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Special to *The Millennium*: National Chaplain David Jolly (NY)

National Chaplain: "Today, we pledge allegiance to the highest ideals of the United States of America"

July 4th 1776, 13 colonies put forth a Declaration of Independence. Words and signatures on that historic paper were words backed up by unprecedented courage, character, and a willingness to die for the freedom and liberty of all.

Then and ever since, military members and their families have offered to or made sacrifices up to and including dying for that cause. No other love outshines the willingness to die for a friend or stranger. The debt we owe is never able to be repaid, but always worth our trying.

We the people in order to pay a portion of our respect choose not to forget sacrifices made. We choose to honor. We choose to remain the "One Nation Under God" that so many died to consecrate or continue. We choose to honor all past, present, and future military and their families in a 250th Birthday that testifies their efforts were/ are not in vain.

Many have wished our Nation ill-will. Always they underestimated the heart of Americans to be our best, to bless all those people we can. This while we ourselves are valuing and enjoying the liberty won. We fall short at times, but then get back to it with no less resolve.

Today, we pledge allegiance to the highest ideals of the United States of America...let our pledge be undergirded by unending resolve. With the help of the God of each person's understanding let it be so. On to the next 250 years.

God, we ask your blessing on all our military and their families, and may God bless each of you. God, bless the United States of America, that we might always be a blessing.



**Top Ten Detachments
2026 Membership Percentage**

1. Philippines 145.85%
2. Dist. Of Col. 135.96%
3. Utah 130.03%
4. Latin America 110.87%
5. South Carolina 106.32%
6. South Dakota 105.53%
7. Idaho 105.24%
8. France 104.19%
9. Wisconsin 104.00%
10. New Hampshire 103.99%

Statistics as of 06 July 2026

BE THE ONE





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

**It's been a BUSY few weeks—
and the pinnacle was USA250**

Hello, Legion Family!

I'm sitting here on my patio writing this editorial this month on the heels of a whirlwind, incredible few weeks. This is really the first opportunity I've had to reflect on it, since I haven't had much time just to sit down and write about my experience.

And boy, what an experience.

I was honored to be elected as the Detachment Commander for New Jersey in mid-June. Since then—between that, *The Millennium*, and the 250th celebration of our country, I haven't had a chance to take a breath.

I had the unique opportunity—one which many of us don't have—to have my dad install me. My dad Russ, who served in Vietnam from 1968-69, was the one to read the charge of office to me and place my detachment commander's cover on my head.

If that's not cool, then I don't know what is.

The thought of joining the ranks of this years' detachment commanders is humbling



Editor's Photo: My father installing me

to be sure, and it was something which I could have never seen myself doing.

One thing I can say without a doubt, though, is that being the editor of *The Millennium* has prepared me more than I could have ever known. Seeing, and writing, about what our brother Sons do throughout the country to carry forward the ideals of the organization is nothing short of inspiring. This newsletter showcases what Sons from Hawaii to Maine do to promote The Four Pillars, and seeing that each and every month showed me that what they do is attainable in each and every detachment. Seeing the good things we do as an organization is what gave me the drive to pursue this elected office—

and I'm grateful to all of you for the inspiration.

But, back to the editorial itself

I truly enjoy writing—and for me, most of the time, it's actually somewhat therapeutic. It's an opportunity to take some time out and put my thoughts into words, and it gives me pause to actually reflect on what I've been experiencing.

I have more things to write about than I have room in this editorial (and more than you care to read, I'm sure), so I'm going to talk about USA 250 ... *what a time to be alive!*

A small tidbit about what I got to do on the 4th—I was invited alongside the Department by American Legion Post 18 in Weehawken, NJ to



L to R: Myself, Post Commander Reynoso, and NJ Department Commander Anthony Gladden

watch the NYC Macy's Fireworks. Post 18 is a young, vibrant post under the direction of Commander Gabriella Reynoso, and has undergone a renaissance over the past few years. They are actually in the midst of re-starting a squadron as well—so they are growing, and it made me very happy to be at their post to celebrate our nation's birthday.

The perks of the office, I guess. The day was about much more than fireworks, though—it was about **American Exceptionalism**.

I'll end with a letter we sent out on the occasion of our country turning 250 years old:

"We, as Sons, all know the answer, otherwise we wouldn't be here... but why has the United States of America lasted this long?"

"It could be that the founders wrote a set of founding documents which were flexible enough to adapt and stand up to the momentum of changing history, but it's much deeper than that ... It is because of the ethereal concepts of freedom, justice, and democracy. A dedication to independence."

"It is because we are a government founded on an idea; on a belief in self-determination, and a commitment to liberty. Because our country serves as a beacon of independence throughout the world. This idea that the United States is unique, distinctive, and exemplary is what USA250 commemorates."

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@gmail.com

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SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Distribution Schedule:

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

12 August 2026

09 September 2026

14 October 2026

11 November 2026

09 December 2026





**Anthony Wright (PA),
National Adjutant**

Taps: Past National Commander Robert Faust (CA)

It is with deep sadness and heartfelt sympathy that I inform you of the passing of Robert Faust, the first elected National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion.



Commander Faust's leadership, dedication, and commitment to our organization helped lay the foundation for generations of Sons who have followed in his footsteps. His contributions to the Sons of The American Legion and to The American Legion Family will not be forgotten.

On behalf of the Sons of The American Legion, we extend our sincerest condolences to his family, friends, and all who had the privilege of knowing and serving alongside him.

May he rest in peace, and may we honor his legacy through our continued service to veterans, their families, and our communities.



400,000 Members ...
... 400,000 Stories.

SHARE YOUR WHY

SAL members can briefly share why they joined, what makes their squadron unique, and what makes them proud to be a Son.

**CLICK TO TELL
YOUR STORY.**



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

"Mentoring Moments"

"...with humble hearts we pay our reverent respect to our departed comrades."

In the Squadron handbook, there is something called Squadron Everlasting. This is a ceremony for the squadron to remember a deceased comrade. The handbook has a script for the commander and chaplain to follow.



SPOTTED BY A SON

In June's newsletter, we asked if you could find the image of the American Flag. The Millennium went out on 17 June, and by 7:54pm we had a winner...



**Buddy Reid
Squadron 34
Rock Hill, South Carolina**

Reid has been a member of Rock Hill Squadron 34 for the past 22 years.

During that time, he has held the position of Commander and Adjutant, and is currently the Squadron Chaplain. His eligibility for membership comes from the WWII service of both his father (US Navy) and mother (US Marines). Both were also Legionnaires after their service. He is also a member of the American Legion Post 34 Honor Guard.

SONS OF THE

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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





Detachment Commander Mark Hines of Georgia wrapping up his year.



NVC Jeremy Revell installing the officers for the Detachment of Vermont.



Detachment Commander Chris Dannennmann installs the officers of Squadron 21 (Kenosha, WI).



Sons from the Detachment of New Jersey marching in the 77th Annual Highpoint Pilgrimage, an event held by the American Legion honoring all of New Jersey's veterans at the Highpoint War Memorial.



Left: The Detachment of Oklahoma held its 2026 Summer Convention at Post 1776 in West Tulsa, where Detachment Commander Chris Sherbourne presented Squadron 1776 with their charter. He's seen here at the celebration afterward.

SONS OF THE
AMERICAN
LEGION

Right: Legion Family participating in check-in at Louisiana Boys State.





Installation of officers of the Detachment of Utah.



Officers of The American Legion and SAL of Post 283 (Palisades, CA) being installed.



Governor Larry Rhoden, a veteran himself, attends the 107th American Legion Department of South Dakota Convention. He takes a few moments out to pose with some of their young Sons at the Detachment convention.



The newly installed officers of the Detachment of Kansas.



Illinois ANEC Mike Vozer at an Honor Flight with a Women's Army Corps (WAC) veteran.



The SAL are huge supporters of Michigan Boys State. One of the many ways they support the program is setting up and running a "Gedunk" ... a mini store. Last year they kicked this off and it's been a fantastic addition to the program. Typical items are snacks, hygiene products, and free smiles.

(L to R) Boys State Director Mark Brejcha, PDC John Beeman, TAL Vice Commander Roger Deaton, and SAL Zone Commander Scott Kelly all are SAL members.



Outgoing Detachment Commander Jason Miller of Maryland taking a candid photo at the Maryland Convention in June with Legionnaire William Griffin, right, and Kason Washington - both from Blake-Blackston Post 77. This was Kason's first convention.





SONS ON SOCIAL

THE SAL ON SOCIAL MEDIA

At Left: New officers for the Detachment of Arkansas. Left to right: Martie Roberts, Finance Officer; Cole Prater, Historian; Rodney Robinson, Adjutant; Matt Haut, Johnny Kelly SE Area Vice, and Stuart Reeves NW Area Vice. Not pictured are Dustin Goddard, SW Area Vice Commander; Josh Robinson, Sr. Judge Advocate; Bob Wade, Sergeant at Arms.



The Sons of Illinois presenting a flag education course at their state's American Legion Youth Police Academy.



Scott and John from the Detachment of Michigan as volunteers at Boys State, promoting the ideals and mission of the organization.



Squadron 157 (Branchville, NJ) presenting Kittatinny Senior Luke Hendershot with a \$1,000 scholarship.



Dean of Boys State SAL David Way at Minnesota Boys State held at St. John's University near St. Cloud.



Squadron 479 (Swanton, OH) installation by 2026-27 Detachment Commander Todd Bidlack.



Pennsylvania Detachment Commander Mark Nave, at the Membership Round Up / Flag Day ceremonies.



Left: The newly installed officers of Squadron 673 (Huntley, IL).





Detachment of Wisconsin **SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION**

The Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Wisconsin, along with Post 100, handed out ALF dogs to comfort families while their mom or dad is deployed.

If you aren't familiar with Operation A.L.F., the dogs are given to children and their families at no cost. The Wisconsin Sons of The American Legion provide an Operation A.L.F. puppy to children who need a companion to help them through a hard time.

For more information on receiving a dog, please visit <https://wisal.org/alf/>

Legiontown, USA—16 June 2026

OH: Annual Spanky Memorial Golf Outing



On June 13, 2026, another Spanky Memorial golf outing hosted by Sons of the American Legion Squadron 535, went into the books ... and they keep getting better every year! In absolute perfect weather for golf, 33 teams enjoyed the competition, sportsmanship and comradery to honor Ed "Spanky" VanHouten

who, while no longer with us in person, still lives in our hearts and minds!

Reminder that proceeds from this event go toward Honor Flight Columbus and to Honor Bus of Richland County.

Some thank-yous go out to Auxiliary Unit 535 for their help in serving the delicious

meal. To the Little Apple golf course for once again providing an awesome venue to hold this event at. To the volunteers who cooked the food, and those who handled getting the door prizes, helped with registration and with 50/50 tickets. A huge THANK YOU to the 34 hole sponsors who donated this year!

The winning golfers were Team Apple Valley in 1st place and Team Brewer in 2nd place. There were two skins awarded, one to Team Apple Valley and the other to Team Vavra. Proximity awards were as follows: Ladies longest drive went to Beth Grant. Longest putt (front nine) went to Jeremy Palm, and longest putt (back nine) went to Squadron 733 team #3. Closest to the pin (front nine) went to Michael Woode, and closest to the pin (back nine) went to Steve Pruett. Proximity winners were awarded a certificate for nine holes of golf (with cart) at Little Apple, donated by the golf course!



Legiontown, USA Photos

Mike Vozar (IL), Staff Contributor to The Millennium

IL: Huntley Squadron 673



Above, Squadron 673 participating in the Post's Flag Day Ceremony on June 14th

Below: Fundraiser by Squadron 673 in Huntley serving up food at the local "Concert on the Square."



Previous page, bottom right: 673's officers getting installed.



Legiontown, USA—07 June 2026**KS: Young SAL member gets presidential letter**

Stanislav Shavaryn-Sharkey, a Squadron member of Pearce-Keller American Legion Post 17 in Manhattan, Kansas, will turn 3 on July 4.

On Saturday, June 6, Stanislav received a letter from President Donald J. Trump, congratulating Stanislav on his upcoming birthday.

It is rare for the White House and Executive Office to issue a birthday greeting to a 3-year-old toddler.

Stanislav is not your usual soon-to-be 3-year-old toddler. He has won two racing series championships. Presently, he is second in points in his first JuiceBox Division season.

Along with his father Jonathon Tepes Sharkey, a U.S. Army Veteran and member of Post 17, Stanislav won 1st Place in a 2-seater kart race on May 29 at T4 KartPlex in Palmetto, Fla.

Like President Trump wrote Stanislav - "As you grow, remember that there is no limit to your dreams, so think big!"

For some, racing in F1 is a dream. For Stanislav, it's part of his journey in life.



Happenings in The Empire State

Representative Mike Lawler (R-NY 17) was signed up as a member of the Sons of The American Legion Leo Laders Squadron 130 in the Detachment of New York. Pictured left to right are NY SAL NEC David Lee, Congressman Lawler, 2025-26 Detachment of NY Commander Joe Guidice, and NY SAL ANEC Peter De Angelis.



Squadron 1700 (Endicott, NY) fundraised and paid for a billboard, in an attempt to share information to the public and increase membership. They received a great deal of positive communication from the members about seeing the billboard, and its placement netted The American Legion one new member, three members for the Auxiliary, and two new members for the SAL.





Don V. Cross Squadron 357 (Minerva, OH) 2nd Vice Commander Matthew Baxter and Squadron Historian Phil Baxter with National Sons of The American Legion Commander William Clancy III of New York and 2025-26 Detachment Commander Jeff Vrabel, Jr. (center left). Taken at Grove City American Legion Post 164 during the Detachment of Ohio Convention.



Legiontown, USA: George White, Adjutant, Post 184 (Redondo Beach, CA)

CA: What Do Different Coins on the Gravestone Mean?

Legiontown Photo



My father, a Merchant Marine from WWII, and my mother are buried at Riverside National Cemetery. Afterward visiting them, I visited other veterans I know here. I had a bag of coins, and I was asked about the meaning.

What Do Different Coins on the Gravestone Mean?

The type of coin left on a gravestone has a specific meaning, personalizing the act and making it even more meaningful.

- **The Penny:** Leaving a penny on a deceased servicemember's tombstone means you visited their grave.
- **The Nickel:** Leaving a nickel indicates you attended boot camp together.
- **The Dime:** Leaving a dime means you served together in some way.
- **The Quarter:** A quarter is one of the most meaningful coins since it indicates that you were there when the servicemember died.

2027 North Carolina SAL Detachment Officers



AMERICAN
LEGION



ADVOCACY ALERT



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





Mike Pook (WI), Staff Contributor to The Millennium

WI: SAL Member joins Post 375 Honor Guard

The American Legion Honor Guard is a unit of men and women veterans who pride themselves in dedication of honoring our deceased with complete military honors. The Honor Guard Unit also participates in ceremonies where a 21-gun salute is rendered. Often, the Honor Guard Unit includes a Color Guard. The "Color Guard" presents the colors at various public events such as parades, veteran functions, school activities, and patriotic programs. The Color Guard may be as simple as carrying the American, POW/MIA, and Legion flags. A rifle escort is always included for the American flag.

Two Honor Guard members may fold the American flag during a funeral ceremony. An Honor Guard member may play Taps using the electronic bugle. Prior to the service, the bugle will be checked to ensure the batteries are good. The member will take a position as appropriate to the location of the service. Taps will be played after the three round volley.

Flag precedence in both static displays and marching formations are in accordance with regulations outlined in various Legion and Military documents. The proper order in a line formation is viewing from left to right, a Lead Guard (LG), the U.S. Flag bearer and Color Guard Sergeant (CSG), Subordinate flag bearers (Sub) and the Trail Guard (TG). The line formation will be at close interval

(shoulder to shoulder). The column formation follows the same order as the line formation from beginning to end.

The Honor Guard must present a professional and dignified presence at these events.

Sons of The American Legion do have their own "Honor Guard" units as well. SAL members do present themselves as professional unit. Many American Legions Posts are accepting SAL members to become members Honor Guard members. The veteran mem-

bers have the opportunity to mentor the SAL members on the various protocols of being a Honor Guard member.

In Wisconsin, American Legion Post 375 inducts their first Son of The American Legion 375 member, Shawn Wilkinson, into the Honor Guard Drill Team. At the Father's Day Parade in June, Shawn was a part of the Color Guard at the very beginning of the parade. Detachment of WI NEC Chris Sherman has been a part his Post Honor Guard unit for 8 years. He was the first Squadron 71 member to join the unit. Now, 3 more SAL 71

members have joined the ranks.. TAL Post 71 presents the "Colors" at all sorts of events and sports events around the Milwaukee, WI. area.

Leigh Rainer was the first SAL 449 to join the American Legion Post 449 Honor Guard ten years ago. When the elite Squadron 449 SAL Color Guard Unit disbanded, Leigh wanted to continue his service.

Being a member of the Honor Guard Drill Team and Color Guard has many rewards that are difficult to put into words.

SAL Proud!



Facebook Photo, [SAL375](#)

Kevin Mook ends eight years as National SAL Liaison

Editor's Note: Kevin Mook, our National Liaison, ended his eight-and-a-half year term in mid-June, and he moves on to become the Department Adjutant of Florida. The national organization thanks him for his service, and wishes him well in his new endeavor. Thanks for everything, and best of luck!

Kevin is a retired Chief Petty Officer in the United States Navy, having honorably served 21 years before retiring in December 2003. Throughout his military career, he held leadership positions in technical and operational environments, specializing in computer and communications systems.

Mook served as the Member Engagement Coordinator at The American Legion National Headquarters from December

2018 through June 2026. During his tenure, he served as the National Liaison for the Sons of The American Legion (SAL), providing direct support to the National Commander and National Executive Committee while ensuring programs and operations aligned with organizational policies, financial guidelines, and strategic objectives.

In this role, Kevin coordinated national-level SAL operations, including membership reporting, officer certification, charter administration, and the development of key publications, operational guidance, and national communications. He also planned and executed major national events, including the SAL National Convention and National Executive Committee meetings, while serving as the primary staff resource for the organization.

A Paid-Up-For-Life (PUFL) member of American Legion Post 419 in Orlando, Florida, Kevin was previously a member of Post 171 in Damascus, Maryland.





The Legion leads the way for the 50th annual Beans & Bacon Parade in Augusta, WI on July 5, 2026, with Tenth District SAL Commander Rick Talford carrying the Sons' colors.

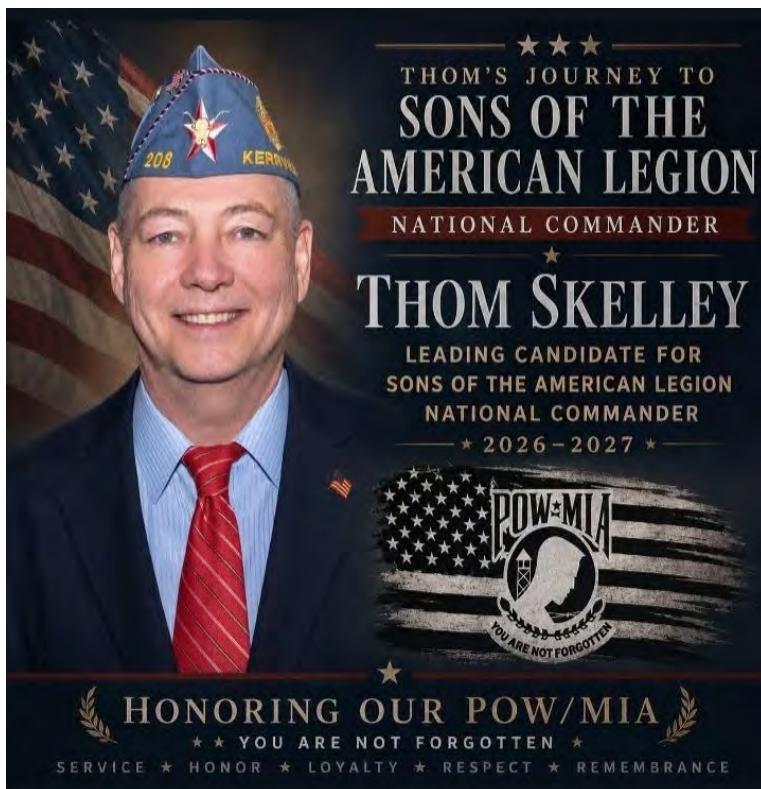


Department of Virginia leadership, including Detachment Commander Tyler Vanice, placing a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown.



Georgia Detachment Commander Dennis Fitzgerald with the newly installed officers of Squadron 116 (Sylvania, GA).

John Nemanich, leading candidate for Sons of The American Legion Illinois Detachment Commander, participating in a parade as part of his hometown Squadron 690 in Palatine.



Massachusetts NEC William Murphy started the America 250 celebrations by joining Detachment Commander Robby Jerdan at the Boston 4th of July parade.





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

Butch's Bullet Points

June is known for many things, but most importantly for members of The American Legion Family, it is a reason to pause and remember one of history's most significant events.

Eighty-two years ago, on June 6, 1944, the world saw one of the greatest demonstrations of courage, commitment, and sacrifice in human history. D-Day—the Allied invasion of Normandy—marking the beginning of the end of World War II in Europe. The outcome was far from certain. Thousands of young Americans stepped from landing craft into battle, knowing that many would never return home.

What carried them forward was not a guarantee of success. It was a commitment to a cause greater than themselves.

On the sands of Normandy's beaches, American and allied soldiers fought through seemingly impossible odds. Among them was Edward Hall, grandfather of Past National Commander JR Hall, who served as a rifleman with the 115th Infantry Regiment. Like thousands of others that day, he faced relentless enemy fire, uncertainty, and danger, yet pressed forward because the mission demanded it.

Also landing at Omaha Beach was Howard Schlitter, grandfather of National Commander candidate Mike Monserud. Serving with the 942nd Field Artillery Unit, he was part of the immense force that provided critical support to the assault on Nazi-occupied Europe. He was wounded in the hedge rows on the 2nd day and spent the rest of the war recovering from his wounds, but his service reminds us that victory was achieved not only by those at the front of the charge but also by those who faithfully performed their duties under extraordinary circumstances day after day.

My best friend's father, William "Bud" Beck, was the pilot of LST #1. He and his crew landed members of the British 50th Infantry Division on Gold beach in what he called a "Long Slow Target" (LST). He feared that they would be caught on the beach at low tide and become sitting ducks. LST 1 made many trips that day and I only knew him to be a conductor on the Illinois Central

(AMTRAK) railroad. Another member of the Greatest (and quiet) Generation.

Just a few miles away, another remarkable story of determination unfolded at Pointe du Hoc. There, U.S. Army Rangers scaled 100-foot cliffs under enemy fire to silence German artillery positions threatening the invasion beaches below. They climbed ropes, ladders, and sheer rock faces while bullets and explosives rained down around them. Many fell. Many never reached the top. Yet those who survived pressed on and completed their mission. Their success helped secure the foothold that would eventually liberate Europe.

The lessons of D-Day remain as powerful today as they were in 1944.

Victory was not achieved by wishing for success. It was achieved through commitment, sacrifice, persistence, and follow-through. Every soldier had a role. Every unit had a responsibility. Every individual understood that the mission mattered.

The Sons of The American Legion face a different challenge today, but one rooted in the same spirit of commitment. Our mission is not fought on beaches or battlefields. It is fought through service, mentorship, patriotism, and the continued growth of our organization. Every membership card we secure strengthens our ability to support veterans, serve our communities, educate our youth, and preserve the legacy of those who served.

Our membership goal is more than a num-

ber. It is a promise.

It is a promise to honor men like Edward Hall and Howard Schlitter. It is a promise to remember Buddy Beck and the Rangers who climbed the cliffs at Pointe du Hoc. Most importantly, it is a promise to honor the thousands of Americans who never came home from Normandy and countless others who paid the ultimate price defending freedom throughout our nation's history.

Those heroes completed their mission despite enormous obstacles. The question before us is simple: Will we complete ours?

Every member who renews. Every member who recruits a new Son. Every squadron that reaches out to inactive members. Every volunteer who shares the story of the Sons of The American Legion helps move us closer to the goal.

The soldiers of D-Day understood that success required action. They climbed into landing craft, crossed the English Channel, stormed the beaches, and advanced inland because freedom depended upon it.

Today, our responsibility is to carry forward the legacy they entrusted to us.

As we work toward achieving our membership goal, let us remember the courage displayed on the beaches of Normandy 82 years ago. Let us match their determination with our own commitment. Let us honor their sacrifice through our service.

And let us finish the mission.

A newsletter of Sons of The American Legion

THE MILLENNIUM

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The Sons of The American Legion**

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★ **JULY IN. DECEMBER OUT.** ★

JUNE

GET PREPARED!

★ GET READY FOR JULY 1 ★



BE READY TO LAUNCH JULY 1!

- ☒  **CLEAN UP YOUR MEMBERSHIP ROSTER**
- ☒  **REACH OUT TO MEMBERS NOW**
- ☐  **GET YOUR TEAM READY**
- ☐  **START THE CONVERSATION**

Preparation Today, Success Tomorrow!

SUCCESS STARTS WITH PREPARATION!

 **LEGION.ORG/SAL-RENEW** ★

THE MEMBERSHIP YEAR BEGINS JULY 1



2026-27 Membership Target Dates

10 SEPTEMBER 2026	25%
14 OCTOBER 2026	35%
12 NOVEMBER 2026	45%
09 DECEMBER 2026	55%
13 JANUARY 2027	65%
10 FEBRUARY 2027	85%
10 MARCH 2027	90%
14 APRIL 2027	95%
12 MAY 2027	100%

29 JULY 2027 105%**

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

***National Membership
Standing available at
[https://www.legion.org/
member-services/
membership-standings](https://www.legion.org/member-services/membership-standings)***





Mike Vozar (IL), Staff Contributor to The Millennium

IL: Detachment Supports Illinois Special Olympics



Submitted Photo: Detachment Commander Wayne Madson and State Auxiliary President Jill Latham

Each year, the Illinois American Legion Family serves as hospitality sponsor for Illinois Special Olympics held at Illinois State University.

The Detachment of Illinois is proud to be an active participant in this effort supporting our communities, children, youth, and families! On June 12th and 13th we again helped prepare healthy refreshments each day, served them to athletes in the main hospitality center, and also transported refreshments to hospitality centers at the athletic fields which were served along with other Legion Family Members.

Such a rewarding experience for all our volunteers to provide meaningful help, and be a small part of something far bigger than ourselves!



Submitted Photo: Detachment of Illinois Volunteers



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QUICKLY AND EASILY RENEW ONLINE

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

SONS OF THE
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Harl "Butch" Ray (IL), Staff Contributor to The Millennium

TX: "What's in a Name?"

Ever visit or drive by an American Legion Post and wonder who it was named after and why? Me too! Here are a few more I have dug up information on. Happy reading!

Edward H. White II American Legion Post #521, Pasadena Texas

The American Legion Post 521, located in Pasadena, Texas, was established in 1967 and proudly bears the name of Astronaut Edward H. White II—a pioneer in American space exploration, and a symbol of dedication, service, and sacrifice.

Astronaut Edward H. White II, born in San Antonio, became the first American to step outside his spacecraft and let go, effectively setting himself adrift in the zero gravity of space. For 23 minutes, White floated and maneuvered himself around the Gemini spacecraft while logging 6500 miles during his orbital stroll. White was attached to the spacecraft by a 25-foot umbilical line and a 23-ft. tether line; both wrapped in gold tape to form one cord. In his right-hand White carried a Handheld Self Maneuvering Unit (HHSMU) which was used to move about the weightless environment of space. The visor of his helmet was gold-plated to protect him from the unfiltered rays of the sun. Tragically, Ed White died on January 27, 1967, when Apollo 1 caught fire atop its Saturn 1B booster on Launch Pad 34 at Cape Kennedy."

Post 521 is committed to honoring those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces and supporting local communities. The post stands as a living tribute to the values of duty and patriotism, reflecting the spirit of Ed White, who was not only a decorated Air Force officer but also a trailblazer who embodied a lifelong passion for flying and service to his country.

American Legion Post 521 is notable for its display of a restored F4D Phantom jet, and is also the Post home of The American Legion Auxiliary's Past National President Carlene Ashworth.



NASA Photo





Mike Monserud (IA), Trailing Candidate for National Commander

OK: Boys State

I have heard the Detachment of Oklahoma brag about how good their Oklahoma Boys State program was, so I decided to attend the event this year over Memorial Day Week. Over 400 delegates from across the state arrived at Rogers State University in Claremore, Oklahoma ... and the week was off and running.



The staff is headed by Legionnaire Corey Brooks, and is comprised of some of the most dedicated individuals to a youth program that I have ever met. The staff, which includes Oklahoma National Guard members, current active-duty members, lawyers, doctors, and of course members of the whole American Legion Family executed the week perfectly.

The days are long, and delegates are on the move from early morning to late at night. As I went from class to class and witnessed all the programs that they were attending, it was a wonder that the staff pulled the whole event off. Our youth program is alive and well in Oklahoma, and as I walked around and saw everything from an outside perspective, I realized that it's not just the classrooms, or the outside activities, or even the large amount of ice cream that is eaten everyday that makes it all successful ... it was the heart and soul of every staff member that was part of the team. They all worked like a well-oiled machine. They talked to anyone who had a question, or needed something taken care of. No complaining, just "what can I do to help."

To prove the success of the staff and leadership qualities, just look at the Boys Nation staff and you will see five members of the Oklahoma Boys State Staff. The last day I attended, I realized that no matter what the curriculum is, you can not be successful without people who believe in the program and will do anything they can to help be successful. Passion from every member there is what makes it all work.

I delivered a speech to the delegates on being successful no matter what life throws at you, and the end was a great gesture by all 400-plus delegates and staff. It happened to be my birthday ... someone found out, and the whole auditorium broke out singing "Happy Birthday." Director Corey Brooks, Detachment Commander Chris Sherbourne, and Department Commander Steve Thomas all plotted and pulled it off. Thank you all for that.

I recommend anyone who has a chance to visit Oklahoma Boys State, you do it ... and you will leave amazed and proud of everyone there. I need to thank Director Corey Brooks, Chief of Staff Matthew Fleharty, Asst Director Bart Looper, Clay Ballenger, PNC Rick Cook, Detachment Commander Chris Sherbourne, Department Commander Steve Thomas and so many more to name. I salute you all and I am proud to have been associated with upstanding members of The American Legion Family like yourselves.



Facebook Photo: PNVC Monserud speaking to a small group at Oklahoma Boys State



Bryan Hine (TN), National Vice Commander Southwest

TN: Squadron 146 (Loretto, TN) Celebrates the 4th of July by cooking stew, raising money for their charitable donation fund



Submitted Photo



Sons of The American Legion Emblem and Branding Guidelines

Excerpts taken from “American Legion Family Branding Guidelines” (20 September 2022)

<https://www.legion.org/about/media-toolkits/brand-marks-guidelines>

A New Brand for the Next Era: For over a century, The American Legion has been nobly and ably represented by its 1919-patented emblem. As we look to the next era of The American Legion, the time has come for new brand marks to be used in all marketing communications applications. This also includes new marks for the American Legion Family and program brands.

The new brand marks do not replace the emblems. Instead, the emblems and the brand marks alike are to be used in specific applications that will better serve The American Legion going forward.



Brand Mark Options



Marketing, recruiting, & fundraising uses, such as:

- advertising
- apparel (use word mark for embroidery)
- business cards, letterhead, email signatures
- credentials, event badges
- press releases
- digital (apps, web, social, PowerPoint presentations)
- promotional communications (flyers, handouts, etc.)
- events (signs, backdrops, tents, tablecloths, swag/giveaways)

SAL Emblem



Official, legal, & historical uses, such as:

- uniform caps
- financial documents
- history books
- flags
- legal affairs
- internal manuals & guides
- reports & resolutions
- awards (option emblem or brand)
- building signage (option emblem or brand)
- formal government communications (option emblem or brand)

Editor's Note: We include this article this month because last month, we inadvertently had an emblem-use violation in the first draft, hence the newsletter was published a week later. The emblem cannot be superimposed on anything other than a solid color—we had the emblem pasted on top of an American Flag graphic. We mention this as a “teachable moment.” Read through the guidelines linked above to read the do's and don'ts of logo usage.

Snapshots of Service

Click here to see the 2025 Recipients



Make Note of these Important dates on The American Legion Calendar

17-24 July	Boys Nation in Washington, DC
27 July	Korean War Veterans Armistice Day
04 August	Coast Guard Birthday
07 August	Purple Heart Day
28-30 Aug.	National Convention in Louisville
11 Sept.	Patriot Day – 25th anniversary
17 Sept.	Citizenship (Constitution) Day
18 Sept.	Air Force Birthday
19 Sept.	POW/MIA Recognition Day



Legion.org—01 July 2026

FL: Squadron hosts post-traumatic stress disorder awareness dinner

Sons of The American Legion Squadron 189 in Sebastian, Fla., has made it a regular occurrence to not only support the veterans at Post 189 and in its community, but to honor them as well. This has included Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home nights, honoring Purple Heart recipients and remembering prisoners of war and those still missing in action.



But on June 26, rather than honoring those veterans, Squadron 189 decided to help educate them on a condition that can often be tied into veteran suicide: post-traumatic stress disorder. And in doing so, it also was a night to remind those in attendance about the Legion's Be the One veteran suicide prevention mission.

As PTSD Awareness Month came to a close, Squadron 189 hosted a dinner that included guest speaker Michelle L. Auton, a veteran service officer for Indian River County. Auton served in the U.S. Army from 1989 to 1993, where she said she developed PTSD that led to alcoholism. She now is two years sober and was able to share her recovery with those in attendance at Post 189.

"June was PTSD Awareness Month. We're always looking for some idea to do something we haven't done before," said Peter Puzzo, a past commander of Squadron 189 who now serves as chairman of the Detachment of Florida's Membership Development & Training Committee.

"One of our pillars is Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, and this falls directly into that, as well as with Be the One. And I think we miss the big picture by not doing things like this."

Auton, who is American Legion-accredited, shared how important it is to have discussions about mental health. "The biggest thing I can do to assist a veteran is listen, especially when they're opening up about mental health," she said. "A lot of people don't talk about mental health. There's been

such a stigma for so long, especially with men. Men don't allow themselves to be vulnerable. Giving them the space to do that and feel comfortable doing that — it's a safe environment. And we're actively listening. Letting them express their feelings, and then how do we navigate the outside civilian world and the VA system and getting them the help that they need.

"It's educating people on what does PTSD look like. What does anxiety look like. What type of physical symptoms your body might go through due to your mental health, and maybe you recognize those symptoms."

Auton said it was important to make those in attendance aware of their importance if they recognize someone who may be experienc-

ing a mental health crisis. "You could be that lifeline," she said. "That one phone call that you answer that could save somebody, and you may not even realize it."

Getting an opportunity to share her message to those at Post 189 that night — including about her own struggles — is important to Auton.

"It feels empowering that I ... have gotten to a point in my own recovery success to where I am able to share that and make that impact for others," she said. "Because people made an impact for me by sharing their stories. If I can impact one life positively, that's pretty empowering."

Puzzo said he feels Auton made that impact at Post 189. "I always try to watch the crowd during whatever event we're having," he said. "In this case, after she finished talking, I could see a different look in people's eyes. Many of them — veterans and spouses of veterans — they came up to me later on thanked me because someone is finally talking about it."



Commander Tom Beck and the officers of Squadron 273 (Madeira Beach, FL) following their installation.

Squadron 273 (Madeira Beach, FL) SAL board member David Slawiak accepted an award from Ready for Life CEO Kathy Mio, left, and Development Coordinator Katalin Espey. The SAL donated \$12,600 to this cause over the past two years.



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A newsletter of Sons of The American Legion

THE MILLENNIUM

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This Month, On The Back Cover

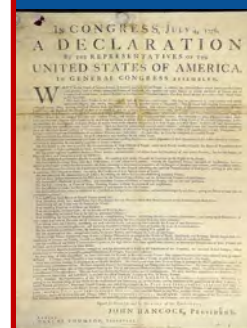


National SAL Commander Bill Clancy helped to plant a large Island Oak at the Palisades High School Stadium (CA). This was sponsored by the Sons of The American Legion and the Pali Forestry Committee, to contribute to the rebuilding of the Palisades as well as to help with the Commander's goal of planting 250 trees across America to commemorate the USA's 250th year.



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
Declaration
of Independence
within this
month's
Millennium!

