SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

A newsletter of Sons of The American Legion

THE MILLENNIUM

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The Sons of The American Legion nationally has surpassed 400,000 members—JOB WELL DONE!

Special to The Millennium—Rusty Myers (NJ), Editor

William "Bill" Clancy III of New York elected as the SAL's 2025-2026 National Commander

On 24 August 2025, with over 1,500 delegates present at the JW Marriott In Tampa, Florida, William "Bill" Clancy III of the Detachment of New York was elected as the National Commander for the Sons of The American Legion for the 2025-26 leadership year.

With his two sons serving as delegates officially nominating him for the high office of national commander, and with Past National Commander (PNC) Clifford Smith of Massachusetts seconding the nomination, Commander Clancy was elected Sunday morning, followed by the election of the five new national vice commanders.

Clancy is a founding member of SAL Squadron 156 in City Island, where he has served multiple terms as squadron commander. He also has served as New York detachment commander and in national leadership positions, and also is a graduate of New York Boys State.

Clancy is the latest in a long lineage of national American Legion leadership that New York has offered up in service to the country's largest veterans service organization - one of whom, Past National Commander (PNC) Christopher Cerullo (NY), made the nominating speech.

Brothers Greg and Mike Clancy, both Legionnaires from Commander Clancy's home Post, swore him in. His wife, Kurstal, placed his name badge, and his sons Geir and Stenn placed his garrison cap and pin. Johnny, his nephew and a Son, was on stage as well.

"All of my thoughts always bring me back to one word. It's the word we," Clancy said. "'We' is infinitely more powerful than 'I'," noted Clancy in his first address as National Commander. "We is the word that our founding fathers chose when they wrote one of the best documents ever written, when they opened it with, 'We, the people'.

"We, the People" highlights one of Commander Clancy's core goals of the year—to celebrate USA250 … the 250th birthday of the United States. Clancy said he and his family have signed up for the USA250 Challenge and plan to complete multiple components. "The first component for us and for me, we're going to do 250 workouts as I travel around the country. The second component … is community service. I aim to plant 250 trees this year around our country and have them named after veterans in the local communities where we plant them."

Continued on Page 2>>>

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100 Years of the Sons of The American Legion

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POW/MIA: Articles in advance of Recognition Day on 19 September

PNVC Harl "Butch" Ray (IL), Contributor to *The Millennium*

400,000 Members!

Talk about a job well done! We have reached and exceeded the 400,000 member goal set for us at the beginning of this membership year! WAY TO GO! We are at 401,084 to be exact and still climbing!

> ***"Reaching this point is not just a victory—it is a reminder of what we are capable of."***
>
> ***-PNVC Ray***

Team, we set a goal, we worked for it, and we crushed it. This isn't just a task completed—it's proof that hard work and determination pay off. As Aristotle said, "Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work." Every challenge we faced only made us stronger, and today we stand here with results we can be proud of.

As many of us went to Tampa's SAL National Convention, the knowledge that we have completed our task is very satisfying. Not just for those of us that pushed and urged all of you to reach this goal, but also for all of you. There is strength in numbers and we will now be able to accomplish just a bit more with these new Sons of The American Legion members!

"Success is not about the applause, it's about the satisfaction of knowing you've done your best!" - Actress Faye Dunaway

Because each of you have done your best, we will now be able to more completely work the mission of the Sons of The American Legion and assist many more veterans and their families because of your efforts! When the new accomplishments sheet comes out, you will see in black and white the dollars raised and the hours volunteered and spent in our Patriotic Service this past year!

"Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment. Full Effort is Full Victory!" - Mahatma Gandhi

Reaching this point is not just a victory—it is a reminder of what we are capable of. Every late night, every moment we pushed a little harder… It all brought us here. This success is ours, and it's something no one can take away. Football Great Coach Vince Lombardi once reminded us, "The price of success is hard work, dedication, and the determination to give our best." Well, we gave our best—and it shows. Let's celebrate this win, carry the momentum forward, and go after the next goal even harder.

"Wake up with Determination. Go to bed with Satisfaction!" - Unknown

>>Continued from the cover: **Clancy Elected as National Commander**

Millennium Photo

Clancy also spoke of the Sons' role in promoting the Legion's veteran suicide prevention mission. "We, the Sons of The American Legion, to carry forward the message of being the one," he said. "Being the one to stop veteran suicide by conveying the training and to make the public aware of this tremendous horror facing our country – that veterans are taking their own lives."

"We're going to continue to spread the message, but we're going to do more than spread the message. We are going to endeavor to bring every veteran in the United States, all 15-plus million of them … into this American Legion Family, where they know they will be loved and cared for all the time."

Millennium Photo: The National Commander receiving his hat from his son, Geir

"Spotted by a Son"

In August's "Spotted by a Son", we asked if you could find the Purple Heart Medal. It was on Page 17...

The newsletter email went out on 13 August, and by 9:33am we had a winner…

Donald Walker
Squadron 555
Pelham, Alabama

Walker serves as squadron commander. Detachment Vice Commander, and Detachment Historian. He is a five-year member, 2024 Detachment "Son of the Year", and is eligible for membership through his grandfather Donald H. Walker's US Navy service during WWII and his father Michael's US Army service.

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!

Donald Walker (AL 555) and his two year-old son, Michael, who is the squadron's newest member

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

Take The American Legion Basic Training Course

https://register.legion.org/alei

William "Bill" Clancy III (NY), National Commander

Commander's Corner: *"Fun With Purpose"*

The 53rd Annual Convention of the Sons of The American Legion in Tampa Bay Florida was an exciting and fun filled weekend. The highpoint for me was the surprise that my 13 year-old son, Geir Clancy, was on stage to nominate me for the high office of National Commander of the 401,000+ member Sons of The American Legion.

Following that nomination, and election, and being led to the stage by all of the Past National Commanders in attendance, was a humbling experience as I look up to and admire each of those men for their past and ongoing service to our organization .

Shawn Davis Photo: Clancy and his wife, Kurstal, in Tampa

I'm beyond excited to do my best over this next year to lead us to new heights and ongoing success. The theme for the year, is inspired directly from our preamble. "Community State and Nation, Live Your Obligation".

If we consider the history of our great country the United States of America, each generation has contributed to the success of the next, from the Founding Fathers right up to today. If we can insure that all Americans … particularly our youngest citizens … have instilled in them the concept of an obligation of service for the greater good, then the future will remain bright for generations to come. This is our task!

The SAL is growing from an organization into something of a social movement. We have passed 400,000 members and we are approaching 6,000 Squadrons. I aim for every squadron to be a beacon within communities … a beacon of service, patriotism and "Fun With Purpose."

So Let's get fired up! Let's serve veterans and engage with our nations' youth and inspire them to civic involvement!

We have the numbers, we have the energy, we have the people leading the charge!

Let's find every veteran in every community and invite them to become Legionnaires; invite them to bring their spouses and daughters to join The American Legion Auxiliary and invite their sons and grandsons to join the SAL.

I look forward to the year ahead. I look forward to seeing so many of you in your squadrons and detachments, and speaking to you regularly through the newsletter and online.

Lets Carry On for God and Country, and have Fun Along The Way!

God Bless The American Legion Family, and God Bless The USA.

Millennium Photo: The National Commander addressing the 2025 National Convention

"Community State and Nation, Live Your Obligation"

-National Commander William "Bill" Clancy III

AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY USA250 CHALLENGE

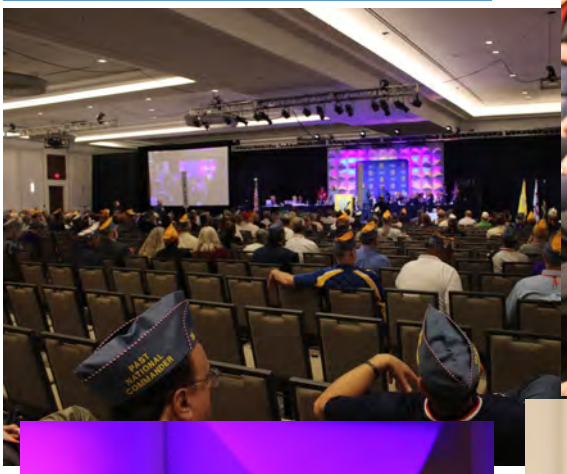
Celebrate the nation's semiquincentennial by taking part in The American Legion's USA 250 Challenge. Your participation, whether as an individual or part of a team, helps honor our veterans and uplift communities nationwide while promoting physical fitness, mental wellness, and community service.

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).

Register Here
www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs/usa250/challenge

The National Convention in Pictures



Rusty Myers Photos

The National Convention in Pictures

Meet Your National Vice Commanders for 2025-26

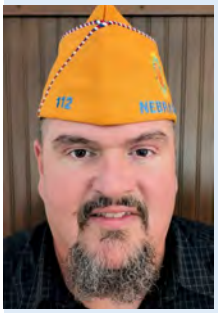
Jeremy Revell (VT), NVC Northeast

NVC Revell is a 24-year member of the SAL, and belongs to Squadron 19 in Bristol, Vermont. He is eligible for membership through his great-grandfather, Alexander H. Revell II, who served in the U.S. Army during World War I; through his grandfathers Alexander H. Revell III and Lorin Leuthold, both of whom served in the Pacific Theater during World War II. He is a two-term Past Detachment Commander, and has served on various national, detachment, and squadron committees.

C. Frank Meraz, Jr. (CA), NVC West

C. Frank Meraz, Jr. is a 45-year member of Ed Stewart Squadron 803 in Stockton, California. He is married to wife Marcie and has a son who is a 21-year SAL member. He was Detachment Commander from 1986-87, and currently serves on the Detachment Finance Commission Chairman and as his squadron adjutant. He also formally served as detachment adjutant, finance officer, IA chairman. His eligibility is through his grandfather, Joseph Guzman, WWII United States Coast Guard.

Chris Casey (NE), NVC Midwest

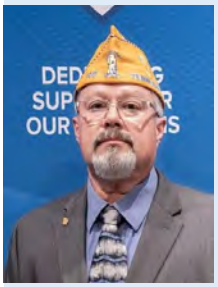


A member of Benson Squadron 112 in Omaha, Nebraska, NVC Casey's eligibility is through his grandfather, David L. Harvey, a United States Air Force Vietnam veteran, who served from 1953-1969. Casey served as the Nebraska Detachment Commander from 2021 to 2023. On the national level, NVC Chris served as a member of the Membership Training and Development Committee, Membership and Squadron Activities Committee, and Chairman of the Americanism Commission.

Steve Honigfort (OH), NVC Central

Serving as Detachment of Ohio Commander for 2011-12, NVC Honigfort has served on and in various committees and offices in his squadron and detachment, including ANEC. He has served on the national Finance Committee for several years, and as the Central Region Membership Chairman. Honigfort's home post is Kerner-Slusser Squadron 63 in Ottowa, Ohio, where he has been for 47 years, with eligibility for membership through his father Robert's Korean War US Army service.

Bryan Hine (TN), NVC Southeast



NVC Hine is a 26 year member of Loretto Squadron 146 in the Detachment of Tennessee, where he's served in all squadron offices, as well as those at district, division, and as Detachment Commander. He has previously served on the national Membership and Squadron Activities Committee, and as Tennessee's NEC and Detachment Adjutant. He is eligible for membership through his stepfather's Vietnam War service.

Chris Casey (NE), National Vice Commander Central

Detachment Spotlight: Nebraska Veterans Memorial

The Veterans Memorial Park in Gordon, Nebraska has grown into a powerful tribute to those who served, thanks to the efforts of American Legion Post 34 and the local community. What began as a wall honoring 270 Sheridan County veterans has expanded over four years to including more than 775 names, funded entirely through donations and the sale of engraved bricks. At the heart of the park stand the Four Pillars of the American Legion, each representing a core value: Veterans Affairs, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth.

Located along Highway 20, the National Medal of Honor Highway, the park also honors 74 Medal of Honor recipients from Nebraska. One of its most striking additions is the statue titled "No Man Left Behind," donated by the Detachment of Nebraska Sons of The American Legion. The 7-foot, 2,000-pound bronze figure depicts a Vietnam soldier carrying a wounded comrade and is placed in front of a restored AH-1 Cobra Helicopter, adding realism and emotional depth to the site.

Submitted Photo

In addition to this powerful piece, the park features statues representing branches of the U.S. military—Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force—making it a place of reflection, honor, and community pride. With over $750,000 in donated labor and materials to date, the Veterans Memorial Park stands as a lasting symbol of gratitude for those who served and sacrificed.

Submitted Photo

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

Reflecting on the National Convention: Camaraderie

I write this on the airplane back to Newark-Liberty International Airport, the weekend after the convention while the whole experience is fresh (truth be told, after we spent five days in Disney after the convention.)

Sitting next to my children in a packed plane out of Orlando, following the better part of a week of Mickey Mouse emptying my bank account, I now have some downtime to reflect on the unbelievable experience of National Convention. Attending a gathering of not only 1,500 other Sons of The American Legion, but a convention of thousands more from throughout the Legion Family, is something that I find hard to put into words.

This was the second convention, with my first being the 51st Convention in 2023 in Charlotte, NC. This time, I had the honor to serve as New Jersey's Secretary-Delegate, as I have just finished a term as Detachment Adjutant. We had a delegation of 15 from The Garden State, all of whom are not only brother Sons from across the detachment but friends. It was great spending some quality time with them outside the normal business of administering the detachment.

In speaking to our Department SAL Chairman Anthony "Tony" Gladden, we both commented on how this week flew by and seemed busier then past conventions.

Editor's Photo: The NJ Delegation

All of us were on-the-go the entire week. We went to committee meetings, training seminars, get-togethers, meet-and-greets, fundraisers, and of course the convention sessions. But it wasn't all business … as Chairman Tony says, "It's a chance to see everyone let their hair down."

As it has been over a year since I inherited the editorship of this newsletter, I've corresponded with folks from around the country quite a bit—and built relationships with these fellow Sons even though we had never met.

I haven't been to a convention or NEC meeting since SAL-U in Spring of 2024, so this was my first time back in-person at any sort of national meeting since taking on *The Millennium*.

I can't say how many Sons I had "met" for the first time, having worked with them virtually for over a year ... but I can guarantee that each one embraced me as a friend with a handshake or a hug. This was something that I was truly struck by—that even though we had never met face-to-face, we felt like life-long friends because of our common bond of service.

To name a few… Mike Pook and PNC David Faust from Wisconsin, as well as their new Detachment Commander Chris "5n" Dannenmann (he had to explain to me why it said that on his business card ... because his last name has 5 'N's). Casey Hansen from South Dakota. Mike Vozar from Illinois. PNC Joe Mayne from Minnesota. Jason Miller and PNC JR Hall from Maryland. Tyler Vanice from Virginia.

Plus, the folks I had met once or twice before—including just about everyone from our SAL-U "Dirty Dozen" class—and not to mention PNVC Butch, PMCC's Kevin Chaplin, and more.

I also got to know the new National Commander fairly well … and I am so excited about the year we're in for. This guy is a class act and he is surrounded by a wonderful family. Commander Clancy's vision for his year is electric and inspiring—and his motivation is contagious.

In saying that, I talk about this in many of the editorials I write … ***camaraderie***. We all-too-often focused on the work we do, and forget that the service that binds and unites us also makes us friends and brothers. If that isn't a reason to get more involved outside of your squadron, I don't know what is. I'm truly blessed that I've met so many great people through The American Legion and the SAL. We have some amazing Sons out there, who work tirelessly for our veterans, our kids, and our communities—get involved and get to know them.

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

Northeast:	Jeremy Revell (VT
Southeast:	Bryan Hine (TN)
Central:	Chris Casey (NE)
Midwest:	Steve Honigfort (OH)
Western:	C. Frank Meraz Jr. (CA)

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SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Projected Distribution Schedule for *The Millennium*

Wednesday 08 October 2025
Wednesday 12 November 2025
Wednesday 10 December 2025
Wednesday 14 January 2026
Wednesday 11 February 2026
Wednesday 11 March 2026
Wednesday 08 April 2026
Wednesday 13 May 2026

Look for this newsletter monthly in the Digital Newsletter, or check out all of the SAL's archived newsletters at https://archive.legion.org/

AMERICAN LEGION Digital Archive

Legion.org, *24 July 2025*

Minnesota: Squadron 225 works to clean veteran's headstones

Over the Fourth of July weekend, approximately a dozen headstones in Scandinavian Cemetery in Forest Lake, MN., were defaced with vulgarities in black spray paint.

But the members of Sons of The American Legion Squadron 225 in Forest Lake moved quickly to deal with the graffiti.

Squadron Adjutant Jeff Larson; Squadron First Vice Commander Bill Murphy; a friend, Tom Larson; and Blake Johnson, who owns a local auto detailing business; headed to the cemetery to try to clean off the spray paint.

"Scandinavian Cemetery is one of the cemeteries we've been to and have done some headstone cleaning for veterans and their wives," Jeff Larson said. Over the past few years, the squadron — using D/2 headstone cleaner — has restored some 80 headstones at a time.

The black spray paint, which was used to write anti-American sentiment in some cases, proved tougher than the usual stains. But the local Home Depot, which has donated products to the headstone restoration efforts in the past, donated graffiti removal material to the cause this time, Jeff Larson said.

"You can hardly see the paint now," he said. There is one headstone whose material absorbed too much of the spray paint. Larson said he plans to "track down the family of that stone and see if it's possible to get permission to take some light sandpaper and get the rest off there."

Forest Lake Police are investigating the incident, Larson said, and the cemetery has installed trail cameras in hopes of catching someone returning to vandalize more headstones.

In the meantime, Squadron 225 will continue to show their support for veterans and the community.

"We are doing this to honor our vets and their families. It's an act of citizenship. It's something for our community, the American Legion; it's a form of true spirit of Americanism," Larson said. "We're not looking for a pat on the back … it's just a shame that such shenanigans are going on."

Legion.org Photo

2025-26 Membership Target Dates

15 October 2025	25%
13 November 2025	35%
10 December 2025	45%
14 January 2026	60%
11 February 2026	75%
11 March 2026	80%
08 April 2026	90%
13 May 2026	100%
29 July 2026*	105%

*** DELEGATE STRENGTH TARGET DATE - 30 DAYS PRIOR TO NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Mike Pook (WI), Staff Contributor to The Millennium

"Mentoring Moments"

As "A Proud Processor of a Priceless Heritage", you should be proud to wear your SAL cover at all Sons of The American Legion meetings and events.

Editor's Photo: National Convention 2025

C. Frank Meraz Jr. (CA), National Vice Commander West

Detachment Spotlight: VA&R in California

When the Detachment of California was asked about what we do best within our Detachment, we saw a clear answer. For our Detachment it would be our Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) and Veterans Employment and Education (VE&E) programs. As California is home to the second largest population of Veterans of any state; supporting VA&R and VE&E programs is crucial to serving our unique demographic. But even further, our state is home to the largest population of homeless Veterans.—making it even more imperative for our Detachment to fortify our efforts, to properly carry on our mission as Son's.

This year for VA&R and VE&E the Detachment has had the honor of supporting the VA First Responder Pamphlet program. This program came from an initiative originally started by the VA. But it was designed for organizations just like us to pick up and spread to our communities. The program aims to get a direct line of aide to our Veterans who may be experiencing crisis, through the First Responders who interact with them on the front lines. The VA had designed pamphlets, that were targeted to First Responders and gave them resources and information to use to help Veterans that they may come across in the line of duty. All that was needed was for an organization to print them and distribute them to Fire and Police Departments alike. Creating a direct link to help for our Veterans, by putting potentially lifesaving knowledge and resources in the hands of the men and women on the front lines of our communities. And so with the immense potential for aide for our Veterans that this program has, our Detachment had to adopt it.

In our first year of supporting this program, our Detachment printed 1000 copies of these pamphlets. And we were even able to distribute them to Fire and Police Departments across 4 of the largest counties of our State. And in the coming year, our VA&R Commission already plans to print and distribute 2,000 more of these pamphlets. Our Detachment has every intention to continue this program for the foreseeable future. And we hope to eventually be able to reach a strong majority of Fire and Police Departments across our state. And we do this all in the effort to leave no area uncovered, ensure that every Veteran across our state now has a greater opportunity to getting any help and resources that they may need.

This article was written by Robert "Bobby" Crevelli, who is chairman of the Detachment of California's VA&R committee, which was provided to The Millennium by NVC Frank Meraz (CA).

Submitted Photo: VA First Responder Pamphlet program

PNC David Faust (WI), SAL 100th Anniversary Committee

100 Years of the Sons of The American Legion

As we approach the monumental 100th Anniversary of the Sons of The American Legion, we invite all members and supporters to join us in commemorating this significant milestone. This centennial celebration is not just a reflection of our rich history, but also a testament to the dedication and commitment of our members to our veterans and our communities over the past century.

Call for Creativity: In honor of our 100th Anniversary, we will be looking for some creative minds. We are considering a series of coins, each highlighting an important period in our history, with a final design to commemorate 100 years.

* 1932 -1951 (The Beginning)
* 1952 - 1971 (The Rebirth)
* 1972 -1991 (The Formative Years)
* 1992 -2011 (The Growth Years)
* 2012 - 2031 (The Defining Years)

We are looking for artwork to use on banners, promotional materials, and potentially our 2032 membership cards. More details will be in future issues, but it is never to soon to create. This is a unique opportunity to leave your mark on our history and be a part of this historic event.

Preserving History in Squadrons and Detachments: Our history is deeply rooted in the contributions and efforts of our squadrons across the nation. As we celebrate this milestone, we urge each detachment to preserve and document their unique history and achievements. We will be asking for your stories, photographs, and memorabilia that highlight the impact and legacy of the Sons of The American Legion in your detachment. Consider initiatives to digitize photos and scrapbooks. Together, we can create a comprehensive archive that honors our past and inspires future generations.

Continued on Page 10 >>>

>>Continued from Page 5: **100 Years of the Sons of The American Legion**

Honoring our longest continuous Squadrons and Members: The strength of the Sons of The American Legion lies in the unwavering dedication of our long-term squadrons and members. As part of our centennial celebrations, we will be recognizing and honoring those squadrons and individuals who have shown exceptional commitment and service over the years. Their contributions have been instrumental in shaping our organization and ensuring its continued success. Consider finding the longest serving 10 to 20 squadrons in each detachment. Who are your longest serving members? Who has made an impact? Begin gathering that information.

Join our Facebook Group: We invite all Legion Family Members to visit, like, join, and share our new 100th Anniversary Facebook page. This platform is a hub for sharing historical information, photographs, articles, and data about the legacy and development of the Sons of The American Legion. We aim to highlight the evolution and achievements of our organization from its founding in 1932 to our milestone celebration in 2032.

Please be sure to provide dates, names, and some background as to what the photo is about.

Join us and be part of this historic event!

Visit our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/groups/1106648784257125

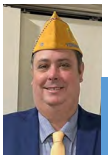
Steve Thomas II (OK), Past Detachment Commander and Current Department Commander

Oklahoma: A Legion Journey

This is how an errand to a small-town Post Office set me on my Legion Journey...

Back in 2015, I was walking back to my truck after doing some business at the local Post Office when an elder gentleman approached me and struck up a conversation ...starting with, "hey son, when did you come home?" The conversation lasted about 15 minutes, when he kindly invited me to come down to visit the Legion. A few days later I made my way not really knowing what I was going to or why. I walked in the door and was immediately greeted by about 15 veterans between 50-80 years of age - I was 35ish. They all talked to me like we were no different, even though a generation or two separated our conflict eras. I felt very welcome, and knew this was a place I could relate to. The Post Adjutant who happened to be that same man at the Post Office, the late Mr.Smokey Davis, handed me a card to join American Legion Bear River Post 789. I joined in with the Ritual Team, and then was convinced to be involved with Regional Oratorical Committee. I was hooked. Two years passed and my family moved to Grove, Oklahoma and one day headed back to work I passed a building surrounded by cars and realized it was the Post in my new town. I stopped in, the first person to greet me there was the late James Lee Cathey, who turned out to be one of the greatest Legionnaires I ever met and one of my greatest friends and mentors, even though he was 23 years my elder. Two years later Lee sent me on a mission to build our first Sons of The American Legion Squadron. I had never really heard much of the Sons, but researched the what and why. I realized all the great things the Sons had done and we could do locally while honoring our individual family history as a group. I am a proud Son to honor the memories and legacy of my grandfathers, David Thomas, USN, Charles Evans, USA, and father Ted Sparks, USMC. Squadron 178 was created, and right as we got started the pandemic hit the world; we pushed through growing and getting involved in all we could. A year later, he shows up at the ballpark where I was coaching our Legion baseball team and says, "I need your cover size. Seemed a weird question at that time ... little did I know, my Squadron had selected me as the first ever National Squadron Commander of the Year award recipient. Two years later, right after being elected as the SAL Detachment Senior Vice Commander, we lost my mentor and our Legion brother, which hit me hard, I knew I had to carry on the torch in his memory. A year or so later, I was elected as the American Legion Grove Oklahoma Post 178 Commander. I knew I was following in the footsteps of some great leaders and knowing I had big shoes to fill. A month later I was elected to simultaneously represent the Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Oklahoma as the Detachment Commander. During that administrative year, our members were able to secure the Detachment's first Triple Nickel Award, and set several Detachment records. All that brings me to the weekend of July 13th. Again, by the trust of my peers of The American Legion Department of Oklahoma I was elected to represent The American Legion Department of Oklahoma as the Department Commander. This is going to be a busy year ahead of me, but I am ready to carry the proverbial torch with all my energy and passion to make this Department the greatest it can be. In closing, thank you to all my brothers and sisters in the Legion who have placed their faith in me ... it means the world to me. I may now be a Past Detachment Commander, but I will always believe in the importance of my fellow Sons and all the truly great things this organization has accomplished the past 94 years and will continue to do with the strength of 400,000 pushing our mission to serving those who served forward.

Submitted Photo: Oklahoma Department Commander Steve Thomas



Jeremy Revell (VT), National Vice Commander Northeast

Spotlight on the Detachment of Massachusetts

Seventeen years ago, the Detachment of Massachusetts created the "Partnership for Kids" program. This program raises funds every year for the three large children's hospitals in Massachusetts: Baystate Children's Hospital in Springfield, UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center in Worcester, and Boston Children's Hospital in Boston.

Donations can be made directly to any of those hospitals in the area where you live; if your post, unit, squadron, chapter, or any individual donates $250.00 or more each year, you are given a mountable plaque and are awarded the Dream Maker Award. Donations are divided equally and dispersed to each hospital from the proceeds of the annual "Partnership for Kids" American Legion Family Bowling Tournament. This is always a great time, and many teams look forward year after year to take part. The tournament has been going on for fourteen years now, and has raised $102,691 for the three hospitals. Total donations since the inception of the program are $193,037. We hope to eclipse the $200,000 mark with this year's campaign.

The program was set up to raise funds for the recreational centers at each hospital. Every year new video games, board games, Lego's, stuffed animals, and various other items are made available for the children to play with and enjoy some time of relaxation. Past National Commander Clifford Smith and his wife Jo-Anne were recent guests of UMass Memorial Hospital at Polar Park in their suite at the Woosox AAA baseball game. PNC Smith was introduced to the Head of Pediatrics at the hospital, and the doctor's response was "So you are the Bowling Guy?!" PNC Smith explained to the doctor that the original premise of the "Partnership for Kids" Program was to raise money for the recreational rooms at the hospital. The doctor responded by saying "Mr. Smith, we rely on your organization and others like yours for donations to these recreation rooms, because there is no money allocated in the total budget of the hospital for what you are doing." Hearing that, PNC Smith responded saying this is what makes this program all worthwhile.

Facebook Photo

You may think that $10.00 donation is not going to make a big difference, but that $10.00 can bring about a million dollars' worth of dreams to a child who is experiencing the most challenging times of their lives. Remember: ***It's all about the kids.***

Information for this article was made available by PNC Cliff Smith (MA), and provided to The Millennium by NVC Jeremy Rivell (VT).

Facebook Photo

Steve Honigfort (OH). National Vice Commander Midwest

Spotlight on the Detachment of Ohio

Ohio has long been a group of dedicated SAL members who never give up where and when help is needed. CWF has been a project the Detachment of Ohio has given to the tune of over $1,000,000.00 over several years. Many fundraisers by several squadrons working together for a common cause made this possible. The Fisher Houses in Ohio are also worthwhile causes that receive attention, as again the Detachment fundraises toward goals to help construction of these facilities. Leadership training at Midwinter conferences helps educate possible future leaders throughout Ohio. Many districts also instruct members on the importance of membership growth and the use of the myLegion website. The Past Detachment Commanders Club encourages younger members to think about their futures by offering a scholarship to advance their education. The PDDC raises monies throughout the year for this cause and many others. The Detachment of Ohio is dedicated to helping The American Legion Family "Carry on for God and Country."

Sons of The American Legion

Detachment of Ohio

Facebook Photo

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Jesse Limanek (MA), Americanism Commission

The Flag of the United States of America

On July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress gathered in Philadelphia, and after much debate, approved the final wording of the Declaration of Independence. This decision came more than year after blood had been shed at Lexington and Concord. Yet, even though the delegates of the states unanimously adopted the Declaration, this nation was nothing more than a rag-tag band of former colonies. Its soldiers were primarily part-time citizen-soldiers mustered to serve in local militias. They were as divided as our early leaders in cause and mission. Even the creation of the Continental Army under the command of General George Washington could not bind the nation together as one. Why? Because it lacked a symbol under which all could unite.

Emanuel Leutze, "Washington Crossing the Delaware", 1851

Either by intention or by accident, the Congress would rectify this problem by creating a symbol for the nation. On June 14, 1777, a resolution was passed stating that, "the flag of the United States be 13 stripes, alternate red and white" and that "the union be 13 stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation." This new flag would become one of our most important national symbols. Each of the colors on the flag would have meaning. Red, found in seven of the stripes, represents valor and bravery. White, found in the six remaining stripes, represents purity and innocence. And the blue, found in the canton, represents vigilance, perseverance, and justice.

Since it was first created, the design of the flag has been modified twenty-six times – due to the growth of the Union. Our current flag, adopted in 1960 upon the entry of Hawaii as our 50th state, is the longest-serving flag in our nation's history and officially turned 65-years old on July 4th, 2025.

Today, our flag is one of the most recognizable symbols on Earth. To our nation's allies, it represents freedom, democracy, and hope. To our enemies, it represents the power of our nation and its ability to deploy that power globally. And to fellow our citizens, it represents so much more.

From our Pledge of Allegiance, we know the flag represents our Republic, united as "one Nation under God", and for all who hold it dear, it promises both "liberty and justice." The US Flag Code also declares that the flag "represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing." Essentially, our flag and nation are one, and the God given rights, which too many take for granted, are guaranteed to all who stand under it. But, it must be protected to ensure that freedom's light may never be extinguished.

Since the earliest days of the Republic, from the Minute Men roused from their beds by Revere, Dawes, and Prescott racing towards Concord; to the men of the 54th Massachusetts who spearheaded an assault of Fort Wagner on Morris Island, South Carolina; to the Rough Riders who followed Colonel Roosevelt up San Juan Hill; to the Marines who charged through a waist-high wheat field towards German machine gun positions in Belleau Wood; to the soldiers of the US First Army who stormed the beaches in Normandy; to the men who battled both the Chinese and artic temperatures in the Chosin Reservoir valley; to those who fended off a hidden enemy that seemingly appeared everywhere throughout South Vietnam during Tet; to those deployed throughout the world fighting a Global War on Terror; and to those who served elsewhere during both times of war and peace since 1776, millions have stepped forward to ensure that the "star-spangled banner yet wave." It is fitting, therefore, that we, the "proud possessors of a priceless heritage," strive to do the same within our home communities.

All members of The Sons of the American Legion are called upon to "foster and perpetuate a true spirit of Americanism." An easy way to do this is through our allegiance to the flag. During our meetings, we should proudly and loudly recite the Pledge of Allegiance. At public ceremonies, we should stand in reverence when the National Anthem is performed. We should assist with flag placements and removals at veterans' graves for Memorial Day. We should encourage those in our communities to familiarize themselves with the rules articulated within the US Flag Code. We should help our neighbors with the proper disposal of unserviceable flags by sharing information of when and where our Posts perform flag retirement ceremonies. And we should educate the youth on the importance of our flag.

If your squadron needs assistance, visit the Flag Advocacy section within the Advocacy page on Legion.org. There you will find information form the American Legion on the Pledge, Flag-Folding Procedures, and a guide to the Unserviceable Flags Ceremony, among others. It is a tremendous resource freely available for all to use.

If your Post/Squadron/Unit/Chapter engages in flag placements for Memorial Day, please report this activity at Flying Flags for Heroes (flyingflagsforheroes.com). The National Americanism Commission has set two annual goals for all squadrons throughout the organization: 1) the placement of one million flags, and 2) 100% participation from all Detachments.

Remember: as Sons, this is our mission – to spread the "great principles for which The American Legion stands." By encouraging patriotism, we are honoring those from which our eligibility derives. We must all do our part to "transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy" symbolized in this nation's flag. By doing so, we can ensure that, in the words of Francis Scott Key, "the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave, o'er the land of the free and home of the brave" now and forever.

Mike Pook (WI), Staff Contributor to *The Millennium*

POW/MIA: A full accounting of those missing

Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th National Convention, calls for designating a POW/MIA Chair at all official meetings of The American Legion as a symbol of the thousands of POW/MIA's still unaccounted for. Let it be a reminder for us to spare no effort to secure the release of any prisoners from captivity and a full accounting of those missing. Let us rededicate ourselves for this vital endeavor.

In a full accounting of those missing - Leon R. Karwacki, KIA, US Army during WWII.

DPAA Photo: Pvt. Karwacki

The back story: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced that U.S. Army Pvt. 1st Class Leon R. Karwacki, 27, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, killed during World War II, was accounted for 26 Sept. 2024.

Karwacki's family recently received their full briefing on his identification—therefore, additional details on his identification can be shared.

In late 1944, Karwacki was assigned to Company E, 2nd Battalion, 36th Armored Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Division. In mid-September 1944, his battalion advanced against enemy forces around Stolberg, Germany, between Aachen and the Hürtgen Forest. He was killed on Sept. 17, during an attack near the village of Mausbach. Karwacki's body could not be recovered due to the intensity of enemy fire.

In late 1945, American graves registration personnel recovered a set of American remains between Mausbach and the town of Werth. Unable to identify the remains, officials designated them X-2192 and the American Graves Registration Command (AGRC) subsequently interred them at Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery, Belgium.

To identify Karwacki's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological evidence, as well as circumstantial evidence.

Karwacki's name is recorded on the Walls of the Missing at Netherlands American Cemetery. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Coming home: Sons of the American Legion who are also American Legion Riders from Districts 1, 2, 4/5 were among the Escort Honor Guard Mission. The remains of U.S. Army Pvt. 1st Class Leon R. Karwacki, was flown into Milwaukee Mitchell Airport where the funeral home, the family, the military honor guard along with 9 motorcycles who escorted the body from General Mitchell Field to the Funeral Home.

An example of how SAL members are dedicated to the mission of a full accounting of those missing!

Thom Skelley (TX), Leading Candidate for National Commander

POW/MIA: To Preserve the Memories of our Forefathers

Sons of The American Legion Preamble to the National Constitution, purpose #4:

TO PRESERVE THE MEMORIES OF OUR FORMER MEMBERS AND THE ASSOCIATION OF OUR MEMBERS AND OUR FOREFATHERS IN ALL WARS

Every year on the third Friday of September, the United States observes National POW/MIA Recognition Day to honor the nation's prisoners of war (POWs) and those missing in action (MIA). This solemn day is not only a time to remember the courage and sacrifice of these individuals but also to reaffirm the country's commitment to never forget them.

The origins of POW/MIA Recognition Day date back to the post-Vietnam War era, a time when national awareness about missing and captured service members reached a critical point. In 1979, President Jimmy Carter officially proclaimed the first POW/MIA Recognition Day, and it has been observed annually since then. Unlike many military holidays, this day is not tied to a specific conflict—it spans generations, from World War II to more recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

One of the most recognized symbols of this day is the POW/MIA flag, a stark black-and-white banner that features the silhouette of a bowed head, a watchtower, and barbed wire, along with the powerful words: "You Are Not Forgotten." This flag flies not only at government buildings and military installations but also in communities across the country as a constant reminder of the unresolved sacrifices made by tens of thousands of American service members.

Ceremonies on POW/MIA Day often include wreath-laying events, moments of silence, and the Missing Man Table—a symbolic setting at military and veteran gatherings that represents those who are absent. The table is set with items like a single rose, an inverted glass, and an empty chair, each element holding deep symbolic meaning.

As of 2025, over 81,000 U.S. service members remain unaccounted for from past conflicts. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) continues its mission to recover and identify remains, using advanced forensic science and international cooperation.

POW/MIA Recognition Day is more than a historical reflection; it's a call to action. It reminds Americans of the price of freedom and the obligation to bring every service member home. Whether through remembrance ceremonies, education, or advocacy, the message remains clear: We will never forget.

In a world where the headlines often shift, POW/MIA Recognition Day anchors the nation's conscience, ensuring that those who served with honor—and remain missing—are not lost to memory.

Randy Timms (WI), Assistant Editor of *The Millennium*

When should we salute the American Flag?

When should we salute the American Flag at official gatherings?

Having attended many meetings of the Sons of the American Legion from Detachment all the way to Squadron's as well as the Legion Riders at State and District levels, I've noticed significant disparity in the manner in which we address the Flag.

There are several scenarios to consider. Placing and retrieving the POW/MIA flag for example. Leaving your seat to leave the room during an official meeting is another. Leaving your seat to approach the head table is yet another.

I asked a Judge advocate and Marine what his council was and that caused us to realize there is no set standard – nothing we're aware of at least – on the proper or best way to handle the situation.

So, between the two of us, we came up with what we believe could/should be universal.

Let's explain. First, you're sitting in an official meeting, and you need to leave the room. Is the exit door behind you or is it behind the head table? Does it matter? Well, it may and here's why. We determined you should salute flag if you're about to turn your back to it. So, if you're leaving via the door to the rear, you stand, salute, then turn and leave. But if the door is in front, it's preferred you wait until you're nearer the flag, then salute. From an educational point of view doing it in this manner will also show the other members that proper respect was paid. If you salute when you stand, members will not see it and when you approach the front and don't salute, that could be seen as a breach of protocol. Waiting becomes a teaching moment to younger members.

Shawn Davis Photo

Another scenario concerns placing the POW/MIA flag. This process is either misunderstood or simply not taught. Ideally the presenter would wear white gloves and have the flag folded on his forearm, much like a waiter in a fancy restaurant. But gloves or not, when you stand and approach the American Flag and POW/MIA chair, you should stop and salute as you normally would. Then turn and place the POW/MIA flag. When placed, step back and offer a slow hand salute. You've accomplished the placement but now must return to your seat so the American Flag is due another salute prior to turning your back on it.

Tyler Vanice Photo

Another flag related issue, which I know has been addressed, is honoring the "sacred ground" between the flags. When the American Flag and SAL or Legion flags are posted near the head table, that invisible space should never be broken. But what frequently happens, is a member needs to deliver a document to someone at the head table. They stand, salute then approach. But when they arrive, they simply lay the document on the table, thus breaking that barrier. Likewise, an officer must never extend their reach over the table and expect a member to reach out and receive it. While it may seem unnecessary, the sacred ground is exactly that. Yes, of course it's symbolic, but it is something that is universally accepted and must be treated with respect.

It's very easy to forget that newer members are watching every detail to learn. By making these steps routine, we're teaching proper procedures and demonstrating their importance.

If we're doing our jobs effectively, we're recruiting the next generation of leaders. They will teach as they have been taught. So let's give them a solid foundation on which to build.

Bryan Hine (TN), National Vice Commander Southeast

Detachment Spotlight: South Carolina

Commander Keyrouze sends greetings from the Detachment of South Carolina.The Detachment currently has 32 Squadrons across the beautiful Palmetto state.

The Detachment of South Carolina focuses on the 4 pillars of our parent organization making donations to Children & Youth, VA&R, Americanism,National Security and Wreaths Across America. This year Commander Keyrouze encourages all Detachment officers to complete the "Be the One Training" as well as the 'Basic Training" on mylegion.org.

The Commander states, "In reference to projects, our fellow Detachment of NJ brothers helped us create the board you see in the photo above, It consists of all the POW/MIA's still unaccounted for from the state of South Carolina. The project is for every September to have a watch fire on the beach, a guiding light burning through the night to guide them home".

Commander Keyrouze along with the Vice Commanders, & NEC are striving to grow the Detachment's membership and charter new Squadrons in the 2026 Membership year and hope to have a Detachment Web-Page in the near future.

Submitted Photo: Detachment Commander Tom Keyrouze and an SAL member at the June 2025 Squadron/Detachment Meet & Greet held at Post 6 Columbia, SC

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

Maryland Detachment Commander Jason Miller presiding over the first DEC meeting of the new leadership year

Detachment Leadership at the Illinois American Legion State Golf Tournament with PNC Navarette

Oliver, Aide to 2025-26 New York Detachment Commander Joe Guidice (also known as Pop-pop)

Squadron 48 (Hickory, NC) Officers Installation

Youth members Abel & Finley Huff of Squadron 246 (Betterton, MD) at the Annual Betterton Appreciation Day festivities.

Squadron 252 (Ackley, IA) marking the 11th year having the honor of raising the flags at the Labor Day Rendezvous; the flag was lowered in remembrance of their comrade Korey.

Squadron 454 (Mt. Cavalry, WI) at the Eden Volunteer Fireman Parade

Snapshots of Service Winners: Each year, the national Public and Media Communication Commission (PMCC) holds a competition where photos which represent the SAL's commitment to "The Four Pillars" are judged. This Snapshots of Service contest is open to any squadron or detachment, and photos are submitted throughout the year. Below are this year's first and second place winners for each pillar. Keep your eye out for announcements on next years' contest, and continue to snap those photos. *Note: This year, there were no National Security submissions.*

Americanism

Port City Sons Squadron 260 – Port City, Indiana

Leon Beatty Squadron 29 – Washington , Iowa

Children and Youth

Belleville Squadron 105 – Belleville, NJ

Belleville Squadron 105 – Belleville, NJ

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Henry "Gene" Burton Sr, Memorial Squadron 13 - Sitka, Alaska

C. Russell Huber Squadron 57 – Fairbanks, Alaska

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
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To:

This Month, On The Back Cover …..

From the official blog of the Naval History and Heritage Command—https://usnhistory.navylive.dodlive.mil/

The POW / MIA Missing Man Table

The white tablecloth draped over the table represents the purity of their response to our country's call to arms. The empty chair depicts an unknown face, representing no specific Soldier, Sailor, Airman, or Marine, but all who are not here with us. The table itself is round to show that our concern for them is never ending. The Bible represents faith in a higher power and the pledge to our country, founded as one nation under God. The black napkin stands for the emptiness these warriors have left in the hearts of their families and friends. A Purple Heart medal can be pinned to the napkin. The single red rose reminds us of their families and loved ones. The red ribbon represents the love of our country, which inspired them to answer the nation's call. The yellow candle and its yellow ribbon symbolize the everlasting hope for a joyous reunion with those yet accounted for. The slices of lemon on the bread plate remind us of their bitter fate. The salt upon the bread plate represent the tears of their families. The wine glass, turned upside down, reminds us that our distinguished comrades cannot be with us to drink a toast or join in the festivities of the evening.

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!

In honor of POW / MIA Recognition Day on Friday 19 September 2025, find the flag shown above somewhere in this newsletter