SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

A newsletter of Sons of The American Legion

THE MILLENNIUM

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Top 2026 Membership Detachments

1.	Philippines	145.83%
2.	Dist. Of Col.	135.96%
3.	Utah	117.78%

Statistics as of 07 May 2026

- Breaking News -

National Emergency Fund (NEF) Update

The Trustees of the National Emergency Fund met in early May at National Headquarters in Indianapolis, and provided the following ruling to The American Legion as a whole:

Effective immediately, ALL SAL members are eligible to apply and receive assistance from The American Legion National Emergency Fund.

Special to The Millennium: Chris Casey (NE), National Vice Commander

September 11th and the Atwood-Beyea-York Memorial Award

Atwood, Beyea, and York are far more than names engraved on an award presented at the Sons of The American Legion National Convention. For those unfamiliar, the Atwood-Beyea-York Memorial Award recognizes the most outstanding Americanism programs at the detachment, district, and squadron levels. Recipients are selected based on data from the Consolidated Squadron Reports. The award honors three Sons of The American Legion members; Gerald Atwood, Edward Beyea, and Raymond York, who each lost their lives in the attacks of September 11, 2001.

I had the honor of visiting the 9/11 Museum & Memorial while in New York City for Commander Clancy's homecoming. Words cannot fully capture the emotions of that experience; at times, it was overwhelming. It is something I will carry with me for the rest of my life. One interactive exhibit allows visitors to search for profiles of those who were lost that day. I immediately thought of our brothers and searched for each of their names. What I found were powerful tributes that made their lives and sacrifices feel deeply personal. Recordings from Beyea's nephew and York's friend brought their stories to life in a profound way.

Gerald Atwood was a member of Sons of The American Legion Squadron 1060 in Brooklyn, New York. He served as a New York City firefighter assigned to Ladder 21, and was among the hundreds of firefighters who lost their lives after responding to the World Trade Center. An eight-year veteran of the FDNY, he worked out of "Hell's Kitchen." He grew up in Brooklyn's Old Mill Basin neighborhood, graduated from South Shore High School, and attended Kingsborough Community College.

Edward Beyea (pronounced "Bee-Yay") was a life member of Sons of The American Legion Squadron 173 in Bath, New York, and worked as a computer programmer for Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield in the World Trade Center. For the last 21 years of his life, he required full-time care after a diving accident left him quadriplegic. Refusing to be defined by his disability, he learned to type using a stick operated with his mouth. On September 11, Mr. Beyea remained on the 27th floor alongside his friend and colleague, Abe Zelmanowitz, who refused to leave his side. They waited together for rescue that, tragically, never came.

Below: l to r—Gerald Attwood, Edward Beyea , Raymond York

Continued on Page 2 >>>>>

Atwood-Beyea-York Award:
Continued from Page 1

Raymond York was a member of Broad Channel Sons of The American Legion Squadron 1404, where he served as 3rd Vice Commander. One of New York's Bravest, he gave his life while attempting to save others during the attacks. A veteran firefighter with Engine Company 285 in Queens, Mr. York had been assigned to light duty due to an injury. On 9/11, he was portraying "Fireman Ray" in a fire safety show at Rockefeller Center. Determined to help, he made his way to the burning towers by hitching rides with a television truck and an ambulance. His remains were found the following day on West Street. After 20 years with the FDNY, he had planned to retire at the end of 2001.

We must never forget the sacrifices made on September 11, 2001, and in the years since. The next time the Atwood-Beyea-York Memorial Award is presented, remember the stories behind the names. They are not just names on an award, they are our brothers, and their legacy lives on through us.

Legion Photo: Trophy Plaque

Mike Vozar (IL), Alternate Executive Committeeman

Illinois: Squadron 203 Certificate of Appreciation

Detachment of Illinois Senior Vice Commander John Nemanich recently presented Georgetown Squadron 203 a Certificate of Appreciation from the Detachment for their work in establishing "Operation Stand Up". This Squadron program honors veterans and their families by cleaning and resetting veteran grave headstones and bronze markers within 10 miles of Georgetown.

Squadron 203 is proud how their program unexpectedly started three years ago by simply "answering the call" from Post 203 member and Korean War veteran Sixty Thompson. Sixty asked the Squadron to help him honor his Great Uncle who was killed in France during WWI by cleaning and restoring his headstone. Squadron 203 rose to the occasion and immediately realized this was a special and respectful service they should make available to all veteran families upon request. They have honored 60 veterans to date. Squadron 203 is particularly proud to have had the opportunity to also help restore the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial at Georgetown Cemetery and the Veterans Memorial in Catlin, Illinois.

Submitted Photo

Facebook Photo

Sons of American Legion Squadron 364 (Dearborn, MI) helping the Dearborn public schools.

The schools were in need of flags to fly at local schools in Dearborn. They bring down the old ones in May, and put the new ones up for Memorial Day. Squadron 364 stepped up and donated all the flags they needed together to fly at the schools. SAL … Promoting the Pillar of Americanism.

Mike Monserud (IA), Trailing Candidate for National Commander

Our Preamble

Our Preamble ... just words, or do you really understand what we are saying at all official meetings? Let's look at this a little closer to better understand what we are reciting.

"To uphold and defend the Constitution of The United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a true spirit of Americanism"; Be a good American and follow the laws of the land - never forget to be proud to be an American throughout your community and in the tasks of your daily life.

"...to preserve the memories of our former members and the associations of our members and our forefathers in all wars"; never forget the ones who came before us, those who never came home, and the ones still serving, all the while honoring the veteran that you became eligible under.

"...to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation"; every member has a civic duty to improve your community, state and nation through action.

"...to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy, to consecrate and sanctify our friendship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness"; means for us to oppose any group that seeks to dominate the government or threaten democratic fairness. We must preserve democratic values for future generations, and it also describes our bond to support Veterans and their families.

"...to adopt in letter and spirit all of the great principles for which The American Legion stands; and to assist in carrying on for God and Country." to remember that as a program of the American Legion that we must carry on the missions of the American Legion and assist our home posts with any duties such as Color Guards, Community Service, and any local events to help support our Veterans.

Bryan Hine (TN), National Vice Commander Southeast

Tennessee goes to the National Commander's Homecoming

Trading the rolling hills of Tennessee for the skyscrapers of NYC is a bit like trading a porch swing for a rollercoaster. At 11:30 am on Thursday April 9th, we lifted off in a "big old jet airliner" bound for JFK Airport in New York City. Yes, New York City. We touched down at 2:59pm New York time.

All was good, but let me tell you: that $130, 18-mile, hour-long Uber ride to the hotel made this Tennessee boy wish he was back home. I cussed and fussed the whole way! After settling in at the hotel, things started looking a bit brighter. My wife Melissa and I, along with our friends Rhonda and Grant (also from Tennessee), took a short walk to the New York Athletic Club. *No jeans or sneakers allowed*? What! In Tennessee, that is business casual. We were directed to the 12th floor, home of American Legion Post 754, where the room was full of 'early birds' gathered to kick off Commander Clancy's homecoming celebration.

Friday morning started around 10:00am, with a quick subway trip (note: those handrails are there for a purpose!) to Chinatown. Our destination was Shanghai Joe's, where we enjoyed a great lunch before heading back to the hotel.

Next, we visited City Island ... home of the Clancy family, their home post, and the Morris Yacht Club. The members of Post 156 were incredibly hospitable—with cold refreshments, hot dogs, and clam chowder for everyone! At 6:00pm, we arrived at the Morris Yacht Club for a great buffet dinner overlooking the NYC skyline. Melissa, Rhonda, Grant, and I opted for the last bus back because there was a "rockin' little three-piece band" playing in the lounge. We stayed as long as possible; they said, "We had a great time, lol."

Saturday was a busy day, starting with an 8:00am departure for a very moving tour of the 9/11 Museum and Memorial. We were back at the hotel by noon to dress for the evening's activities. The buses departed for the USS Intrepid for a meet-and-greet with Ken Fisher, President of the Fisher House, followed by a tour of the museum.

Then it was off to Federal Hall. After touring the site of the original US Capital (where George Washington took his oath of office), we walked across the street to the fabulous Capital Grille on Wall Street.

We enjoyed happy hour and a testimonial steak dinner—or "supper," as we call it here in TN—dedicated to our SAL National Commander, William "Bill" Clancy. Sunday morning, it was time to depart for "Sweet Home Tennessee" (Podunk).

All jokes aside, we had a great weekend in Bill's hometown! His team did an amazing job putting everything together. I know the bus schedule had the Commander a little stressed, but everything worked out perfectly. Melissa and I, along with Rhonda and Grant, had a fantastic time. We are so glad we had the opportunity to be part of Commander Clancy's homecoming.

Photos this page: National Historian Van Patten and Millennium Editor Rusty Myers

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

Stop and Smell the Roses: From New York City to Indy

In this newsletter you'll see quite a bit about the National Commander's Homecoming in NYC. I think it's something that very few people have the chance to be a part of, and that warrants writing about. It was a very cool experience.

I had the opportunity to attend this year's as my first National Commander's Homecoming. Not only was if for someone I've grown incredibly fond of, but it was also just across the river from home.

Without getting into the entire itinerary, we visited Commander Clancy's home post, the American Legion on Central Park South (I've worked three blocks from there for 25 years and had no idea it was there), the 9/11 Museum, the USS Intrepid, Federal Hall, and the famous Capital Grille.

In the previous pages, you've gotten a taste of our adventures in The Big Apple.

The front page article is a very heavy one … talking about the three Sons who died on September 11th. It's a story that's difficult to hear … but a story that needs to get told. A story about heroism, and selflessness—a story that brings the experience of September 11th home to us as an organization. I personally had no idea about the names on this trophy, though I have most certainly heard about the gentleman in a wheelchair in one of the towers who couldn't get out, and perished with his colleagues who wouldn't leave his side. I had no idea he was a Son.

This article is balanced by the humor of NVC Hine's article on the following page. I asked him for a few words to accompany pictures I wanted to run, and he hit the assignment out of the park.

The intent was to get an out-of-towner's perspective on New York City … and what we got was pure country boy goes to the big city. Your article made me chuckle, NVC Hine.

Though I'm not from New York, I've worked there every day for over two decades … commuting by bus and train five days a week. Here, in North Jersey, we're all used to going there …. and I have to say I do consider it *my* city …. So I really enjoyed sharing the experience with our Legion Family from around the country.

Much of what we did on the homecoming were things I had in fact never done. You would be amazed at the things folks in NYC take for granted because they are right in our back yard, and just never do.

I've never been to the 9-11 Museum, though I have been to the memorial. Never been to Federal Hall. Never been to City Island. Never been to the New York Athletic Club (where the Legion Post on Central Park South is), or to Capital Grille … both of those are out of my budget!

It wasn't just the planned activates, though. The best part about going to these places was the opportunity to experience it with my Legion Family. The un-planned activities.

Lunch and libations with Casey Hanson from South Dakota. A tour of FOX News with Jesse Limanek from Massachusetts, Scott Williams from VA, and Kevin and Lisa Chaplin also from Virginia. A great chat with Department Commander Miga of New York. Some QT with my buddy James from New Jersey.

We all too often focus on the mission and the work, and we don't take the time to slow down and spend time "off the clock" with the friends we've made. This homecoming weekend was an opportunity to do just that. Appreciate the gift of friendship.

That homecoming weekend stands hand-in-hand with last weekend's Spring NEC meetings in Indianapolis.

One would think going to Indiana for Committee and Commission meetings and two three-hour long NEC Sessions would be daunting—but it's quite the opposite. It's a fantastic opportunity to see the "inside baseball" of the mechanics that keep the SAL going, and a chance to play your small part in determining its direction.

This year was more powerful then most—because we met in the NEC Room at American Legion HQ. So much history.

But again, it's the off-time which is what I enjoy the most. The moments outside of the conference rooms—dining together, going to the Slippery Noodle to see a band together, having a walk and a cigar together.

So stop and smell the roses—take some time off from the "job" of being a Son and enjoy each other's company. To quote Commander Clancy again—have ***Fun with Purpose.***

THE MILLENNIUM

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Distribution Schedule:

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

13 May 2026
10 June 2026
08 July 2026

Robert Crevelli (CA), Vice-chair, Natn't Media and Communications

Spring NEC: Progress, Partnership, and Momentum

Held in the historic Jake P. Comer NEC Room at National Headquarters, the Spring 2026 NEC meeting highlighted strengthened collaboration between the Sons of The American Legion (SAL) and The American Legion (TAL). A key development was the ongoing effort to amend the National Emergency Fund (NEF) Trust to allow full participation by SAL members—an important step toward expanding access to critical support resources and further aligning both organizations' missions.

Editor's Photo: NEC Session

National leadership engagement reinforced SAL's role in sustaining posts and delivering programs nationwide, emphasizing its impact in supporting veterans, families, and communities. The establishment of the J.R. Stillwell National Legacy Award marked a historic milestone, honoring decades of transformational service and a legacy that helped shape the organization. Leadership development also continued with the advancement of the next national candidate.

Membership remains strong at approximately 390,000 and continues trending ahead of prior years. The 2027 national budget was approved, and a rare Committee of the Whole session provided an opportunity for open discussion on financial transparency and member input.

Editor's Photo

Programs continue to deliver measurable impact, including growth within the Child Welfare Foundation, the Veterans & Children's Foundation fundraising effort, and expansion of the Be The One initiative. Youth engagement remains a priority, with enhanced programming planned for the upcoming National Convention.

Commissions & Committees

Legislative Commission: The Legislative Commission continues to prioritize passage of the Major Richard Star Act. While bipartisan support is strong, progress remains stalled, making grassroots advocacy essential through VoterVoice and direct engagement with elected officials.

Media & Communications Commission: The commission is focused on strengthening storytelling through NEC press releases and expanded Millennium content. Low participation in Snapshots of Service highlights an opportunity to better showcase squadron impact.

Americanism Commission: Programs promoting civic engagement continue through Flying Flags for Heroes, Boys State, and America 250 initiatives, with emphasis on increased participation and improved reporting.

Editor's Photo

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R): Efforts include homelessness outreach, rehabilitation programs, and partnerships such as K9s for Warriors. Expanding representation in VA medical centers remains a key goal.

Editor's Photo

Veterans Employment & Education (VE&E): The commission focuses on veteran homelessness and access to resources, with a new informational pamphlet being developed to guide squadrons and share best practices.

Internal Affairs Commission: The commission continues strengthening governance, with updates to the F.A.L. Ceremonial Manual completed and distributed for feedback.

Membership & Squadron Activities: Membership growth and retention remain priorities. The upcoming toolkit and "July In, December Out" initiative aim to improve engagement and early renewals.

Editor's Photo: SAL 100 Committee

100th Anniversary Committee: Planning focuses on historical preservation, with detachments encouraged to appoint historians and contribute records alongside digital archive efforts.

Emergency Preparedness Committee: The committee is developing preparedness resources and expanding organizational readiness through improved structure and coordination.

Committee and Commission Action Items:

Media & Communications: Squadrons Submit Snapshots by June 30; Submit Millennium content; Recruit assistant editor, submit videos for "Share Your Why"

Membership: Launch toolkit by July 1

Internal Affairs: Generate and review a National Ceremonial Manual

VA&R: Expand VA representation

VE&E: Finalize VE&E pamphlet

100th Anniversary: Appoint squadron historians; receive submissions for archives

Emergency Preparedness: Review preparedness guide

Legislative: Engage Congress on the Major Richard Star Act; promote Voter Voice

Americanism: Report Flying Flags For Heros; Sponsor Boy State; report America 250 activity by August 5

VCF: Support $150K goal by July 4

Be The One: Promote training

General: Submit your SDR's

Steven Lance (NJ),
Detachment Chaplain

Chaplain's Corner: Memorial Day

This coming Monday, May 25, 2026, we shall all observe the 59th annual federal Memorial Day as calculated from the establishment of the Uniform Holiday Act that went into effect in 1971 by our nation's 90th Congress. This act (H.R. 15951) permanently moved federal holidays to Mondays to create three-day weekends. It was also aimed at boosting commercial and industrial production while at the same time reducing absenteeism.

It should, however, be noted that this year's Memorial Day will actually mark the 159th year of remembrance since the very first "Decoration Day" observed on May 30, 1868.

Decoration Day was established by General John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic and honored the more than 20,000 Union and Confederate Civil War dead interred at Arlington National Cemetery by "decorating" their graves with flowers.

It is also key for us to remember (and perhaps even more importantly) to share with those around us that - rather than barbecues, races, and yes, even parades—that Memorial Day is meant to remember those who served their country in uniform and who are no longer with us.

As such, while family members and friends often lay flowers on the final resting places of our nation's warfighter's, it has now long become a long-standing tradition for American Legion posts nationwide to lead the effort in the placement of small U.S. flags on veterans' graves, executed with assistance from members of the American Legion Family— our Auxiliary, Sons, Riders, and Juniors along with other community member organizations and volunteers.

Let us pray. ***Oh Lord, we ask that you hold our departed Veterans in thy loving hands. Bring comfort to their loved ones. Bring warmth to their friends, and to those strangers whose lives were touched and enriched by them.***

Gracious God, on this Memorial Day, and every day, help us steward the freedoms bought for us by the selfless commitment of our departed warfighters. We also ask, that you protect all those who serve today, and especially those who are in harm's way.

Heavenly Father, never let us forget that We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity…

And let us all say . . . Amen.

www.legion.org—*26 April 2026*

Deadline 30 June for Media Contests

Squadrons have until June 30 to submit entries in the Snapshots of Service and Videos of Service contests.

Snapshots of Service entries must be submitted by a squadron and reflect one of the Four Pillars of The American Legion: Americanism, Children & Youth, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, or National Security. Photos must be in a digital JPG or TIFF format and have no right of restriction. Photos must contain members of the Sons with their covers or identifiable clothing on during the activity or event and a brief history of the event. Squadrons may submit a maximum of three entries per category.

Entries will be judged by the SAL Media & Communications Commission on quality of the photo, how the photo symbolizes support of the Four Pillars by the SAL, and whether SAL members are included in the photo.

The Videos of Service contest is open to all SAL members. Videos must contain members of the SAL with their covers or identifiable clothing on during the activity or event. Videos shall fall under one of these categories: Program Support, Community Engagement, or Membership and Recruitment. Videos should be under five minutes and should be published to Facebook, YouTube or Instagram. A link to the published video's location must be included on the award entry form.

Entries will be judged by the SAL Media & Communications Commission on quality, content and branding.

Plaques for both contests will be awarded during the National Convention to the first - and second-place winners in each category.

Entry forms for each contest are available under "Public Media & Communications" at https://www.legion.org/about/american-legion-family/sons-of-the-american-legion/publications-and-forms.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

A newsletter of Sons of The American Legion

THE MILLENNIUM

Have some news to share?

Monthly deadline is the 25th

Email us at rusty.myers@ymail.com

Harl "Butch" Ray (IL),
National Membership and Squadron Activities Committee Chairman

The "Other" Empty Chair

The Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Marion, Illinois, is a vital healthcare facility dedicated to serving U.S. military veterans across Southern Illinois and neighboring states. Established between 1939 and 1941, the center is notable for its Egyptian Revival architectural style, reflecting the region's nickname, "Little Egypt."

The Marion VA Medical Center serves approximately 49,000 veterans annually across 27 counties in Southern Illinois, eight counties in Southwestern Indiana, and 17 counties in Northwest Kentucky.

A few years back, the administrative office at the Marion VA received a poem from an unknown author who claimed to be a patient at one of the Marion VA clinics. This poem made such an impact that it has been stitched into a leather drape and placed on an empty chair and is read at the beginning of all administrative and staff meetings since.

I heard this poem read for the first time a couple of years ago at a fundraiser and the impact it made on me urged me to request a copy of it for distribution:

"THE EMPTY CHAIR"

I wonder how we would react, If at all our meetings there was an empty chair.

Would we tend to look away, or possibly turn and stare?

But why would we bother with an empty chair, If all it does is elicit a stare?

Can an empty chair speak? Or convey thought?

Or is it just empty… and thus, should never have been brought.

But what if the chair was an unspoken Vet? Could we ignore his presence without feeling regret?

It's a powerful thing, the empty chair. It doesn't have to speak, but we know it's there.

As the chair can't speak, it has no choice, but to rely on us to become its voice.

- Anonymous

Spotted by a Son

In April's newsletter, we asked if you could find the image of the poppy. The Millennium went out on 08 April, and by 11:50am we had a winner…

Steve Christenberry
Squadron 400
Topeka, Kansas

Christenberry serves as Squadron 400's Finance Officer and Co-Adjutant. He is the past Vice Commander for the 1st District SAL, and was just elected as the Commander for the 1st District, assuming that role after the State Convention the last weekend of May.

He draws eligibility in the Sons from his father, who served in the US Army from 1952-54. He was stationed in Germany when Steve was born in 1953 at Forbes Air Force Base in Topeka.

Steve is also dual member, serving five years active duty in the United States Marine Corps from 1971-1976. He is a 13-year member of The American Legion, with six years as an SAL.

He has served as the Post 400 Vice Commander, Commander, and Finance Officer, and continues to serve as the Post Service Officer.

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!*

Gary Crawford (NJ), Editor of the Detachment Newsletter The SALute

NJ: 23 Graduate SAL College

On the weekend of 24 and 25 April, New Jersey's American Legion held their annual Legion College, featuring instruction in Basic and Advanced courses for both the Legion and SAL, held at the Sea Girt, NJ State Police and National Guard Training Center. For those staying overnight at the camp for the courses, Neptune American Legion Post 346 hosted an informal Legion Family gathering on Friday to see old friends and make new ones. Food, drinks, hospitality, and fellowship were on tap.

Submitted Photo

Twenty-three Detachment of NJ Sons graduated the College, along with four SAL. PDC instructors. Fifteen took the Basic course, while eight attended the Advanced course, featuring leadership skills as well as how the SAL works. This was one of the highest attendance of Sons to these annual courses. It was refreshing to see so many newer "Blue Cap" Sons taking advantage of these new skills.

After courses were completed on Saturday, attendees were treated to another get-together at Legion Post 266, also in Neptune.

A special visit was made by Legion National Vice Commander Northeast Ron LaRose, a retired Lt. Colonel from Bristol Post 19 in Vermont.

TN: Upper Cumberland Squadron 135 Receives Charter

Submitted Photo, David Curler: *David Curler SAL NEC TN; Charter Members Tom Slover (Dual Member), Steven Oge (Dual Member and newly elected SAL 4th District Commander), Ed Bray (Dual Member and outgoing 4th District Commander), Mark Harris (Dual Member), Randy Porter (Putman County Mayor), and Ron Hessil (Dual Member and Middle Tennessee Department Vice Commander)*

MD: Post Family donates $4,000 to local JROTC

Submitted Photo, Squadron 166 1st Vice Commander Robert Krizanski: *Post and Squadron 166 (Ocean City, MD) presented two donation checks totaling $4,000 to the Snow Hill JROTC program on 23 March. Pictured are members from the Synepuxent Post 166 Family and JROTC leadership. Presenting the donation check for the SAL is 2nd Vice Commander Matt Laick.*

IL: Squadron donates $1,500 to The St. Baldrick's Foundation

Submitted Photo, ANEC Mike Vozar: *Squadron 581 (Columbia, IL) at their BBQ at an April St. Baldrick's event. The squadron proudly donated $1,500 in sales proceeds to this incredible annual event. The St. Baldrick's Foundation is a volunteer and donor powered charity committed to supporting the most promising research to find cures for childhood cancers. Since St. Baldrick's began, the 5-year survival rate for childhood cancer has risen from 79% to 85%.*

By Jim Newell, Lake Orion Review—*08 April 2026*

MI: SAL Squadron 233 hosts annual Easter egg hunt

The rainy weather did not dampen the kids' enthusiasm during the Lake Orion Sons of the American Legion annual Easter egg hunt on Saturday.

Approximately 100 children madly dashed around Children's Park to fill their bags to the brim with some of the 4,000 plastic Easter eggs – each con-taining a coveted candy treat – scattered around the park.

The chaotic fun lasted a little more than five minutes before the kids were able to scoop up all the eggs, and then the second phase of the hunt begin – opening the plastic shells to reveal the candy surprise inside and negotiating and trading with siblings and friends.

Lake Orion Review Photo

Bob Gritzinger, commander of Sons of the American Legion Squadron 233, said the SAL purchases the candy and fills the eggs every year, and then treats the kids to a pizza lunch. The SAL Eas-ter egg hunt began more than 20 years ago with about 20 kids participating, and has grown since then.

"It's been a long-standing tradition. It started out as a small event for legion-naires, their children and grandkids. It has grown into a community-wide event with over a 100 kids each year," Gritzinger said. "It's a phenomenal thing. Anybody who has witnessed it will note that we count it down from 10 to 1 and those kids launch and in five minutes those eggs are collected."

Lake Orion Review Photo

By Kevin Raunch, The Express—*05 April 2026*

PA: Squadron 442 Holds Successful Chicken Fundraiser

The Express Photo

Squadron 442 in Renovo, PA spent an April Saturday morning flipping and cooking bar-b-que chicken dinners. The nonprofit group spent most of their day at the American Legion Remembrance Post on Erie Ave. The windy day had the smell and smoke of chicken spreading down and throughout town, leading many people to discover the dinners. Sons of the American Legion member Steve Fantaski provided the setup and, along with two personal volunteers, Keith and Kevin Tripp, were joined by many members of the Sons of the American Legion. All of the chefs and volunteers seemed to have as much fun cooking and serving the dinners as those that stopped in to buy them did.

Legion.org– *15 March 2026*

FL: Squadron 189 member Peter Puzzo brings flag education into schools

Peter Puzzo has reached his goal of teaching Americanism to 250 students and adults as part of his participation in The American Legion's USA 250 Challenge. Since the challenge kicked off last July to celebrate the nation's 250th birthday on July 4, 2026, Puzzo and others from Post 189 in Sebastian, Fla., have visited five local schools to provide flag education.

Participating in the USA 250 Challenge "was an opportunity for me to do something for the Legion," said Puzzo, Americanism chairman and member of Squadron 189.

The post and squadron members have been going into Indian River County Schools for several years with its Americanism 101 program, which consists of videos, presentations and hands-on experience. The program teaches students in elementary through middle school the history of the Pledge of Allegiance, shares a Red Skelton video about the meaning of each word in the Pledge of Allegiance, discusses the origin of the Star-Spangled Banner, and educates about the history of the U.S. flag by showing the "I am the Flag" video starring Jimmy Weldon, a World War II veteran.

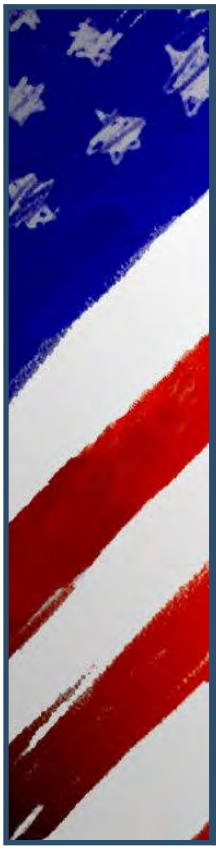
When the program is taught to elementary students, Puzzo hands out copies of the Legion's "I Pledge Allegiance" activity comic book that educates on why we recite the Pledge of Allegiance, what each word means, and why our flag is important.

The students also learn about flag etiquette and how to properly fold the flag. "The children always volunteer to do this part," Puzzo said. "And when the student is done with the triangle, they hold it up and the class applauds them."

Puzzo, who is in the post honor guard, conducts a mock flag presentation ceremony for a veteran's funeral for the students to understand the repsect rendered. "The kids get a sense of what this is really all about," he said. If the Americanism program is being taught close to Memorial Day, Puzzo will hand students a flyer inviting them to put flags on veteran gravesites with the Post 189 Legion Family.

"I love kids and I love thinking that I am helping them formulate pride in their country," he said.

Legion.org Photo



Make Note of these Important dates on The American Legion Calendar

16 May	Armed Forces Day
22 May	National Poppy Day
25 May	Memorial Day
06 June	82nd Anniversary of D-Day
14 June	Flag Day and the Army Birthday
27 June	National PTSD Awareness Day
01 July	CSR Deadline for National Convention Awards
04 July	Independence Day
27 July	Korean War Armistice Day
29 July	105% Membership Target Date
04 August	Coast Guard Birthday
07 August	Purple Heart Day

Facebook: During the 107th Spearfish American Birthday Celebration on April 11th, Doug Henwood was recognized as the Sons of The American Legion Squadron 164 (Spearfish, SD) Member of the Year. He received this high award from Squadron 164 Commander, Mike Porter, assisted by the Detachment of South Dakota Commander Wyatt Reid and District Commander Grant Lolley. Congratulation, Doug … well deserved!

Legion.org—*22 April 2026*

DE: Cleaning Headstones as part of the USA 250 Challenge

Rick Wheatley is the Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Delaware commander, and a project of his is headstone cleaning and restoration. He combined his community service project with the Legion's USA 250 Challenge and made it his goal to clean 250 veteran headstones.

Since last October, Wheatley has cleaned over 300 veteran headstones in his hometown of Harrington and nearby.

"We don't just clean, we rebuild, we reset and we fix cracked headstones," said Wheatley, commander of Squadron 7 in Harrington. "I really enjoy it. And the gratification that you get is unbelievable."

Wheatley has been caring for the headstones of his late parents, which include his father Cyrus, a World War II Purple Heart recipient, along with his dear friend Donald Jenkins, who got him involved in Squadron 7.

"My father has always been my hero," Wheatley said. "Every time I go to his grave, I say a little prayer, and I just tell him I hope I'm making you proud. I'm doing the best I can."

The veteran headstone cleaning project is a continuation of immediate past Detachment Commander Chris Reachard. "I've taken what Chris started and tried to make it grow," Wheatley said, adding that he created a Headstone Cleaning and Restoration Fund for the Detachment of Delaware to help purchase cleaning solution and supplies. And he now has a chairman of the headstone cleaning project for Kent and Sussex County.

"The project has taken on a life of its own," he said.

Wheatley travels with a spray bottle of Endurance Gravestone & Monument Cleaner so he can make a stop at a cemetery any time. "I enjoy it. I get a lot of satisfaction out of it." he said.

And next month, he and members of Post 2 in Dover plan to celebrate America's 250th birthday by cleaning the headstone of Walter L. Fox, the namesake of Post 2 who died from wounds in World War I, as well as Caesar Rodney of Delaware who signed the Declaration of Independence.

When it comes to cleaning the headstones of veterans, "it doesn't matter whether the family knows that I've done it or don't know that I've done it," Wheatley said. "They just know that it's been cleaned, it's been done."

There is still time to register for The American Legion's USA 250 Challenge. Learn more here and register for $30 which benefits The American Legion's Veterans & Children Foundation. And be a part of the challenge to raise $150,000 for VCF.

Legion.org Photo

Juan A. Cruz-Rodríguez (PR),
Natn'l SAL 100 Ad-Hoc Committee

The SAL at 100: A Century of Service

As the Sons of the American Legion (S.A.L.) prepare to celebrate 100 years, they embody a legacy of dedication to veterans, community, and country. Founded in 1932 as an extension of The American Legion, the SAL has become a leading service organization known for resilience, patriotism, and honoring the legacy of America's veterans.

Founding a New Generation of Service (1932): The origins of the SAL trace back to the 14th National Convention of The American Legion in Portland, Oregon, in September 1932. Delegates recognized the importance of engaging the sons and grandsons of veterans in service and citizenship. With this authorization, the Sons of the American Legion were born, designed to honor veterans by empowering their descendants to serve their communities and uphold the Legion's values.

The response was immediate and enthusiastic. During the 1930s, Detachments and Squadrons emerged across the nation. They grew thanks to a generation eager to contribute. By 1939, membership had surpassed 72,000. This achievement reflected the organization's growing influence. The SAL even entered the cultural spotlight with the 1938 film *Sons of the Legion*. This movie introduced the program to audiences nationwide.

A Turning Point: World War II and Its Aftermath: The outbreak of World War II reshaped the organization in profound ways. Thousands of young SAL members answered the call to serve. Many returned as veterans eligible to join The American Legion itself. While this transition strengthened the Legion, SAL membership sharply declined. By 1953, the organization had reached its lowest recorded membership. This moment threatened its continuity.

Yet the spirit of service that defined the SAL never faded. The 1960s marked a resurgence. Membership climbed again. The organization reestablished its presence in communities across the country. This revival set the stage for a new era of growth and national coordination.

A National Identity Takes Shape (1972): A defining milestone arrived in 1972 with the first National Convention of the Sons of the American Legion. This historic gathering formalized the organization's national structure. It strengthened its leadership framework and affirmed its role within the Legion Family. From that point on, the SAL operated with a unified voice and a renewed sense of purpose.

Expanding Impact Through Service: Over the decades, the SAL has become synonymous with service. Their contributions to the Child Well-Being Foundation—totaling millions of dollars—have supported programs that improve children's lives nationwide. Members have volunteered countless hours in veterans' hospitals, participated in community improvement projects, and supported youth initiatives that promote leadership, citizenship, and patriotism.

This commitment to service is not merely tradition. It is the living expression of the SAL's founding principles. Each Squadron, Detachment, and member contributes to a legacy that honors veterans by strengthening the communities they defended.

Celebrating a Century: A Commemorative Coin Series: To honor this remarkable history, the SAL 100th Anniversary Committee is designing a special set of six commemorative coins. Each coin in the series will be released separately, and will depict a specific defining moment or milestone from across our century-long journey. These coins will serve as lasting mementos of pride for members.

This limited-edition series will highlight key historical events. Coins will range from the organization's founding to modern-day achievements. Members will be able to hold a piece of SAL heritage in their hands. The coin set is intended not only as a collector's item, but as a symbol of the enduring values and service that have shaped the Sons of the American Legion for 100 years. Stay tuned for more details on this extraordinary opportunity.

A Century of Strong Growth: Today, the Sons of The American Legion counts more than 400,000 members nationwide. Their presence is felt in every corner of the country. Small-town Squadrons and large Detachments coordinate statewide initiatives. As they celebrate their 100th anniversary, the SAL stands not only as a guardian of history but also as a vibrant, forward-looking organization. They remain committed to shaping the next century of service.

The story of the SAL is, at its core, a story of gratitude—gratitude for the sacrifices of veterans, gratitude for the freedoms they secured, and gratitude for the opportunity to serve in their honor. For almost 100 years, the SAL has carried out this mission with pride. In a few years, the SAL will embark on its second century; its commitment will remain unchanged: to serve the community, strengthen the nation, and preserve the legacy of those who defended liberty.

SAL 100 Committee virtual meetings are every other 1st Monday, with 01 June next.

Facebook.org: 2nd Vice CMDR American Legion Dept of Michigan—*25 March 2026*

MI: A New Flag

Very cool and patriotic story – we stopped by the "Polar Bear" post - Post 14 in Troy/ Birmingham MI, to get a passport stamp and visit with Sandy Lipman (Past SAL Detachment Commander.) When I arrived the post flag was a bit tattered.

Now, this is were it gets so cool… within an hour two, Auxiliary members Nora and Mary Ann showed up with a brand new flag. We helped the two change out the flags, and to show my appreciation I introduced them to the American Legion Passport Program by giving them each a Passport Book. Fun to watch them get their first post stamp at there home post.

-From a Facebook post written by Roger Deaton (MI) via PDC Sandy Lipman (MI)

Squadron 328 (Safety Harbor, FL) donates a whopping *$60,476*, supporting two amazing local organizations - Hero To A Child, and Steps To Recovery

Checks were presented to two charities: Hero To A Child helps support children in the foster care system for Pinellas and Pasco counties; Steps to Recovery is a veterans support non-profit which takes homeless veterans and gives them a home and rehabilitation.

David R. Faust (WI), Past National Commander

Rededication Day: Recommitment to God and Country

In May we celebrate the founding of America and rededicate ourselves to God and Country. From our earliest beginnings, faith and freedom have been intertwined.

In 1607, the settlers at Jamestown planted a cross on the shores of Virginia and dedicated the new land "to the glory of His Divine Majesty". Their mission was not only exploration and trade, but the expansion of the Christian faith.

The Pilgrims continued this tradition. The Mayflower Compact began "In the name of God, Amen," declaring their voyage was undertaken "for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith".

The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut echoed the same conviction, grounding their new government "according to God".

As the colonies grew, so did the belief that liberty itself was tied to divine truth. Patrick Henry's cry — "Give me liberty or give me death!" — invoked Almighty God as the source of courage and conviction. The Declaration of Independence affirmed that all people "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights"

Throughout our history, Americans have returned to this connection between faith and freedom. Francis Scott Key praised the "Power that hath made and preserved us a nation" and declared, "In God is our trust". Julia Ward Howe wrote that Christ "died to make men holy," inspiring the resolve to make men free.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called on the nation to lift itself "from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood," proclaiming that "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed" as freedom rang for all God's children.

Pope Benedict XVI reminded us that America's commitment to liberty has always rested on a moral order rooted in God, and that freedom requires virtue, responsibility, and courage from every generation.

What do these voices tell us? From the first settlers to the Founders, from patriots to civil rights leaders, and from soldiers to spiritual leaders, America's story is one of faith guiding the pursuit of freedom.

As Rudyard Kipling warned, "God and the Soldier, we adore in time of danger, not before." Let us not forget either.

Only two forces have ever offered to die for us: Jesus Christ for our souls, and the American G.I. for our freedom.

May God bless each of you, and may God continue to bless America.

Wisconsin: Equipping our Schools for Emergencies

Facebook: **Blain Nolte with Katherine Chase from Squadron 105 (Shullsberg, WI) and Shullsburg Rescue Squad present first aid trauma kits to Mike Raso at the Shullsburg School District. This donation equips the school to handle potential emergencies effectively.**

The kits are traveler-friendly and include essential first aid supplies like gloves, bandages, and gauze, as well as more advanced supplies such as trauma dressings. Thanks to this generous donation, the school is now well-prepared to address any first aid needs that may arise.

Winona Post—*14 April 2026*

MN: Sons of The American Legion Support their City Park Fund

The Sons of the American Legion Squadron 9 continued their longstanding tradition of supporting community projects this week by donating $500 to the Minnesota City park fund. The contribution will help maintain and improve local park facilities, ensuring residents and visitors can enjoy safe and accessible outdoor spaces.

Squadron 9 members presented the donation to city representatives during a brief gathering at the American Legion. The funds will assist with upcoming upgrades, including improvements and ongoing general maintenance.

"Our parks bring people together and help strengthen community ties," said Squadron 9 spokesperson Greg Lemmer. "We're proud to play a small part in keeping Minnesota City's park welcoming for everyone."

The Sons of the American Legion Squadron 9 has been active in Winona County for decades, contributing regularly to veteran and community causes.

Winona Post Photo: L to R - SAL Members Mike Stinson, Brian Tomashek, Minnesota City residents Kathy Scholn, Joan Albrecht, and Michelle Langowski, and SAL Members Randy Sobeck and Greg Lemmer.

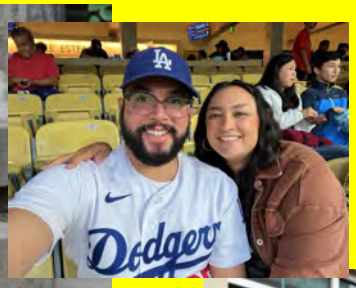
Greg Shaffer (NJ), National COTA Liasson

Children's Organ Transplant Organization (COTA) at 40

The Children's Organ Transplant Association has been around for 40 years. In those 40 years they have helped more than 4,500 transplant children and their families. COTA's mission is to serve every family that comes to them, and ensure that no child is denied a second chance at life due to financial issues. The American Legion has been a part of this journey since 1986. During those years, The American Legion has raised more than $2.5 million dollars. We are proud to say that COTA was the Department Commanders Project this past year in New Jersey, Florida, New Hampshire, and within The Detachment of Arizona. Delaware has also supported COTA within the Legion Family for many years. I have heard that this year Arizona, Florida and Georgia Detachment Commanders have chosen COTA as their project. It is nice to see that more Legion Families are getting involved with this wonderful organization. In some way I may be repeating myself, but this organization means so much to me. My challenge is still being put out there, $1 dollar for every member of The Legion Family to support COTA. Again, can you imagine how much we could raise to help these children and their families?

Please send me at **shiftyshaff@gmail.com** any pictures you have from each COTA event run. Also, any flyers you may have for your COTA event. These will go out to the Legion Family nationally so they can see what we are doing for these children.

So, here's to 40 years with many more to follow. Below are a few pictures of children that are part of the COTA family. Enjoy the smiles as I do. We are helping them to live a better life. You can get more information on their web site, **COTA.org**.



40 YEARS Then. Now. Always. Giving Hope.
Children's Organ Transplant Association.

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

"Mentoring Moments"

What is a Buddy Check?

It's reaching out and contact members to check on their well-being and assist with any needs, and making sure resources like service officer information and financial assistance applications are readily available. Invite members back into the organization and meetings.

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

https://vimeo.com/showcase/8339635

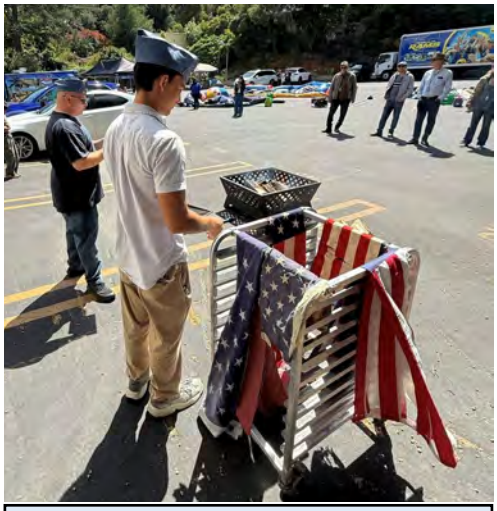
Squadron 323 (Clearwater, MN) making a $2,500 donation to the Minnesota Veterans Pantry. Support like this helps them continue serving Minnesota veterans and their families with food and essential resources.

Sons from New Mexico, including PNC Joseph Navarette, and from the Detachment of Arizona raising money for veterans charities at a golf tournament.

Sons from the Post 60 Family (Laurel, MD) presenting a donations to Laurel's community first responders in support of their various programs. Recipients included Gold Star Moms, the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department, the Laurel Rescue Squad, and the Laurel Police Department. In total, Legion Family donated $24,000.

Right: Squadron 68 (Tucson, AZ) at their Chili Cookoff.

Left: Firefighter of The Year Alex Fonseca receiving his certificate from Squadron 42 Vice Commander, Drake Mohr (Arlington, SD).



Squadron 43 (Hollywood, CA) conducting a flag retirement ceremony at a Family Fun Day they co-hosted with the community.

Squadron 801 (Roscoe, PA) coordinated an Adopt-A-Highway clean up day in late April.

Squadron 492 (West Lafeyette, IN) donating to Battleground Elementary funding new recess equipment.

Squadron 1290 (Utica, NY) visited the Utica Center for Development, bringing blankets, walkers, a shower chair, plus a check.

Sons from around the Detachment of Oklahoma with American Legion National Commander Dan Wiley on his official visit to "The Sooner State."

Commander Dan Lancette presenting a donation from the 4th District of New York to National Commander Wiley.

Squadron 67 (Lake Mills, WI) presents a check to John Black and the Lake Mills Fireworks Committee, to help support this year's fireworks display celebrating 250 years of freedom and independence.

Squadron 279 (Lawlor, IA) making a $35,000 donation to Retrieving Freedom, a charity which places life-changing service dogs with veterans and children with autism at no cost to the recipients.

The Detachment of Arizona at a recent fundraiser to benefit Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA).

Squadron 15 (Sioux Falls, SD) proud to present a check for $400 to American Legion Post 15 in support of Boys State at the Legion's monthly meeting.

Supporting our nation's youth is one of the Four Pillars of our mission, and they are honored to help invest in the next generation of leaders. Programs like Boys State provide young men with valuable experiences in leadership, citizenship, and service.

North Carolina's Division 3 after a successful meeting hosted by Squadron 6 (Chapel Hill, NC)

On the left, Detachment of Wisconsin Membership Chair Jeremy Mason with the Detachment's oldest SAL member, 86-year-old Richard Bennett at center next to Detachment Commander Chris Dannenmann.

At a Detachment of New York fundraiser for their Walk-a-thon ….. L to r, ANEC Peter De Angelis, Detachment Commander Joe Guidice, National Commander Clancy, and Geir Clancy.

Sons from across the Detachment of Colorado meet to raise some money for CWF at their Child Well-Being Foundation Banquet.

Squadron 273 (Brainard, NE) raises funds throughout the year which they put back into their post and community. Pictured here are two local veterans which they sponsored at a state pheasant hunt.

New Jersey's Squadron 70 of Nutley after a general meeting at their post.

Installation of the new officers of Wisconsin's SAL District I.

Squadron 75 (Fond du Lac, WI) was honored to listen to Tim Cody from the Fox Valley Veterans Council – an incredible organization that not only aids veterans in need, but provides skills and tools to overcome challenges. Afterward, they proudly made a donation.

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

Butch's Bullet Points

I was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to attend the homecoming of the SAL National Commander Bill Clancy this past weekend. I had a wonderful time full of good friends and catching some of New York City's sights and sounds. Our hotel was just a few blocks from the Times Square district that most see only once a year via television on New Year's Eve. So, as they say... "When in the neighborhood..." I walked down to take a look.

The first thing that hits you in Times Square isn't the crowd—it's the glow. Screens stacked on screens, flashing ads layered like a digital fireworks show over New York City. I stood there thinking, "If hope and enthusiasm had a zip code, this would be it."

Everywhere you look, something is competing for your attention. Billboards practically shouting, "Buy this product!", "See this show!", "Wear these jeans!" and all this in 4K LED wonder!

And just when you think you've seen it all, another classic ad seems to echo through the lights: "Just do it." No hesitation, no overthinking—just action. Times Square doesn't wait for permission to be noticed, and neither should we.

And that's when it hit me: Times Square isn't just about advertising—it's about presence. If you're not visible, you're invisible.

Now, stay with me—because oddly enough, that same lesson applies to the Sons of The American Legion.

According to our 90% goal date membership report, the Sons are anything but invisible. Sitting at 91.41% of our goal and at 82.60% in retention, we are CERTAINLY VISIBLE! We are a short, very manageable 35,169 members away from reaching another all-time high in membership.

No, we don't have neon towers (yet), but we do have something even more powerful: purpose, history, and community. Still, in a world full of distractions, even the best missions need to be seen and heard. Otherwise, we risk blending into the background like yesterday's ad slogan or current fad. Still, even the strongest mission needs to be shared. It needs to be seen, repeated, and remembered.

Think about it—our message should stick just like "The Real Thing." When people hear about what we do—supporting veterans, mentoring youth, strengthening communities—it should resonate as authentic and essential. And when it comes to reconnecting with former members, maybe we lean into a little nostalgia and fun:

"My Legion has a first name… it's F-A-M-I-L-Y!"

Earlier I mentioned retention because retention isn't just a goal—it's a responsibility. Every former member is someone who once believed in what we do. That connection doesn't disappear; sometimes it just needs a reminder, a friendly nudge, or a simple invitation back. If Times Square teaches us anything, it's that repetition works. Visibility works. Energy works.

Maybe our version of a Times Square billboard is a phone call. Maybe our flashing lights are community events. Maybe our "ad campaign" is a handshake, a smile, and a sincere *"We'd love to have you back."*

And let's not forget another timeless line: *"I'd like to buy the world a Coke."* It wasn't really about soda—it was about connection, unity, and shared experiences. That's exactly what we offer. ***Continued on Page 18>>***

2026-2027
SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP
TARGET DATES

SEPTEMBER 9, 2026	**25%**
OCTOBER 14, 2026	**35%**
NOVEMBER 12, 2026	**45%**
DECEMBER 9, 2026	**55%**
JANUARY 13, 2027	**65%**
FEBRUARY 10, 2027	**85%**
MARCH 10, 2027	**90%**
APRIL 14, 2027	**95%**
MAY 12, 2027	**100%**
**** JULY 29, 2027**	**105%**

**** DELEGATE STRENGTH TARGET DATE**
[30 DAYS PRIOR TO NATIONAL CONVENTION]

** **Note**: Target dates and percentages were recently restructured by the Sons of The American Legion, National Membership & Squadron Activities Committee (M&SA)

Facebook.com: **WI SAL Photo-Journalist** —*18 April 2026*

WI: SAL Banner Makes its Way Home

Facebook Photo, Mike Pook

A "Sons of The American Legion, Milwaukee, WI" flag returned back to Districts 4 and 5 after 15 years absence. Research suggests it was in use in the 1970s. At one time, The American Legion of Wisconsin headquarters was located in Milwaukee and the banner was made to reflect that location.

The banner reappeared in 2010, and again in 2022, when the National Convention for the SAL was held in Milwaukee. It first appeared during "cow pin" sales, then again at the registration table for the SAL National Dinner held at the West Allis Post.

In 2022, the banner made a couple of appearances during that National Convention. During that 50th Anniversary, it was used for pin sales when Allen Watry used it as a table backdrop, and for DJ David West at the SAL National luncheon.

The banner was welcomed home this year, and is now housed with Districts 4 and 5, with discussion on how to preserve it, for the future.

Facebook photo, Mike Pook: Detachment Commander Dannenmann, center with yellow tie, was present when the flag made it's way back to Milwaukee.

Butch's Bullet Poins:

Continued from Page 17

A place where people come together, not because they have to, but because they want to.

As we look ahead to the United States Semi-quincentennial, the timing couldn't be better. 250 years of American history—built on courage, sacrifice, and a deep sense of belonging. That's our story to tell, and it deserves to be front and center.

Picture it: flags waving proudly, communities gathering in celebration, veterans honored, and members—new and returning—standing side by side. It's not just about looking back; it's about building forward. It's about making sure the next generation understands what it means to serve and to belong.

So maybe the takeaway from Times Square is simple: don't be afraid to shine a little brighter. Share the message more often. Make it memorable. Add a touch of humor. Be bold enough to say, "We're here—and we matter."

Because if a catchy line like "Where's the Beef?" can echo for decades, imagine what a meaningful mission can do when we keep it alive in conversations, in communities, and in the hearts of our members.

At the end of the day, retaining our members isn't about chasing them down—it's about reminding them they're part of something enduring, something patriotic, something worth coming back to.

And that, in every sense of the phrase, is "The Real Thing."

Excerpts from Legion.org—*06 July 2025*

Consolidated Squadron Report Deadline Approaches

The deadline to submit the 2025-2026 Consolidated Squadron Report (CSR) is July 1 to qualify for national convention awards. Reporting for the CSR will remain open until Sept. 1, but reports submitted after the July 1 deadline will not be eligible for awards. **Listen to the May 27, 2025 Training Tuesday webinar here** on CPR and CSR to help you fill out the forms.

How to start reporting: The fillable 2025-2026 CPR is available on legion.org and in MyLegion. **The .pdf CSR is is available here** and in MyLegion.

The form provides posts and squadrons an opportunity to document external activities, such as volunteer hours, fundraising efforts, Be the One events, funeral honors, youth programs, scholarships, blood donations and more. This data is collected by National Headquarters to help quantify – for Congress, American Legion media, national leadership and more – the good that American Legion Family members do in their communities every year. Commanders and Adjutants can follow these steps to access 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, then:

- Save As Draft – saves draft and allows you to return and make future entries.
- Next – provides "Submit Final" button to finalize. Finalizing the report closes the report for additional updates.

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

Facebook: Partnering with the Children's Miracle Network for over 20 years, the Detachment of New Hampshire Bowl-a-thon benefits children from their state at Boston Children's Hospital. This year they raised over $10,000.

Congratulations to Dover Post 8 for retaining the coveted bowling pin trophy. and to Squadron 21 Commander Matt Bartlett for raising $630 on his own. Concord Post 21 also hosting lunch.

John Davies (MD), National VE&E Commission Member

Veterans Employment and Education Update

This year, the VE&E Commission is placing and emphasis on helping homeless veterans. One way to prevent a veteran from being homeless is to be sure they are employed. The VA offers many job fairs designed to help veterans utilize the skills they learned from their military service to obtain jobs in the civilian workforce. Below is a list of some upcoming job fairs. A complete listing of these job fairs can be found at: **www.vaforvets.va.gov/vaforvets/events/pages/Upcoming_hiring_event.asp**

5/20/2026: Hiring our Heroes (HOH) is sponsoring an event titled Amplify at Military Spouse Employment Summit. The event will be located in Washington, DC. Registration information may be found at **www.hiringourheroes.org/event-registration/**

5/21/2026: Corporate Gray is sponsoring a Virtual Military-Friendly Job Fair. Registration information can be found at **www.corpirategray.com/event/virtual-military-friendly-job-fair-4/**

5/26/2026: HOH is sponsoring a Skillbridge Fellowships Information Session. The session will be virtual and provide information on programs designed to help veterans transition to the civilian workforce. **https://uschamberfoundation.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1qRqhT7kS9KJ81DBaF7wrQ#/registration**

6/2/2026: HOH is sponsoring Robins Air Force Career Summit. The event will be held at Robins AFB. The summit will emphasize connecting military talent with American employers. Registration information can be found at **https://www.hiringourheroes.org/event-registration/**

6/04/2026: HOH is sponsoring a Virtual Hiring Fair for Operations and Management. The event will focus on employment opportunities in operations and business management. Registration information can be found at **https://www.hiringourheroes.org/event-registration/**

6/09/2026: HOH is sponsoring a Skillbridge Fellowships Information Session. The session will be virtual and provide information on programs designed to help veterans transition to the civilian workforce. **https://uschamberfoundation.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1qRqhT7kS9KJ81DBaF7wrQ#/registration**

6/10/2026: HOH is sponsoring a Fort Gordon Career Summit. The event will be held at Fort Gordon. The summit will emphasize connecting military talent with American employers. Registration information can be found at **https://www.hiringourheroes.org/event-registration/**

Stand Downs are also especially helpful for our homeless veterans. These events are one to three days in length. At these events, veterans are provided food, clothing and health screenings. They also receive referrals for health care, housing, employment and counseling services. The upcoming stand downs are too numerous to list here. A complete list can be found at **https://department.va.gov/homeless/stand-down-events/**

If you know an unemployed or homeless veteran, please help them by sharing this information with them. By doing so you may BE THE ONE!

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
A newsletter of Sons of The American Legion
THE MILLENNIUM
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To:

This Month, On The Back Cover …..

"This is Hallowed Ground": Past Department of Florida Commander Nolle Deas

As members, we have seen the posting of our nations flag many times. Sometimes the flags are placed along the back wall behind the head table, and sometimes they are placed at the ends of the presiding officer's table. the area between the flags is considered sacred and should never be walked between or reached across breaking the field between the flags. -PNVC "Butch" Ray

Between the flags that proudly fly
Let no one dare stand.
For here our fallen comrades lie,
We call it hallowed ground.
* * *
A symbol, yes but mark it well;
Here let us ever humbly pause
In memory of the ones who fell
In fighting for our sacred cause.

On sea or land these buddies died,
Some lie beneath a foreign sod
In graves caressed by winds and tide,
In spots unknown to all but God.
* * *
And so, this place is hallowed ground,
And it shall be forever blessed,
As though it were a grassy mound
Beneath which gallant heroes rest.

Be ever watchful, Legionnaire,
Of those two flags which signify
That we would guard this spot with care
Where our departed comrades lie.
* * *
And, if a man should dare to tread
This spot where lie our gallant brave,
He desecrates those noble dead
As though he walked upon their grave.

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!

In honor of those who never made it home, find the Battle-field Cross in this newsletter.