SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

A newsletter of Sons of The American Legion

THE MILLENNIUM

Sons of The American Legion | PO 1055 | Indianapolis, IN 46206 | www.legion.org/sons

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Special to The Millennium—Russell "Rusty" Myers III, Editor

Sons Across the Nation Spread Cheer to our Veterans and Children over the Holidays

The holiday season is perhaps the most visible time where the Sons of The American Legion showcases its work throughout our communities. Be it a holiday party, a visit from Santa, a trip to a VA or veterans home, or a toy or coat drive, the spirit of giving is evident in the programs our Sons run at the end of each year.

See over the next two pages some of the good deeds our SAL's have done to make the holiday a little more special for our vets, our kids, and our communities:

Illinois: Make A Wish

Santa Claus was spotted bringing Christmas joy at Onarga American Legion Post 551 in Illinois. The Squadron hosts "Pancakes with Santa", where member Steve Sullivan had the honor of being Santa. The event raised $1,000 which was donated to a local "Make a Wish Child" and family that needed help. - *Eugene Gort (IL)*

Pennsylvania: Holiday Tour

The PA Legion Family and Detachment Commander Mark Nave made 15 stops on their Holiday Tour. "It has truly been an honor and blessing to visit all the VA's and veterans homes in Pennsylvania … Seeing the work our Legion Family does through volunteering time, treasure, and talents is inspiring. Its one thing to talk about it, it's another thing to see it in action!!" - *Mark Nave (PA)*

California: Serving our Serviceman

Squadron 155 hosted a Christmas party at the Area 22 Air Wing and 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton.—*John Mejia (CA)*

Wisconsin: Caroling for our Vets

The American Legion Family of Post 375 at their holiday community service event ... Christmas Caroling at local nursing homes. 38 Legion Family members participated.

The Tidewater Post 327 Family (Norfolk, VA) hosting a Breakfast with Santa for over 40 kids

Squadron 224 (Wixom, WI) on their Annual Toys for Tots Shopping Spree. The squadron spent $1,700 dollars this year for the kids.

Squadron 324 (Rose City, MI) at their annual Post Christmas Party

Legionnaires and Sons at the William P. Roche Post 21 (Philadelphia, PA) Toy Drive

Santa played by Dual Member Ed Hall (Post 105 Belleville, NJ) handing out toys at the ALA Unit 105 Toy Drive at VFW 4697 in North Arlington, NJ.

National Americanism Chairman Jeff Hicks (NJ) at the Post 129 Family (Toms River, NJ) 15th Annual POW/MIA Christmas Tree Lighting.

18th District SAL Commander PDC Sandy Lipman presenting toys to the Marine Corps Toys for Tots program from Squadron 14 (Troy, MI).

Squadron 170 (Herreid , SD) gathers the night of 23 December at the Herreid Fairview Cemetery and the St. Michael's Catholic Cemetery to remember our deceased veterans, saying a prayer and playing Silent Night and O Holy Night. They also held a wreath laying ceremony at the grave of Edward Goehring who gave his life in World War II, and the grave of Max Brandner who died in the service of our nation during World War I.

NVC Chris Casey and son Sean raising some money for The Salvation Army with the Benson American Legion Family Post 112 (NE)

Maryland Vice Commander John Davies calling bingo for the veterans at Martinsburg VA center.

www.legion.org—*06 January 2026*

SAL Ends 2025 with New Membership Record

For the third consecutive year, the Sons of The American Legion set a new record for membership. 25 detachments also set all-time highs in membership.

The SAL finished 2025 with 404,941 members. That's a 1.94% increase over 2024's final membership of 397,243 members.

Since 1983, the first year of accurate membership numbers, the SAL membership has increased every year except two — in 2020 and 2021, during the Covid-19 pandemic.

When SAL membership surpassed the 400,000 mark in August, then-SAL National Commander Joseph Navarreté said, "Surpassing 400,000 members shows how much our generations, from our oldest member to our youngest, value the service and sacrifice our veterans have made so that we all can live free in the greatest nation in the world."

Twenty-five detachments finished 2025 with all-time highs in membership:

- Arizona: 9,812
- California: 11,837
- Connecticut: 2,036
- Delaware: 2,694
- Florida: 27,466
- Hawaii: 135
- Idaho: 755
- Latin America: 45
- Maryland: 18,309
- Michigan: 29,024
- Minnesota: 11,862
- New Hampshire: 6,833
- New Jersey: 10,323
- New York: 32,295
- North Carolina: 2,964
- North Dakota: 1,148
- Ohio: 33,270
- Oklahoma: 1,526
- Pennsylvania: 64,910
- South Carolina: 1,886
- South Dakota: 2,284
- Tennessee: 1,858
- Virginia: 4,788
- Washington: 2,928
- Wisconsin: 4,820

Those detachments will be recognized during the SAL National Convention in Louisville, Ky., Aug. 28-Sept. 3.

Excerpts from Facebook, **John R. Rowe Post 17, Honolulu, Hawaii** - *14 December 2025*

National Legion Family Gathers in Hawaii to remember Pearl Harbor Attacks

Many of the Hawaii American Legion Family, along with National Commander Dan Wiley, SAL National Commander Bill Clancy, and Auxiliary National President Pam Ray, plus their staff and families from the mainland, visited Hawaii on the dates surrounding the anniversary of the 1941 Pearl Harbor attacks. Legion Family members, plus active duty serviceman, Young Marines, National Park Service, and Pacific Historic Parks personnel participated in events on the 6th of December, including a Family Flying Flags for Heroes event and tours with the National Park Service of the Pearl Harbor National Memorial. They met inside the park behind the ticketing area, and planted 2,390 4"x6"flags within 2-and-a-half hours—recognizing the 2,390 military service members and civilians who lost their lives during the attacks on 07 December 1941. The following day, they also participated in the remembrance ceremonies.

Facebook Photos: Above—placing the 2,390 flags. Below, left—Legion Family at the Arizona Memorial. Below, right—California Detachment Commander Curtis, left, with National Adjutant Wright and Commander Clancy.

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

Re-dedicate Ourselves to What We Do Best

It's a new year … so it's time to refocus and rededicate ourselves to what we as Sons do best.

You'll see in this month's newsletter some of the great things our Sons did over the holiday season for our vets, our kids, and our communities.

It's hard to believe, but the new year marks—for many of our squadrons and detachments—the halfway point of the leadership year. June and July come quickly, so it's time to start tabulating what your squadron or detachment has done so far, and what your goals for the rest of the year are going to be.

It's never too early to start logging dollars and hours for your Consolidated Squadron Report (CSR). This information is crucial for the national organization to know how we are making an impact. Every squadron should make an extra effort to fill this out … linked here is a **great Training Tuesday session from May 2025 about how to complete the form**. Though the deadline is in July, start putting together a running list now.

At the end of this newsletter, please also find a memo from the National Commander and a form for the Four Pillars Squadron Award, which was started by PNC JR Hall in 2023-24.

This award is at the heart of what we are supposed to be doing … supporting the Four Pillars of our parent organization—Children and Youth, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, Americanism, and National Security. We implore you to make this award happen in your local squadron, because it is a fantastic way to make a difference and show our commitment to the principles of The American Legion.

National Commander Clancy says it perfectly ***…"Community, State and Nation … Live your Obligation!"***

Please also continue to let *The Millennium* know what's going on out there throughout the country—let us know about events your squadron runs, fundraisers you hold, and about how you as a Son are experiencing this rewarding experience of the SAL. A great example is the National Regional Information Conferences … if you are going to attend this training, take pictures and let us know what you learned and how it went.

As we've said over and over, you don't have to write a *War and Peace*-length article to get published—just put something short and sweet together to brag about what you do. We know at all levels of this organization we're doing good … but many detachments never let the world know about it. This newsletter is your opportunity to do so.

And a tip—make sure you take photos doing what you do with your SAL cover on, or with SAL-identifiable clothing. It's much more compelling of a photo if you can be immediately identified as a member of the Sons.

As PNC Joe Mayne said at the Fall NEC, when you think of *The Millennium*, think *"...a picture and a paragraph."*

Thanks again for reading each month!

Legion.org—*24 November 2025*

CPR / CSR's Available Now

The fillable 2025-2026 American Legion Consolidated Squadron Report (CSR) is now available on legion.org and in myLegion. This form provides posts an opportunity to document external activities, such as volunteer hours, fundraising efforts, Be the One events, funeral honors, youth programs and more.

The reports can be updated throughout the year and finalized when complete. Submission deadline is July 1, 2026.

Adjutants can follow these steps to access the reports in MyLegion:

1. Begin in My Groups. The dashboard will display a link for consolidated reports.

2. Click "Edit Reports" or "View/Edit Reports" from the left menu. Then view dashboard. The dashboard with consolidated report options is restricted to post and squadron adjutants.

3. My Consolidated Post Reports window will open. This window provides information for open and closed reports. Click "Edit" to open the report.

4. Click "Edit" in Preview and Final Steps to open the report fields to enter data.

At the bottom of the form are buttons to "Save as Draft," "Next" or "Cancel."

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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Check your email inboxes for the SAL Newsletter / *Millennium* on the second Wednesday of the month (subject to change):

11 February 2026
11 March 2026
08 April 2026
13 May 2026
10 June 2026
08 July 2026

@ Email your story to *The Millennium*
rusty.myers@ymail.com

Top Ten Detachments 2026 Membership Percentage

1.	Philippines	108.99%
2.	Latin America	84.78%
3.	South Carolina	80.04%
4.	Louisiana	79.07%
5.	Wisconsin	77.93%
6.	Dist. Of Col.	77.53%
7.	France	76.65%
8.	North Carolina	74.79%
9.	Florida	74.62%
10.	Nebraska	73.68%

Statistics as of 06 January 2026

Squadron 99 (Salem, MO) recently donated $3,500 to the Love Pack Program in Dent County. These proceeds came from the Clint Medlock Rib Cook Off at the American Legion. Pictured making the donation to AJ Seay, program coordinator, is Jason Gray, left, and Raul Segovia.

Squadron 644 (Swoyersville, PA) recently donated gift cards to the residents of Veteran's Village in Kingston. Shown from left are: Squadron 644 Sgt. at Arms Pete Fenedick, American Legion Post 644 Commander Ed Tressa, Veteran's Village Case Manager Luke Malonis, Squadron 644 Commander Thomas Walsh, and Squadron 644 2nd Vice Commander Joe Groblewski.

Sons of The American Legion Squadron 223 (Shippensburg, PA) recently held a coat drive. Adjutant Bill Heck, Jr. and Vice Commander Guy Hayslett collected over two truckloads of coats for adults and children. The coats were donated to the Community Cares shelter in Shippensburg. They will also be distributed to residents in the Shippensburg and Carlisle area.

Kim Nelson, Hometown Newsource—*09 December 2025*

Minnesota: SAL Squadron donates $1,500 to local food pantry

Sons of The American Legion Squadron 191 (Caledonia, MN) donated $1,500 to the Semcac food shelf in early December. The funds were raised during a Chicken Q held earlier in the year at American Legion Post 191 in Caledonia. The check was presented by Pete Gengler, Larry "Ollie" Becker and Wylie Steele. One of the other pit masters, Dave Olson was unable to present the check.

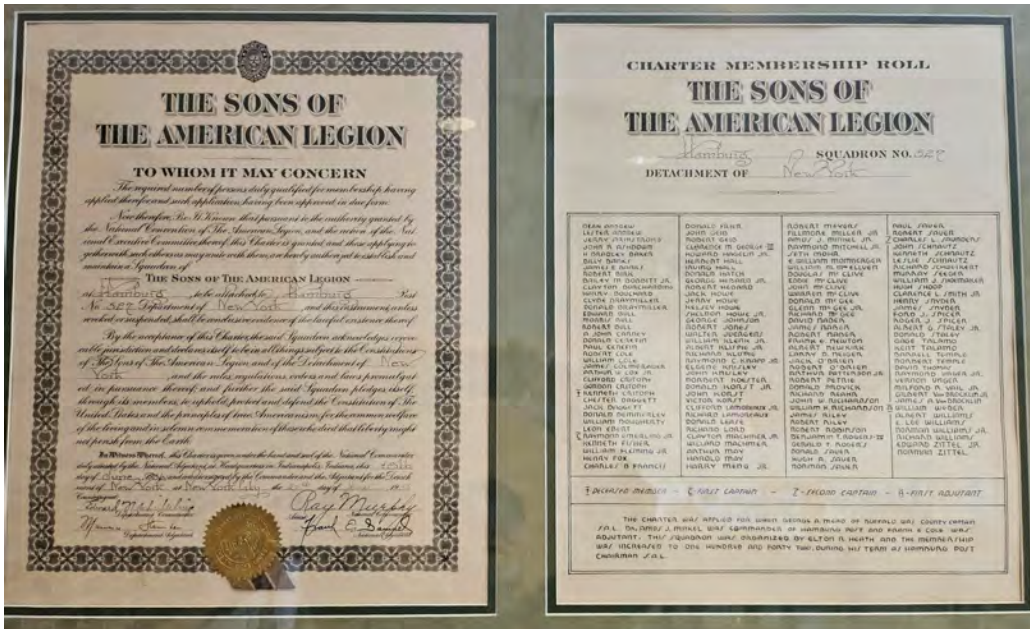
Kim Nelson Photo

Michelle Vitse, a Semcac employee, was there to accept the check as Semcac Food Shelf Manager Kris Olson was unable to attend.

"We are incredibly grateful for the contribution. It will go a long way to helping people," Viste said. "We are serving over 35 families each day we are open."

PNC Greg "Doc" Gibbs (NY),
SAL 100 Committee

SAL 100: Legacy Equals Strength



The Sons of The American Legion at Hamburg, New York has a rich and varied history. It began early in the chartering process back in 1936. The Hamburg area had a significant number of World War I veterans that started Post 527 right after the war. As a result those veterans reacclimated to civilian life and raised families, creating a ready body of recruits for the Sons organization. The Sons had a strong squadron of 141 members at the charter inception in 1936.

The very first SAL captain (commander) after serving in World War II, even became one of the Legion Post Commanders. This legacy was a solid force in securing the reputation of the Post becoming a local institution for family support and service.

Many of those Sons members became veterans when the call-up for World War II started. As a result, the squadron had a powerful past and a powerful future. The fact that many of those original chartered Sons members became veterans significantly affected the growth of the squadron after WWII. They knew what it was like to be a Sons member, even though they now were veterans ... they came back from WWII and strengthened the Post with their Legion membership, but also made sure that the Sons squadron would remain strong and viable as the Legion family grew.

Many Hamburg family names appear on this list - they are business owners and impactful people in the town even today, generations later.

This level of dual membership and organizational understanding helped to solidify that the Sons Squadron 527 would continue to impact the Post and community for many years to come.

This ongoing series about the upcoming 100-year anniversary of the founding of the SAL in 1932 is compiled by the SAL 100 Ad-hoc Committee. If you have a squadron which can trace its history to the 1930's, tell your story by contacting Committee Chairman Tyler Vanice (VA).

Juan A. Cruz-Rodríguez (PR),
Detachment Adjutant and NEC

Detachment Spotlight: Puerto Rico

Greetings from the Detachment of Puerto Rico, We are pleased to report strong performance within the Detachment of PR. As of mid-December, our membership metrics are robust, securing 14th place nationwide and 5th within the Southeast region.

This growth is further propelled by the recent receipt of the official charter for Squadron 140 from National HQ. Additionally, we are actively working to establish another squadron in collaboration with Post 69.

Looking ahead to the holiday season, our focus remains on engaging closely with existing squadrons, encouraging continued membership drives through Christmas, and conducting essential buddy checks to ensure the well-being of all members.

On behalf of the entire staff of the Detachment of Puerto Rico, we wish you and all our comrades a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

This Detachment Spotlight was provided to The Millennium by the Detachment of Puerto Rico, by way of NVC Southeast Bryan Hine (TN).

SALute, the Official Newsletter of the Detachment of Kansas—*January 2026*

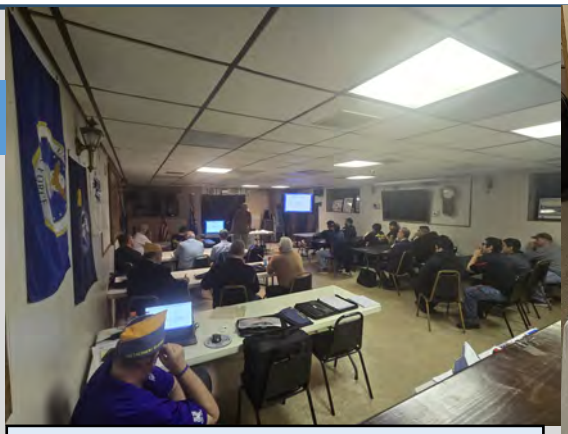
Kansas: Detachment rolls out the "Get one for the Legion" Campaign

This program rewards Sons of The American Legion members for doing the work and supporting The American Legion, while the Legion gets new members and continues to grow their membership, staying alive and active. The whole American Legion Family benefits: every time the Legion gains a new member, chances are there are family members that are eligible to join the Auxiliary, Sons, Riders, and Cruisers. Here is how it works ... Any SAL member (regular, dual, or triple) that recruits a NEW Legion member gets a polo shirt, courtesy of the Detachment of Kansas. The detachment pays for the shirts and the embroidery; on one side of the shirt, it is embroidered with "Got One For The Legion Family" and on the other side it is embroidered with the SAL logo/emblem. The shirts were designated to be a bright neon color for two reasons - when you know the program and see someone wearing the shirt, you know they signed up a new legion member. plus it is a great conversation starter for people unaware of the program. The shirt color will change each year, but will be a bright color to draw attention to the program. Visit salkansas.org for more.

Edward Ranney, Department of Illinois Assistant Sargent at Arms

Illinois: Sons Conduct District and Division Leadership Training

Squadron 687 of Stickney, IL hosted the SAL 5th District and SAL 1st and 2nd Division for American Legion and Sons of The American Legion Leadership Training. The class, taught by Larry Miller, went over the history and organization of the SAL, officer duties and responsibilities, how to conduct a meeting, programs the SAL supports, required reports, and awards and recognition.



Submitted Photos: Above—SAL Leadership class by Edward Ranney ; at right—a presentation of the SAL programs

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

Take The American Legion Basic Training Course

https://register.legion.org/alei

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

"Mentoring Moments"

Have you noticed that lots of people wear red on Fridays more than any other day of the week? Wearing a red shirt or other red clothing (shirt, tie, skirt) on Fridays is a show of support for and an honor to those who are deployed service members. A simple act of wearing RED shirts on Fridays (R.E.D. is an acronym for Remember Everyone Deployed), is a visible and constant reminder to show our support our military.

Facebook Photo: Illinois ANEC Mike Vozar, left, with Detachment Commander Wayne Madson sporting their RED Friday Shirts.

Danny A. Rollins, Detachment of South Carolina Adjutant and Finance Officer

South Carolina: Goings-on in The Palmetto State

Submitted Photos:

Right: 10 December 2025—South Carolina Detachment Commander Keyrouze on a visit to River Park Assisted Living Community with a 108 year-old Navy Veteran.

Below: 09 December 2025—Making a $5,000 donation to McLeod Health Foundation by Squadron 186 in Little River, SC from their squadron-sponsored Golf Tournament. McLeod Foundation provides Cancer Treatments for Veterans.

AMERICAN LEGION

★ ★ ★ ADVOCACY ALERT ★ ★ ★

Visit www.legion.org/advocacy/legislative to learn about The American Legion's National Advocacy Agenda

www.legion.org, *31 December 2025*

Host a Be The One Event in the New Year

American Legion posts are spreading the Be the One message through local events. According to the 2024-2025 Consolidated Post Report, there were 7,223 suicide-prevention events conducted by 2,917 posts in 2024-2025. These included 5K run/walks, in-person suicide prevention training for Legion Family and community members, displays at sporting events, and resource fairs with local suicide prevention experts and available support.

Start planning your Be the One event now, maybe even around the following dates:

- **March 9-15: Buddy Check Week, ending with the Legion's birthday**
- **May: Mental Health Awareness Month**
- **September: Suicide Prevention Awareness Month**
- **Nov. 9-15: Buddy Check Week, including Veterans Day**

If your post, district or department wants to host a Be the One event, go to **betheone.org/resources** for materials on how to get started:

- **How-to videos.** If you are coordinating an event for your post, district or department, two videos outline how to organize an event and engage the media.
- **Sample media advisory and press release.** Download the documents, update them with your event information, and distribute to local media, community partners and others.
- **Sample speech**. Use this prepared speech for any event to educate others on the Be the One mission and how they can support it.
- **Materials**. Click on "Other Resources" for customizable content, including print-ready pop-up banners, flags, posters, table covers and more. Download the items you want and order from a local print shop.

Hometown News—*30 December 2025*

Florida: Squadron's "Operation Remember Our Heroes" honors veterans; Volunteers place flags and markers at Sebastian-area gravesites

For more than a decade, Sons of The American Legion Squadron 189 has worked to ensure local veterans are never forgotten through its ongoing effort, Operation: Remember Our Heroes.

Launched in 2014, the program's mission is simple but meaningful: to identify and honor veterans' graves by placing a bronze military marker and an American flag at each site. Twice each year — on Memorial Day and Veterans Day — Squadron 189 members and community volunteers visit Brookside, Winter Beach and Sebastian cemeteries to replace worn flags and mark previously unidentified veterans' graves. Since October 2014, volunteers have placed more than 10,000 American flags across these cemeteries, a number that continues to grow as more veterans' graves are identified each year. Participants range from preschool-aged children to seniors, including church groups, sports teams and other local organizations.

"Operation Remember Our Heroes" was conceived by past squad commander Peter T. Puzzo, who said the effort reflects the community's gratitude to those who served.

"We believe that is not too much to offer these brave men and women who fought, and in some cases died, for our freedom and the way of life we choose," Puzzo said. The program is funded entirely through donations from individuals and local businesses. Jerry Smith Flooring & Design Center has served as a flagship sponsor for nine years, and squad members expressed gratitude for the continued support of businesses that invest in community causes.

Current corporate sponsors include Jerry Smith Flooring; Reel'Em In Bait & Tackle; Strunk Funeral Home; Veterans Council of Indian River County; Post 189; American Legion Riders; American Legion Auxiliary 189; Earl's Hideaway of Sebastian; TJ's New York Style Pizza of Sebastian; Bay Street Pharmacy; Arnold Heating & AC; Meeks Plumbing; Barker Heating & AC; Jetson's Appliances of Vero Beach; and many others.

Squadron 189 Photo

Gary Nelson (NJ), Past National Vice Commander

New Jersey: Getting Our Veterans Outside

Past Commander Keith Barnes of New Jersey elected to get outside games and furniture for the veterans of the Paramus Veterans Home for the annual Detachment Commander's Project. The project consisted of building six outdoor areas that the facility's veteran residents can use outside for three seasons a year.

"I wanted to do something for the veterans and the families that got them into the fresh air instead of being inside all the time," noted PDC Barnes about his commander's project. "It's quality of life for the veterans where they just have some fun:'

Lakisha Williams, the Recreation Director for the Paramus Veterans Home, said that "This donation from Commander Barnes and the Detachment of New Jersey SAL will enhance the life style of our veterans … and now we are even getting a checker and chess club together in the spring."

"All of these games - like cornhole, four corners, washers, and checker, chess, and card tables—are permanent, and made of cement and are now permanent fixtures at our home", William continued. "We thank Commander Barnes and the Detachment of New Jersey for this generous donation making the Paramus Veterans Home a nicer place to live for all the veterans."

On Tuesday December 9, 2025 Commander Barnes and the Legion Family came to the Paramus Home to dedicate the furniture and games. Santa and Mrs. Claus came with the Legion Family as well to visit the veterans—a good time was had by all.

Commander Barnes wants to thank everyone that donated to his worthy project.

Submitted Photo: A Legion Family contingent from New Jersey visits the Paramus Veterans Home to dedicate Past Detachment Commander Keith Barnes' (third from right) 2023-24 Detachment Commander's Project of outdoor recreation spaces. Santa and Mrs. Claus attended as well.

Submitted Photos: Left—l to r—Santa, Mrs. Claus, DVC Greg Shaffer, and PDC Keith Barnes behind one of the new permanent chess tables. Right—NJ PDC Lenny Free posing next to one of the large outdoor Connect4 games.

Click here or on the thumbnail at left to watch a 3-minute video about the project dedication produced by the Detachment of New Jersey

Photo by Casey Hansen (SD)

2025-2026 Sons of The American Legion Membership Recruiter Award Pin

Recruit five new SAL members in the 2025-26 year and receive a pin to recognize you for your work in growing our membership!

Award Application .pdf available at:

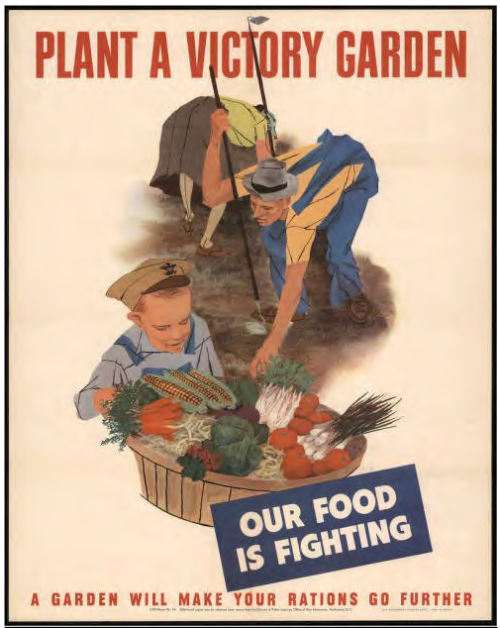
https://www.legion.org/getmedia/5d45c930-82b6-457d-8f74-feee67883f71/sal-membership-recruiter-award-form-2025-2026.pdf

Tracy Wood (TX), National Children and Youth Committee

Victory Gardens: Growing Community

Victory Gardens hold an important place in American history. During both World Wars, families across the nation cultivated gardens in backyards, schoolyards, and shared spaces to support the war effort and strengthen their communities. At their peak, Victory Gardens produced nearly forty percent of the nation's vegetables. Beyond food production, they fostered self-reliance, reinforced family involvement, and united communities around a shared commitment to service.

Today, Victory Gardens are experiencing a renewed relevance. Rising food costs, environmental concerns, and an increased emphasis on local service have driven renewed interest in community-based gardening initiatives. Victory Gardens offer a practical, visible way to support families, promote sustainability, and provide meaningful opportunities for youth engagement—values that align closely with the mission of the Sons of the American Legion.



Texas Virtual Archives Image: World War II Victory Garden poster distributed by the Office of War Information

This renewed emphasis is supported by a National Sons of the American Legion directive, formally encouraging Squadrons nationwide to establish Victory Gardens as an official service initiative. The directive calls on Squadrons to participate in a shared national effort that honors the organization's history while advancing youth involvement, veteran support, and community service. By adopting Victory Gardens, Squadrons demonstrate service in action through projects that are accessible, impactful, and adaptable to local needs.

One of the strengths of Victory Gardens is their ability to succeed across diverse regions. The USDA Plant Hardiness Zone system allows communities to tailor planting schedules to local climate conditions. Northern regions may focus on shorter growing seasons and early preparation, while southern states benefit from extended seasons and multiple planting cycles. Regardless of location, Victory Gardens are most successful when planning reflects regional conditions and available resources.

Across the country, Squadrons are translating this national initiative into local action. Underutilized spaces are being transformed into productive gardens that emphasize youth participation, sustainability, and service. Features such as raised beds improve accessibility and soil quality, rainwater collection promotes responsible water use, and creative solutions like vertical gardening maximize limited space while modeling resourcefulness.

Youth involvement remains a central benefit of Victory Gardens. Participation allows young people to learn where food comes from, develop responsibility, and experience the value of consistent effort. Gardening fosters problem-solving, teamwork, and patience while providing opportunities to work alongside veterans and adult mentors. These shared experiences strengthen intergenerational connections and reinforce the importance of service.

The benefits extend beyond education. Harvested produce supports Post activities and events, with surplus often shared with families or veterans in need. The gardens themselves serve as visible symbols of pride, cooperation, and service, reinforcing to young members that their contributions are meaningful and valued.

Victory Gardens grow more than food. They cultivate responsibility, confidence, and community connection. As Squadrons across the nation embrace this initiative, Victory Gardens reaffirm a timeless lesson of service: meaningful impact often begins with shared effort, local commitment, and the simple act of growing something together.

For additional information, resources, and guidance on implementing a Victory Garden project, please scan the QR code below.

Spotted by a Son

In December's newsletter, we asked if you could find the image of a wreath. The Millennium went out on 10 December, and by 12:25pm we had a winner…

Kevin Skattebo
Squadron 477
St. Nazianz, Wisconsin

Skattebo joined the SAL only a month ago, and is eligible for membership through his father's Korean War service. When he and his brother had joined the Sons, they also found out their grandfather served in the First World War.

Children and Youth Committee Tasks and Goals 2025-2026

Assist the Americanism Commission with development of guidelines for Detachment level Youth Academy

Distribute and promote digital materials to plant a Victory Garden

Children's Organ Transplant Association®

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Increase donations by 10% for the Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA)

Increase donations by 10% for The American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation (VCF)

Increase donations by 10% for Children's Miracle Network (CMN)

Increase donations by 10% for Ronald McDonald House

Sons with National Commander Wiley on his Official Visit to Arizona at Post 66 (Green Valley, AZ)

Commander Randy Miraldi of Squadron 211 (Avon Lake, OH) presented $2,000 checks to each of the Lorain Police officers and to the wife of Officer Phillip Wagner, all of whom were affected by last summer's tragic shooting.

Squadron 19 Commander Irvin Johnson (Baltimore, MD) at Mt. Zion Baptist church clothing drive, volunteering with Women Empowering Women Inc.

The Sons of Middlesex County, NJ held their first official Executive Committee meeting following its formation at Spotswood Post 253, with a cake to celebrate.

Detachment of Wisconsin Past Commander Allen Watry and District 9 Commander Bob Seide took part in the Wreaths Across America event in Two Rivers.

Leonard H. Hawkins Squadron 156 (City Island, NY) hosts their Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony. Afterwards, the Squadron presented Detachment Commander Joe Guidice a $500 donation for CWF.

A snapshot from the Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Illinois DEC.

Commander Kinlen of Squadron 189 (Sebastian, FL) presents Steve Defren representing Dogs For Life with a check. Dogs For Life works with veterans to get needed service dogs.

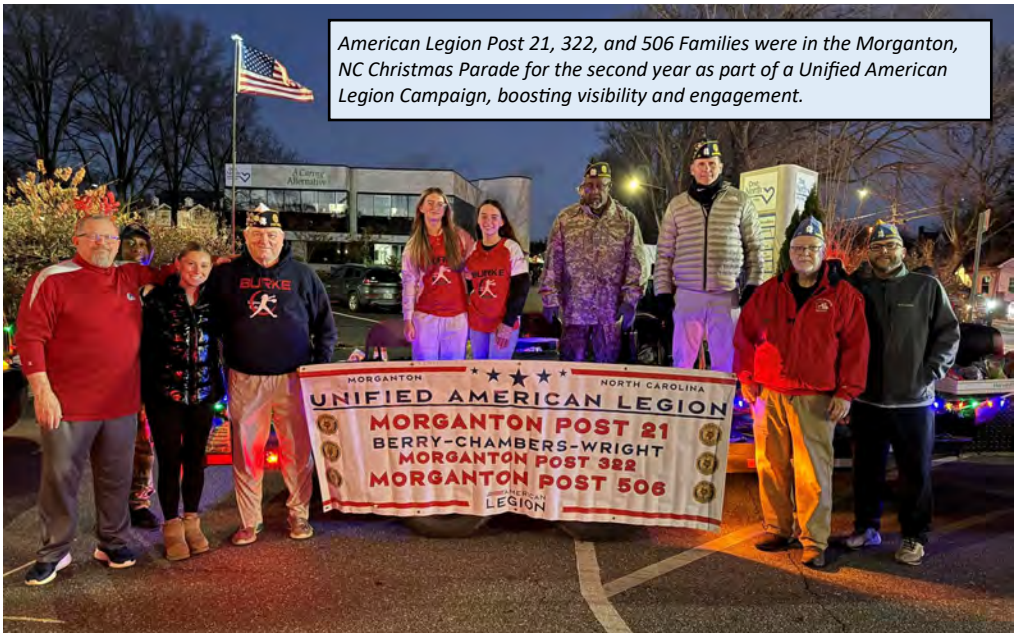
Squadron 273 (Madeira Beach, FL) donating the funds needed for Stroud Fuste to travel to England, where he will serving alongside Indian Rocks Christian School sharing faith, hope, and compassion across the streets of London.

At right, the squadron presents the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches program a $6,000 check, affirming their commitment to our pillar of children and youth.

Squadron 42 (Arlington, SD) Finance Officer Tim Holzer presents the Arlington Food Pantry with a check for $500 to use to stock their shelves with.

Missouri Detachment Commander Walter saluting a veteran following the presentation of a certificate of appreciation for his service.

Above: Young Sons of Squadron 9 (Milbank, SD) recognized for setting the POW/MIA table at their school Veterans Day ceremony.



American Legion Post 21, 322, and 506 Families were in the Morganton, NC Christmas Parade for the second year as part of a Unified American Legion Campaign, boosting visibility and engagement.

Liam and Anna of South Dakota receiving Certificates of Appreciation from their home unit and squadron.

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

Harl "Butch" Ray (IL), National Membership & Squadron Activities Chair

Butch's Bullet Points

Here's hoping everyone had a wonderful holiday with family and friends!

Being thankful took on a new and different meaning for me this year. I was humbled and honored to escort my wife, currently serving as the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary, on her official visits to Hawaii for the Pearl Harbor Observances, to respect and honor the service and sacrifices that took place 84 years ago on December 7, 1941; and also to assist her and thousands of others at Arlington National Cemetery by placing wreaths on our heroes graves during Wreaths Across America Day on the 13th.

Both of these events reinforced for me once again that our freedoms came and will continue to come at a high price. As President Abraham Lincoln stated in his famous "Bixby" letter, of which a portion is carved in stone at the National Cemetery of the Pacific famously known as the "Punchbowl", he stated his condolences for the loss of Mrs. Bixby's five sons and states in part... "The solemn pride that must be yours, to have laid so costly a Sacrifice upon the Altar of Freedom."

It was my honor to serve in my small way to pay tribute to our fallen servicemen and women.

Service ... our service … is the heartbeat of the Sons of The American Legion. Whether it's volunteering at hospitals, providing flag education, supporting citizenship initiatives, or decorating graves and dropping flower petals into Pearl Harbor above the USS Arizona; every act of service strengthens our bond with the community and each other. As the membership expands, so does our capacity to do good. "Service is not just doing for others, but doing with others." By working side-by-side, SAL members build relationships and skills, making the experience as rewarding for the volunteers as for those they serve. Make service projects a regular part of squadron activities, inviting the broader community to participate.

And who wouldn't want to participate in the Sons of the American Legion? According to the December 8th Membership Report, we were sitting at 53.58% with 51 Detachments at or above the 45% goal for December 10th! WAY TO GO! On top of that all five SAL regions were also over 45%! The only shadow in this report is that our retention numbers are way too low sitting at 36.11% at this reporting period. We need to rededicate our efforts to get all of last year's members to renew and to do it soon!

We need these members and many more to continue our mission to assist our Veterans and our communities! The need never stops—there are always veterans to assist, flags to honor, and children to support. Having more members means more opportunities to answer these calls, ensuring our mission never stalls. When potential recruits see the SAL hard at work, they'll want to join in on the action. This week, as the Holidays are right around the corner; organize a service project or volunteer opportunity and invite everyone—members and non-members alike—to participate.

Service is our signature, and it's how we light the way for others to follow. Imagine telling future generations that you were part of the drive that made the Sons of The American Legion one of America's largest service organizations just before the country's 250th birthday. That's not just a statistic—it's a living legacy. "Legacy is not leaving something for people. It's leaving something in people."

Membership is an invitation to be remembered as a builder, a leader, and a steward. Whether you help grow our numbers, mentor youth, or expand service projects, your contribution matters. Together, we are writing the next chapter in the Sons of The American Legion's history of service and patriotism. Every member's unique story enriches our narrative and strengthens our organization. Encourage everyone to see their participation in SAL as a chance to shape not only this year's goals but the next 250 years of American history.

Facebook Photo

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FOR GOD AND COUNTRY
OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMANDER

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Sons of The American Legion,

We have been doing an outstanding job so far during the 2025-2026 membership year. It has been a true honor to serve as your National Commander. Every time we sign a membership card or welcome a new member, we reaffirm our commitment to honor and respect our family members' military service.

I strongly believe in the Four Pillars of our organization and what they represent. The American Legion was founded on the principles of **Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Americanism, Children & Youth, and National Security**. These pillars are the foundation of what the American Legion Family stands for. I am proud to continue the initiative started by Past National Commander, Donald "JR" Hall, through the National Commander's Challenge - encouraging every Squadron to support the Four Pillars and earn recognition as a **National Four Pillar Squadron**.

Participation is simple. Each Squadron is encouraged to raise just **$1 per member** in each of the following areas:

- **Child Well-Being Foundation (CWF)** - *Children & Youth*
- **Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW)** - *Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation*
- **Department (State) Boys State Program** - *Americanism*
- **Host a Blood Drive and/or Donate to the Local American Red Cross** - *National Security*

After completing these efforts, the Squadron should submit the **Four Pillar Squadron Award Form** (attached for reference) to National Headquarters. Once processed, the Squadron will receive a **National Four Pillar Squadron Citation**. With planning and teamwork, this is an achievable goal for every Squadron.

The Sons of The American Legion can reach new heights and break records for volunteer hours and donations. It will take all of us working together and believing in our mission to support veterans, children, and our communities. Let us stand for what is right and show that our family's service inspires us to be the best Sons we can be in every way.

Bill Clancy

William "Bill" Clancy
National Commander (2025-2026)
Sons of The American Legion
"***Community, State, & Nation…***
…Live Your Obligation"

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

National Commander's Challenge Four Pillar Squadron Award Form

CHILDREN AND YOUTH (C&Y)

Donate $1.00 for the Squadron's current membership for Child Well-Being Foundation (CWF).

[include donation check with this form]

Make check payable to: The American Legion Child Well-Being Foundation

Check # _____ Amount: $ _____

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION (VA&R)

Donate $1.00 for the Squadron's current membership for Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW).

[include donation check with this form]

Make check payable to: The American Legion Operation Comfort Warriors

Check # _____ Amount: $ _____

AMERICANISM

Donate $1.00 for the Squadron's current membership. *Check box below to certify donation was sent to the Department (state) American Legion headquarters office.*

[Please do not send payment to National Headquarters]

☐ Donation to the Department (state) American Legion Boys State Program.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Host a blood drive or donate $1.00 for the Squadron's current membership. *Check one box below to certify.*

[Please do not send payment to National Headquarters]

Option 1: ☐ Blood drive held locally on _____

Date Format: mm/dd/yyyy - click inside above box

Option 2: ☐ Donation made to the local American Red Cross.

The below section to be completed by the squadron authorized representative:

Detachment: _____ Squadron No. _____ Date: _____

Date Format: mm/dd/yyyy

Squadron Auth. Rep: _____ Title: _____

Type First and Last Name to serve as digital signature

Return award form and applicable donation checks to:

The American Legion
Attn: SAL Awards
700 N. Pennsylvania Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Questions: email SALawards@legion.org

Bernie Kessler (OH),
National Legislative Commission Chairman

Important 2026 Washington Conference Update!

If you or your detachment has plans to attend the Legislative Conference in Washington, DC this year and participate in the Wreath Laying bus trip on Sunday, March 1st, you need to be aware of the following:

There will be NO stop or wreath laying at the WWII Memorial due to updates at the location, as noted in the link below. Your Commission is working on an alternative trip that will include either the WWI Memorial at Pershing Park, or the Marine Memorial—Also known as the Iwo Jima Memorial. Please make your wreath laying plan is revised based on this information. We will still have our presence at the Vietnam Wall and the Korean War Memorial. An update will be in the February issue of *The Millennium*.

The deadline for the trip is January 30, 2026. The form can be obtained by emailing me at kesslerbernie@gmail.com for a 'pdf' copy.

https://www.stripes.com/theaters/us/2026-01-09/wwii-memorial-washington-closes-20354140.html

Make Note of these Important dates on The American Legion Calendar

February 2026	**Americanism Month**
01 February	**Four Chaplains Sunday**
16 February	**President Day**
01 March	**SAL Wreath Laying at the Washington Conference**
15 March	**American Legion Birthday**
29 March	**National Vietnam Veterans Day**
April 2026	**Children and Youth Month**
25 April	**American Legion Family Day**
1-3 May	**Spring NEC Meetings**

www.legion.org—*06 January 2026*

Florida: Squadron 129 spearheads a memorial honoring those who died in service in Korea and Vietnam

A project three years in the making, led by Sons of The American Legion Squadron 129 in Jacksonville Beach, Fla., pays tribute to local servicemembers who died in the Korean and Vietnam wars.

The memorials, which also honor those who died in America's undeclared wars, were unveiled Dec. 14 in front of Post 129.

"It is satisfying that we finally got it installed to memorialize the many servicemembers who served, their families — and especially those who paid the ultimate sacrifice during these armed conflicts and wars to protect our freedoms," said SAL member Dave Breitenstein.

Post 129 Treasurer Jim Wineland approached Squadron 129 member Brian Haught with the project in 2022, and Haught developed pillar designs with John Allan of AAA Monuments.

Breitenstein later spearheaded the design and proposal to fund the new monument. As part of the project — funded by almost $25,000 in donations — the post's bell tower was also renovated.

"A special thank-you goes out to the SAL leadership team and Legion leadership team for funding and approving the project, including our late commander Joe Mailchle and current commander Jeff Durden, who both championed the project," Breitenstein said.

Legion.org Photo

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To:

This Month, On The Back Cover …..

Be on the look out for "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!
Look for the Snowflake in this month's newsletter!