships, revitalization, digital tools, inclusive outreach, and legacy-driven leadership development. Seminars on Be The One, developing a 21st Century Report, Post Revitalization.

Green Group – Strategic Leadership & Legacy Track
Focus: Empower strategic leaders to align priorities, mentor others, and drive mission impact through structure, tools, and legacy planning. Seminars on Putting Strategy into Practice, the Mission, Growing Leaders and Growing Legacy.

American Legion Law Enforcement Career Academy of Arizona *(continued from page 1)*

From Border Patrol to State Trooper, to Military Police and even Federal Law enforcement, these dreams would not be attainable as easily if they did not attend ALLECA. Captain Mondragon from the Arizona DPS stated that when they are interviewing potential candidates for DPS, that they look to see if they attended the ALLECA program. She stated that without the American Legion, they would not be able to put this program on. This is what we are supposed to be doing in our communities, not sitting behind the Post's walls and waiting for them to come to us. It takes passion for a program and someone like Matt who says that they believe in this and will lead from the front. We all need to get out into our communities and re-engage, and use the programs that we have to provide and show that we are here for the youth and support them.

If not us, then who, and if not now, then when? It is up to all of us to stand up and say we will lead the programs of the American Legion if given the chance. The ALLECA program is not the only program that the Arizona Detachment leads. When it came to graduation day, the state leadership showed up, with the American Legion Riders Director being an SAL member. It was nice to see all the SAL caps at the graduation, and proving the Arizona SAL has leadership.

I encourage everyone to check out the ALLECA program and you can at www.alleca-az.org. To the ALLECA Class 2025, make us proud and lead from the front. To all of the cadet advisors, keep up the outstanding work. To all the law enforcement instructors of ALLECA, thank you for your service and we salute you all.

Facebook Photo: ALLECA Director and National Sergeant-at-Arms Matt Griffis (AZ) at morning formation and inspection

Harl "Butch" Ray (IL), National Vice Commander Central

Butch's Bullet Points

"To be a Champion you must believe you are the best. If you're not, pretend you are!" - Boxer Muhammad Ali

What is the mark of a champion? Having just returned from the first weekend playoff rounds of the NCAA Men's Baseball World Series in Omaha, I have to agree with the quote above. My family had the opportunity to sit in on a few player and coaches press conferences following their games and the theme of "You are a Champion if you believe you are" came up time and again!

After reviewing the most recent SAL Membership Report I can see that each of you truly believe you are Champions! Brazilian Martial Artist Anderson Silva once said... "Behind every Champion is a team that prepared him to become that Champion." This is true of the Sons of The American Legion. We are Champions for the cause of our mission to assist the American Legion Family in supporting Veterans, our Children and our Communities! We are Champions because we were and continue to be prepared to grow our numbers, reach and surpass our goals, and prepare our younger members to take our place when the time comes!

As of the June 30th membership report we are only 3,091 cards away from reaching the 400,000 member goal! We have approximately one and a half months to reach and exceed this mark, and as the CHAMPIONS I believe all of you to be; I know we will make it to that magic goal!

I'm reminded of a phrase from one of my Father's favorite poems... Life's battles don't always go, To the stronger or faster man, But soon or late the man who wins, Is the man who thinks he can! (I have attached the full poem to this email)

We my friends need to keep pushing for those non-renewed members. We need to make the calls and knock on doors to get these last few back into our organization. At only 86.62% retention, we have a way to go, but I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT!

Remember July 1st marks the beginning of the new membership year, so start collecting your 2025-2026 dues today! The sooner we educate our members of this fact, the easier the collection of membership will be for each and every year! For most of us, our dues are less than the cost of a tank of gas, or unfortunately the cost of feeding four family members at most fast food restaurants! Let's start the 2026 administrative year with a BANG!

"Champions aren't made in the qyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them: a desire, a dream, a vision" - Muhammad Ali

Sons of The American Legion, let's make the 400,000 member "Vision" become a "Reality"!

Expand your knowledge of the nation's largest veterans service organization online!

Take The American Legion Basic Training Course

https://register.legion.org/alei

Do you know about Training Tuesday?

The last Tuesday of each month American Legion National Headquarters staff will present 60 to 90-minute sessions on topics aimed at post commanders and adjutants. Each session will be recorded and made available for later viewing. Past topics have included CSR/CPR's, Be The One, writing resolutions, and running a meeting.

https://www.legion.org/information-center/training/training-tuesdays

From PNC Donald "JR" Hall (MD) and legion.org

USA 250

The American Legion Family has been working on plans for our country's 250th birthday, which is coming up next year on July 4th, 2026.

The American Legion Family is honoring this landmark in history with a commitment to embracing physical activity, supporting mental health and serving its communities. The USA 250 Challenge encourages American Legion Family members, other veterans and all Americans to participate, and even raise additional money to support our disabled veterans and families in need through The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.

American Legion National Commander James LaCoursiere launched the USA 250 Challenge on July 3, 2025. The yearlong initiative offers three categories — fitness, mental wellness and community service — in order to engage more American Legion Family members and others to participate.

Participants may engage in one, two or all three activities as an an individual or as part of a team like an American Legion post, American Legion Auxiliary unit, Sons of The American Legion squadron and/or an American Legion Riders chapter.

For a $30 registration fee, participants will receive their choice of a USA 250 Challenge tech shirt. The proceeds will go to the Veterans and Children Foundation (VCF).

We would love to see a 250 celebration at your post next year, so why not be the one to start the conversation at your post. Hopefully the Legion Family will lead the way in the celebrations across America. Start planning now and be prepared to share your thoughts and plans with others. After all you only turn 250 once!

You can find out more about USA 250 and the National Commander's Challenge here: **https://www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs/usa250**

John C. Lawrence (LA), National Vice Commander Southeast

Reflections on Service

I am privileged compared to many Americans today. I have the opportunity to interact, associate, and talk with our veterans at a higher level. I have had the privilege of speaking to veterans who have had the enemy in their sights describing in detail their actions at that time. When you sit there and listen, *truly listen* to what that veteran is saying, you can't help but be moved by the conversation. I can't imagine anyone who opposes war more than those who have fought in war … for those who have fought and served in our military, you have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

Many of our citizens today are not aware of the sacrifices our veterans have made, and sadly in some cases they do not even care. They sit back and enjoy the freedoms that our veterans, throughout our history, have bought with their blood. Worse yet, they fight against our freedoms and they want the government to rule many if not all aspects of our lives.

"The foundation of our Empire was not laid in the gloomy age of Ignorance and Superstition, but at an Epoch when the rights of mankind were better understood and more clearly defined, than at any former period, the researches of the human mind, after social happiness, have been carried to a great extent, the Treasures of knowledge, acquired by the labours of Philosophers, Sages and Legislatures, through a long succession of years, are laid open for our use, and their collected wisdom may be happily applied in the Establishment of our forms of Government;" — George Washington

Bill Towns, Jr. (OH), National Historian

SAL 100: A Century of Serving

If you wanted to check information like "Where was the temporary National Headquarters of The American Legion?" or "What year did they move into 777 Meridian Ave?" or even "What year was the uniform cap Introduced?", just a couple clicks of the keyboard would find you an answer. But what if you wanted similar information on the advancements of The Sons of The American Legion? The sad truth is that much of the growth in The SAL has not been recorded.

Submitted Photo: 1st National Convention Medal, 1972

This article is not about placing blame; it is a cry for help. Help from you, The American Legion Family. The 100th Anniversary Ad-Hoc Committee is working to research, gather, compile, and record as much of the SAL missing history as possible, so that the 100th Anniversary Celebration is based on facts. The committee knows that in some showcase or backroom storage at a local post or a family members' home, SAL history is out there. Be it a detachment or a squadron scrapbook, someone that kept minutes of national or detachment meetings, or just lone certificates, photos or trophies, documenting the history, these things exist. If you have any documents, pictures, or memorabilia setting around that you are no longer able to keep, or that your heirs have no interest in, please donate this history before it is lost forever. It is completely understood if what you have you do not want to part with, but you can still play a valuable part in collecting this history by scanning any documents or photos you have. Even just taking a good clear picture of what you have and forwarding it helps.

Submitted Photo: Three Hills Squadron 565 (Pittsburgh, PA), Date Unknown

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

The Post 435 Family (Worcester, MA) performing a ceremony on Flag Day, also commemorating the US Army's 250th Birthday on 14 June.

Detachment Commander Mike Obremski (MD) attending Maryland Girls State

Squadron 154 (Montrose, SD) presented their Squadron Son of the Year Award to Jacob Kloos recognizing an outstanding year of dedication to service

Officers of the Detachment of Florida being installed at their convention by PDC Jim Roberts

The Detachment of Florida conducting a training day focusing on Communicating, Chain of Command, and the use of Info-Grams to train our Squadron members

The Post 20 (Fort Gibson, OK) Honor Guard Team at one of the four events they participated in during the second week of June.

Squadron 45 (Manchester, IA) donates $500 to the Delaware Co. Food Bank

Members of Post and Squadron 67 (Newmarket, NH) prepping for their Flag Retirement Ceremony

Director Chad Robinson at Opening Day of the 2025 Delaware Boys State Program.

Newly elected detachment officers and appointed chainman for the year 2025-2026 being installed by Michigan American Legion NEC Larry Money.

Jake Bourgeois, The Manchester Press—19 June 2025

Iowa: Delhi post signs Sons of The American Legion charter; Welcomes special honorary member

Flag Day was imbued with a little extra meaning June 14 in Delhi as the community gathered at the Legion Post to dedicate the charter for the newly-formed squadron of Sons of The American Legion at John N. Porter Post 160.

Manchester Press photo: Sons line up to sign their new charter

The day was more than a year in the making, which started with efforts to save the community's American Legion Post from closing.

"I got a phone call a little over a year and a half ago that someone told me this post was closing," Commander Travis Niehaus said. "We got some people involved and we transferred back to the 160."

After an election named Niehaus the commander of the local American Legion Post 160, they've been trying to get membership back up and now have more than 25 members. As he took over the post, the need for a SAL squadron became clear."It was evident with what was happening in this community, in Earlville and the post that I was at, that in order for us to survive, having a Sons squadron is a huge, huge thing to have," he said. "If we want to have an event, we ask the Sons. If the Sons want to have an event, they ask us."

It's a sentiment that the commander of the new Sons chapter echoed when declaring what the newest chapter is all about.

"First of all, I believe we should carry out our main mission, which is to assist veterans and their families. First and foremost, to assist this post. After all, they are made of all veterans," Grover Goldsmith said.

Goldsmith also said the new chapter would be looking at activities they could run to be involved in the community.

"I believe this squadron will become a vibrant and active one in this community," he said.

His post commander agreed.

"I'm thankful that we have this many members, it's awesome to get the charter and we're going to do good things in this community," Niehaus said. "We will be prevalent in this community, you will see us in this community and, going forward, you'll see the funny little hats running around."

The ceremony brought together local officials and members of the statewide American Legion to celebrate the new squadron, who were likewise pleased at what they had seen so far.

"It's great to see the amount of members you have here already in place," Department Commander of Iowa Brian Ring said. "As a family, work hard to keep this post vigilant, bring yourself back to life and you will be here forever."

"I'd like to welcome you all to the American Legion family," Detachment Commander Doug Honse said. "I've heard some interesting stories over the last few hours of this post and this squadron. I'm glad to see that a post is able to come back and an SAL group will help in a lot of ways."

It was a day to mark for Delhi, but also for Ring, as this charter was only the second to bear his signature and the first charter signing he was able to be present for.

As the squadron welcomed new members, they added an honorary member to their roster as well.

A couple month's back, Niehaus had been forced to explain to a family looking to host a celebration of life, that the Legion Post was unavailable as their schedule was booked. He later found out that the celebration was for a Marine veteran, Austin McDowell.

Niehaus and another officer went over to where the celebration of life was happening and introduced themselves, which is when he found out that Kayla Rand, McDowell's significant other, was expecting.

"That little baby boy is here today, and his name is Austin Boone," Niehaus said.

"We have made him an honorary member. It's imperative that we forget not his service and it's imperative that his son forget not his service."

Niehaus then presented the certificate of honorary membership with a folded flag to Rand.

The Brookings Register—17 June 2025

South Dakota: 'Legion Ride 605' receives $200 in Arlington stop

The annual "Legion Ride 605" is a fundraiser for the South Dakota American Legion Foundation.

Donations from this ride benefit veterans in need or children and youth programs supported by the Legion. This year's ride ran June 7-10, covering 1,050 miles from Piedmont to Pierre. They picked up donations, local Legion Rider Chapters for shorter ride-alongs and met with the community posts and businesses.

Arlington hosted the Legion Riders in the middle of their run on June 9 for a quick coffee/cookie break, before they headed out to other post stops. Arlington Post 42 Legion and Sons of the American Legion joined together to donate $200 to the worthy cause.

Post and Squadron 42 (Arlington, SD) joined together to donate $200 to the "Legion Ride 605" cause on June 9.

Bruno Williamson (IL), Chairman, National VA and R Committee

Together Making a Difference

Hello, my brother Sons, it is crazy to think that we are now in convention season, and that the year is ending.

A few final programs I would like to talk about that your National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission has been working on this year are the VA's Red Coat Ambassador Program and Honor Flight.

The Red Coat Ambassador Program: A "FIRST IMPRESSION" into the VA. You are the first face our veterans see, and you are easily identifiable by the very sexy red coat or vest that you get wear. Ambassadors are stationed at the main entrances of the VA or CBOC during their core business hours. Some of the responsibilities of an Ambassador are greeting veterans, families, and visitors as the come into the VA; provide information; provide escort service; wheelchair service; and help with navigating your facility. VA is always doing surveys so you may be asked to help with these surveys to get their feedback on the services that they are receiving. This is typically a regularly schedule assignment so you would have to go through the VA's volunteer application and on-boarding process. Whether your assignment is at a VA or C.B.O.C., contact your VA's C.D.C.E. Center for Development and Civic Engagement (Volunteer Services) for more information.

Honor Flight: Almost 20 years ago Honor Flight was created with a simple, mission – honoring our nation's veterans by bringing them to Washington, DC to visit the memorials built in their honor. Honor Flight is a national non-profit organization of independent hubs that have a common goal of showing our nations veterans our appreciation and giving them the honor that they deserve.

An Honor Flight trip gives veterans a chance to share their stories with other veterans. All honored veterans travel free through donations to Honor Flight.

Honor Flight was originally focused on our WW II-era veterans. But as time has moved on and we continue to lose those of our "greatest generation," Korean War and Vietnam War-era veterans are now included on these flights. Through the Honor Flight TLC program, any veteran of any service era who is critically ill is also eligible. Transporting approximately 22,500 veterans annually, the Honor Flight Network has flown over 317,128 veterans to Washington, DC since its inception from 128 hubs in 46 states.

We Sons of course can help with donations to make sure every veteran that wants to go on a flight can go. We can be at the airport for the going away ceremonies and for the welcome back ceremonies. On the flight home, every flight has mail call. You can get together with your squadron or district to write cards and letters for the next flight. In the fall at the VA I volunteer at, we are doing our first ever 'virtual" Honor Flight - that may be something you can investigate at your VA.

As I said at the beginning of this article, we are coming to the close of this year. It is indeed my hope that squadrons across the country have filled out their CSR's, or Consolidated Squadron Reports. Why you ask? Let me show you what we did for just VA&R last year: **over $2 million dollars was donated to all the VA&R programs on the CSR**, we volunteered 240,000 hours which equates to $8 million for a total of $10 million in donations and hours volunteered. These are incredible numbers, but is it really showing all that we do? Nationally, we reported at 33%, so are we really donating closer to $30 million. We will only have an accurate number if you are filling out your CSR's.

I hope to see many of you in a couple of months in Tampa.

Jeff Trout (IL), Chairman, VCF Ad-Hoc Committee

Veterans and Children Foundation

The VCF Ad-Hoc Committee would like to remind everyone that although the cut off was May 31st, please continue to spread the word and raise funds for this vital program. Inform your squadrons that The American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation supports veterans and children within their own communities. For those squadrons that insist on 100% support within their community, it truly is that simple. We all know a veteran who is receiving VA benefits because they received assistance from an accredited American Legion Service Officer. Many of us know a veteran or active-duty service member with young children at home that received a Temporary Financial Assistance grant to pay their utility bill.

Since its inception in 1925 as the American Legion Endowment Fund, the foundation has assisted millions of veterans, their families and children in need. In 2019, the American Legion Endowment Fund was renamed the American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation, to more clearly state who benefits.

Raising money for VCF is not just asking for donations, but educating people on what VCF does and what it is about. The VCF covers training and accreditation costs for American Legion claims experts who provide free representation for veterans and families applying for disability benefits, survivor assistance, GI Bill opportunities, and more. Through VCF funding, the Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance provides vital support for military and veteran parents in unexpected financial crises. These grants prevent eviction, keep the power on and fulfill basic needs to hold a family together through difficult times.

So, as we continue to educate our detachments, districts, and squadrons, the donations will continue to grow, and The American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation will continue to assist the veterans and children within our communities.

Learn more about VCF and how you can help by visiting www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs/veterans-and-children-foundation

Randy Timms (WI), Assistant Editor, "The Millennium"

Badger Youth Camp

On June 21st of this year, the Sons of The American Legion were joined by several members of the Auxiliary and Legion as we presented our program to 104 children from active duty families. This year, we were thrilled to have Nathan Bond, leading candidate for Department Commander, join us.

Submitted Photo

We believe strongly in the Children and Youth pillar that states in part "to strengthen the family unit; extend support; extend support to sound organizations and facilities that provide services for children and youth".

The younger children (camp caters to kids from 8 to 17 years of age) can be confused over what mom or dad are really doing, and come with anxiety and sometimes fear over their departure. Camp affords them an opportunity to meet other children in their age range which allows them to share their feelings with peers. When a child lives in a more rural location, they often have no one to talk with. Camp improves their knowledge, creates friendships that can last years, and gives them an opportunity to simply be children.

Submitted Photo

Badger Youth Camp is run by the WI Army National Guard. While they offer a wide variety of programs throughout the year, Badger Youth Camp is where the Sons have partnered with them. And honestly, it has been a blessing to us as well as the kids; it should also be noted that every child, no matter their parents branch of service, are welcomed with no one ever being turned away.

The program we introduce them to has evolved each year, and will continue to grow—and if other squadron's or detachments would like a copy of the script, we're happy to share it. Currently, we "introduce" them to Betsy Ross and explain how the flag we use today came into being. We then read and explain the Pledge of Allegiance.

Francis Scott Key, lawyer, author and poet, wrote the words to the Star-Spangled Banner. So, we explain each line to deepen its meaning and understanding. Then we all stand together and sing it.

Many years ago, Johnny Cash introduced a song called "That Old Ragged Flag". Joyce Buehl, past Wisconsin Auxiliary President, wrote it out and gifted it to me. As part of our program, a member speaks as if he were the flag. It tells of how, when "he" came down the street, people would stand, be silent and reverent and respect it. But today, much of that has disappeared. People barely notice when Old Glory comes by. He goes on to explain the importance of acknowledging and respecting what our flag means to all of us.

TAPS is well known to all of us. We've heard it many times, but few really know where it came from. So, we tell the story of how TAPS and the Civil War battlefield set the stage for its creation as they all stand respectfully as it's played.

We also ask our veterans to take the stage, and invite the kids to ask any questions they wish. We've had some great questions and some sensitive ones too .. but the vets have taken each with a great attitude and done a superb job.

Submitted Photo

Lastly, we explain how to properly retire the American Flag. If weather

Submitted Photo

requires us to remain inside, we walk through what happens, explaining each step. Weather permitting, we use the fire pit and perform a true retirement.

At the end of the day, I believe everyone taking part is blessed. It's a wonderful reminder of how sharing history, patriotism, and experiences should never be neglected or forgotten.

If your squadron, or your detachment, are not doing something to address the needs of military-connected children, PLEASE consider what's happening in Wisconsin. If you are proactive, share it with others so all children can realize the benefit of having the Sons of The American Legion working for them.

"Spotted by a Son",

*In June's **"Spotted by a Son"**, we asked if you could find the folded flag graphic. It was on Page 12 of the newsletter, which went out on 11 June, and by 9:23am we had a winner…*

Archie Scott Squadron 25 Newport News, VA

Scott serves as Adjutant, Finance Officer, and VE&E Chairperson for the Detachment of Virginia. He's been a member of the SAL for 5 years now, joining under his grandfather, Marion E. Gibson, a WWII Army veteran. Scott is also a dual member.

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—the first email wins!

Installations and new officers from throughout the SAL

Charles Curtis (CA-283), and wife Joanna. Curtis was recently elected as the Commander of the Detachment of California.

Squadron 434 (Oak Creek, WI) installation of 2025-26 officers

Mark Hines (GA-145) is elected as the 2025-2026 Detachment Commander of Georgia

Installation of Detachment of Colorado officers

Installation of officers in Chautauqua County, NY

Installation at newly elected Detachment Commander Clive Seydell of Michigan

At the installation of officers from Squadron 173 (Holiday, FL)

SAL Detachment of Virginia Vice Commander Jay Rarick installs the officers of Squadron 364 in Woodbridge, VA

Installation of officers at Post 91 (Chandler, AZ)

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

"Mentoring Moments"

The Eagle flag pole ornament, on top of the American Flag, represents our nation's soaring spirit and noble ideals. The Eagle not only serves as a patriotic symbol, the spread wings must face forward as if it was flying. When the flag is posted or being moved, the Eagle faced forward.

Editor's Photo

Facebook.com

Massachusetts: Thomas J. Abernathy Memorial Scholarship

There were seven scholarships awarded by the Westfield, MA American Legion Post 124 Family of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary Unit, Sons of The American Legion, and the Legion Riders.

Facebook Photo: Ryan Borthwick, recipient of the Thomas J. Abernathy Memorial Scholarship

The recipient of the Thomas J. Abernathy Memorial Scholarship was Ryan Borthwick. Ryan was not available to receive his award on Memorial Day, as he was at Fort Benning, GA attending the Army National Guard's Air Assault Course at the Warrior Training Canter. The Air Assault Course is twelve days in duration, and prepares soldiers for air mobile operations. During the course, students train and are evaluated on combat assault, sling loads, rappelling, physical fitness, and various other critical skills. Students are required to complete an obstacle course and two-mile run on "zero day" before entering the course. Prior to graduation, students must successfully complete written and hands-on examinations, sling load tests, and a twelve-mile foot march in under three hours with full combat load.

Borthwick is an ROTC cadet at Norwich University, where he is studying cybersecurity. He is an alumnus of the 2022 Massachusetts Boys State program; Borthwick aspires to be commissioned in the United States Army and to serve as a combat infantry officer.

Dr. Abernathy, whom the scholarship is named for, was a WW I combat veteran who as a pilot was assigned to the 147th Aero Squadron, 1st Pursuit Group, who was credited with the destruction of three enemy airplanes. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism near Vourbin, France on July 15, 1918; he was also awarded the Croix de Guerre. After WW I, Thomas J. Abernathy continued to serve his community, state, and nation as a member of American Legion Post 124.

Facebook Photo: Borthwick, left, at Air Assault Training at Fort Benning

Thomas J. Abernathy was recalled to Active Duty during WW II, and served five years attaining the rank of LtCol. Dr. Abernethy was also once the principal of Westfield High School, and the superintendent of the Westfield Public Schools. He was a past president of the Westfield YMCA and a director of the Westfield Athenaeum until his death.

AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY

Facebook Photo: Squadron 169 (Winner, SD) receives their Largest Squadron Growth for Membership Award for being at 190% membership!

Facebook Photo: The Detachment of Illinois proudly presents a Flag Etiquette program every year on the first day of the Illinois American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program

Facebook Photo: Post and Squadron 39 (Manitou Springs, CO) presented flags to new citizens, three of whom were members of the military. It was a nice ceremony with many heartfelt words from the new citizens and their families, as well as the judge who is a second generation citizen.

The Newshound

A special section dedicated to the Young Sons of The American Legion

Rusty Myers (NJ), Detachment Children & Youth Chairman

New Jersey holds their first Children and Youth Academy

The Detachment of New Jersey held their first Children and Youth Academy on Sunday 08 June at American Legion Post 105 in Belleville, NJ. The Academy, run by the Detachment's Children and Youth Commission, is geared towards educating younger members of the SAL about the values and initiatives of the greater organization.

Rusty Myers, 2024-2025 Commission Chairman, taught the seminar which lasted about two hours.

"This has been something we've been trying to do for years, which finally came together this summer," Myers noted. "The Academy is one way which we are engaging our younger members, who will one day move into leadership positions within the Sons. We're making an investment into the future of The American Legion Family."

Submitted Photo: Caden with his 10 Ideals Award

The SAL, the largest program of The American Legion at almost 400,000 members nationwide, is made up of male descendants of veterans and serviceman. Though the American Legion itself is comprised of those who have served in uniform, Sons membership is open to sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons of those vets. It is by being a "proud possessor of a priceless heritage" that someone could become a Son as a young man or even on the day they are born.

Though the national organization considers all SAL members Sons, without distinction to age, there really is no way to ballpark how many SAL's are under the age of 18. Many squadrons have a good deal of their membership as young men, which is why there needs to be a concentrated effort to get them involved.

These Children and Youth Academies, run both at the national level and at many of the 55 detachments, are one way to get these younger members educated and up to speed on the role they play as Sons.

NJ's first academy focused on earning the participants the 10 Ideals Medal. The award – a medal suspended from a blue ribbon – is a national award for younger members, given out at the squadron level. It is given in recognition of completing a program of Patriotism, Health, Knowledge, Training, Honor, Faith, Helpfulness, Courtesy, Reverence, and Comradeship.

The seminar included flag education, where the participants learned how to fold flags, as well as open round-table discussions about the veteran who made them eligible for membership, their thoughts about being a good citizen, and the importance of doing our part to support those who served in uniform. Members of the American Legion Auxiliary were there to audit the class as well, giving their thoughts about "service above self."

14-year-old Caden, a member of Anthony Wayne Squadron 174 in Wayne who is a member though his great-grandfather's WWII service, was a participant in the seminar. He noted he would like to continue learning about what the Legion does.

Following the completion of the Academy, Caden received his certificate and medal, pinned on him by his grandfather Greg Shaffer. Shaffer is also an SAL from Squadron 174 currently serving as a Detachment Vice Commander.

"I can say that I also picked up some new information which will help me in moving forward supporting the 10 Ideals, our American Legion and our Veterans," Shaffer said.

Caden joins only a handful of other Sons in New Jersey who have received this prestigious medal, and becomes the first graduate of New Jersey's Children and Youth Academy.

Did you know that your squadron can run The 10 Ideals Program geared towards your younger members?

A national award of recognition may be presented to those who have completed the Ten Ideals Program. This medal is available through National Emblem Sales, for completing a program of Patriotism, Health, Knowledge, Training, Honor, Faith, Helpfulness, Courtesy, Reverence, & Comradeship.

This is a great way to engage your young members at the local level, and help train the future of the Sons of The American Legion.

Email the editor for resources used in his home detachment to help administer this award.

The award is available through Emblem Sales here currently for $16.99.

Excerpts from legion.org: Sons of The American Legion at Boys' State programs across the country

American Legion Boys State is among the most respected and selective educational programs of government instruction for U.S. high school students. A participatory program in which students become part of the operation of local, county and state government, Boys State was founded in 1935 to counter the socialism-inspired Young Pioneer Camps.

At Boys State, participants learn the rights, privileges and responsibilities of franchised citizens. The training is objective and centers on the structure of city, county and state governments. Operated by students elected to various offices, Boys State activities include legislative sessions, court proceedings, law-enforcement presentations, assemblies, bands, choruses and recreational programs.

Legion posts select high school juniors to attend the program. In most cases, individual expenses are paid by a sponsoring post, a local business or another community-based organization.

Boys State programs currently exist in all Legion departments in the United States except Hawaii. As separate corporations, Boys State programs vary in content and method of procedure, but each adheres to the same basic concept: teaching government from the township to the state level.

Michael Vozar (IL), staff at Premier Boys State

Premier Boys State

The Detachment of Illinois proudly supports American Legion Illinois Premier Boys State! ALIPBS completed their 88th Session in June at Eastern Illinois University. Illinois Boys State was founded in 1935 by the Department of Illinois and was the first Boys State Program in the Nation— hence the title "Premier". The 2025 session had 220 young men registered with 67 of the 100 plus staff volunteers being Sons of The American Legion members.

ILLINOIS PREMIER BOYS STATE

"Give me a place to stand, and a lever long enough, and I will move the world..." - Archimedes

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Postage Here

To:

This Month, On The Back Cover …..

For more SAL History, as at left, click on the logo below or go to https://archive.legion.org/

AMERICAN LEGION Digital Archive

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 being July, find the Betsy Ross Flag somewhere in this newsletter