Sons Of The American Legion—Detachment of Virginia



FOCUS



Detachment Officers

- Detachment Commander Doug Ferrell
- Detachment Vice Commander—Mike Butler
- Detachment Vice Commander—Dellie Suiter
- Detachment Vice Commander—Mike Walden
- Detachment NEC—Steve Gower
- Detachment Alt-NEC- Linwood Moore
- Detachment Adjutant—Scott Williams
- Detachment Finance Officer-HB Hall, Jr.
- Detachment Chaplain-Robert Wilson
- Detachment Sgt At Arms-Richard Pregnall
- Detachment Judge Advocate-Elton Morgan, Jr.

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The Detachment of Virginia held its Annual Fall Conference in Colonial Williamsburg. SAL National Vice Commander Thom Chebro was our special guest.

Past Detachment Commander, Bob Borkovich presented Past Detachment Commander, AD Carter and Membership Chairman, Scott Williams with the All Time High Membership and Detachment 100% Membership Ribbons.

Detachment Commander, Doug Ferrell presented Squadron 1 its new charter. The Squadron was newly chartered in September of 2013.

Membership Chairman, Scott Williams presented Certificates to those

Volume 5, Issue 2 March 2014

Fall Conference

Squadrons who achieved 100% Membership. Squadrons receiving 100% Certificates were Squadron 190(Portsmouth), Squadron 242(Sandston), Squadron 89(King George), Squadron 157(Madison), Squadron 28(Dumfries), Squadron 270(McLean), Squadron 68(Narrows). and Squadron 104(Appomattox). Squadrons from across the Detachment turned in 139 Memberships during the call for Membership Turn In.

Squadrons from across the Detachment presented donations for the various programs as follows-\$1,500 for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, \$1,350 for Fisher Houses, \$3,185 for the Child Welfare



Foundation, \$1,000 for Operation Comfort Warrior, \$700 for National Emergency Fund, and \$200 for the Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. The total donations for the Fall Conference were \$7,935.

National Vice Commander, Thom Chebro (GA) addressed the membership. He talked about the Family Tree to grow membership. He also talked about Scouting. He encouraged all Squadrons to help sponvarious Scouting sor activities. - Scott Williams

Squadron 293 Holds Annual Chili Cook Off

On January 19, Squadron 293 held its annual Chili Cook Off. Eight pots of Chili were entered into the competition.

During the event, Upper Loudoun Little League presented the Squadron with its Sponsorship plaque for sponsoring a T-Ball Team for the 2013 season. Squadron 293 also presented its donation check for the 2014 year. Squadron 293 raised over \$150 for Squadron programs. The winners were-1st Prize-Gina Shinal; 2nd Prize, Scott Williams; and 3rd prize(3 way tie) Angel Fleming, Kevin Lowell, and Don Wallace.

Commander's Corner Detachment Commander, Doug Ferrell

Thank you to all of the Squadrons and Posts for the hospitality you have shown me during my visits to your squadrons and posts this year.

I especially want thank you all for your hard work with membership, our veterans, and children's programs.

We still have a way to go to reach our 100% membership goal! We are coming down to the end of the membership year and we need to get out in person and on the phone to get these renewals! Please don't hold on to these memberships. Please mail them in as soon as possible! Please don't forget about our younger members, as they are the Son's of the future...

If your Squadron has not signed up for MY SAL, please do not hesitate to do so. If you need further information, do not hesitate to call or email me or one of the Vice-Commanders.

Do not hesitate to call or email me if your Squadron would like for me to attend a future function.

Squadrons should plan to send someone to Legion College later this year. This is an important time to help our members and officers learn more about the Sons and our programs. This is a great place to share ideas on what your Squadron is doing well and what is not working. Thank you again to all the Squadrons and Posts for the hospitality you have shown me during my visits. I sincerely look forward to seeing everyone at the Spring Conference, as the Sons National Commander, Joe Gladden will be attending. If you need anything, please feel free to call me at 434 251email 2282 or me at ferrells15@yahoo.com.



Adjutant's Blog—Detachment Adjutant, Scott Williams

We continue on for another strong year here in Virginia. We had a great Fall conference with donations totaling over \$7,000 for the conference.

If you have not signed up for mysal.org, please have your Squadron Adjutant or Commander fill out the application, have your Post Adjutant approve and send into National Headquarters. This will help you keep your Squadron Membership Records accurate and help with renewals.

We hope you are tracking your hours and donations for this year. The Consolidated Report Forms will be available at Spring Conference or mailed out if your Squadron does not attend. We would like to have 30 or more reports turned in this year. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Detachment Commander Doug or myself for help.

Remember our website at www.vasons.org and our Facebook page Sons Of The American Legion Detachment of Virginia.

Please note the new Detachment Adjutant's email address SonsVA-DetADJ@comcast.net.

Membership Minute—Membership Chairman, Scott Williams

We continue to make strong progress this year. We have met all of our National Targets this year. Thanks of your efforts in membership this year.

Congratulations to Squadron 5 (Norfolk), Squadron 190(Port-



Smouth), Squadron 242(Sandston), Squadron 55(Fredericksburg), Squadron 89 (King George), Squad-74(Charlottesville), ron Squadron 157(Madison). Squadron 28(Dumfries), Squadron 330(Culpeper), Squadron 270(McLean),

Squadron 68(Narrows), Squadron 16(Lynchburg), Squadron 104(Appomattox), Squadron 221(Big Island), and Squadron 274(Madison Heights) for reaching 100%. Congratulations!

Our next Target Date is April 2 with a target of 90%.



2013-2014 MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATES SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

SEPTEMBER 11, 2013	10%
OCTOBER 9, 2013	25%
NOVEMBER 14, 2013	35%
DECEMBER 11, 2013	45%
JANUARY 15, 2014	60%
FEBRUARY 12, 2014	75%
MARCH 12, 2014	80%
APRIL 9, 2014	90%
MAY 14, 2014	100%
*JULY 23, 2014 *Delegate Strength Target Date	105%

2013-2014 MEMBERSHIP YEAR



2013 – 2014 MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATES SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION DETACHMENT OF VIRGINIA

SEPTEMBER 3, 2013	10%
OCTOBER 1, 2013	25%
NOVEMBER 6, 2013	35%
DECEMBER 4, 2013	45%
JANUARY 8, 2014	60%
FEBRUARY 5, 2014	75%
MARCH 5, 2014	80%
APRIL 2, 2014	90%
MAY 7, 2014	100%
*JULY 16, 2013 *Delegate Strength Target Date	105%

2013-2014 MEMBERSHIP YEAR

Americanism—Supporting Our Future

Mike Butler is one of our Detachment Vice Commanders and is the Chairman of our Detachment Americanism Committee. With Spring time coming soon, High School Oratorical Competitions and Junior Shooting Sports Programs are starting up for another year.

The American Legion Oratorical Competition helps develop deeper knowledge and appreciation for the United States Constitution among High School Students. Since 1938, the program has presented participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation's laws, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship. Over \$138,000 in scholarships can be awarded each year. The overall national contest winner gets an \$18,000 scholarship. Second place takes home \$16,000, and third gets \$14,000. Each department (state) winner who is certified into and participates in the national contest's first round receives a \$1,500 scholarship. Those who advance past the first round receive an additional \$1,500 scholarship.

Shooting Sports Program is a gun safety education and marksmanship program that encompasses the basic elements of safety, education, enjoyment and competition. Shooters use the .177 caliber air rifle. Both males and females can participate, through Legion sponsorship; disabled youth are encouraged to join, as competitive shooting is a sport that creates an equal playing field for all competitors. We hope your Post and squadron will continue your support of these programs. Mike **Butler**

The American Legion Junior

Legislative Committee—We Need You!!

The American Legion will be 95 years old this year. Never before has this organization needed its member's involvement more. Due to sequestration, the benefits earned, and the promises made to our veterans are under attack. With your help, we can head off improper decisions by Congress. The most recent part of the budget "deal" affected decreased CO-LA payments to retirees. Due to the many phone calls, e-mails, and visits our leaders changed course and both houses of government passed legislation, sending S.B.25 to the President's desk to overturn this wrong.

How can you help?

Go to <u>www.legion.org/legislative</u> and sign up for e-alerts. When bills are coming up for discussion, an e-mail is sent to you requesting your assistance. Contact your Representative or Senator. Speak up for our veterans. They stood up for us, now it is our turn to stand up for them.

I will give a full report on the Washington Conference at the next meeting following this edition of The Focus. *Jeff Evans-Legislative Chairman.*

Homeland Security - Let's Get Prepared

With the holidays and new year now behind us its time that we focus on what's ahead. There are four simple steps to get started. 1. Make a kit of emergency supplies at least 3 days supply 2. Make a plan for what you will do in an emergency, develop a family communication plan. Create a plan to shelter in place, create a plan to get away, know emergency

plans at school and work. 3. Be informed about what might happen. 4. Get involved in preparing your community. You can get all the information you may need to get started a www.ready.gov it will let you know how to build your kit. We owe it to our families to be prepared.

I would like to see Homeland Security and Civil Defense make its way to each Squadron so that we would be able to give and get the information out there to our members as quick as possible. **Bob Borkovich-Homeland Se**curity Committee Chairman I recently attended a Joint 16th and 17th District Four Chaplains Service at Arlington Cemetery. The Four Chaplains story is one of courage, honor, and sacrifice. Its legacy through the Sons Of The American Legion led to the creation of a Jewish Chaplain's Memorial in Virginia.

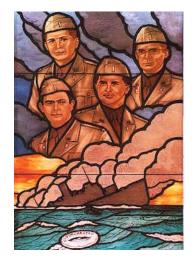
We will share a brief history of the Four Chaplains and the SAL involvement in the establishment of the Rabbi Chaplain's Memorial.

The Four Chaplain's story is remarkable. It was the evening of Feb. 2, 1943, and the U.S.A.T. Dorchester was crowded to capacity, carrying 902 service men, merchant seamen and civilian workers. Once a luxury coastal liner, the 5,649-ton vessel had been converted into an Army transport ship. The Dorchester, one of three ships in the SG-19 convoy, was moving steadily across the icy waters from Newfoundland toward an American base in Greenland. SG-19 was escorted by Coast Guard Cutters Tampa, Escanaba and Comanche.

On Feb. 3, at 12:55 a.m., a periscope broke the chilly Atlantic waters. Through the cross hairs, an officer aboard the German submarine U-223 spotted the Dorchester. The U-223 approached the convoy on the surface, and after identifying and targeting the ship, he gave orders to fire the torpedoes, a fan of three were fired. The one that hit was decisive--and deadly--striking the starboard side, amid ship, far below the water line.

Danielsen, alerted that the Dorchester was taking water rapidly and sinking, gave the order to abandon ship. In less than 20 minutes, the Dorchester would slip beneath the Atlantic's icy waters.

Aboard the Dorchester, panic and



chaos had set in. The blast had killed scores of men, and many more were seriously wounded. Others, stunned by the explosion were groping in the darkness. Those sleeping without clothing rushed topside where they were confronted first by a blast of icy Arctic air and then by the knowledge that death awaited.

Through the pandemonium, according to those present, four Army chaplains brought hope in despair and light in darkness. Those chaplains were Lt. George L. Fox, Methodist; Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Jewish; Lt. John P. Washington, Roman Catholic; and Lt. Clark V. Poling, Dutch Reformed.

By this time, most of the men were topside, and the chaplains opened a storage locker and began distributing life jackets. It was then that Engineer Grady Clark witnessed an astonishing sight.

When there were no more lifejackets in the storage room, the chaplains removed theirs and gave them to four frightened young men. That night Reverend Fox, Rabbi Goode, Reverend Poling and Father Washington passed life's ultimate test. In doing so, they became an enduring example of extraordinary faith, courage and selflessness.

Sons of The American Legion member Ken Kraetzer of New York, during a visit to Arlington National Cemetery, climbed Chaplains Hill where three monuments stand to honor military clergymen who have died in service. Besides wishing to see the inscribed names of honored chaplains who had been alumni of his alma mater, Providence College, Kraetzer wanted to view a remembrance of World War II's fabled four chaplains. As Kraetzer tells it, "I was familiar with their story because of the Four Chaplains Mass held each year by the Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., post. Legion posts around the country deserve credit for keeping the four chaplains' story alive for now six decades."

In 2006, The American Legion passed a national resolution calling for Medals of Honor for each of the four chaplains.

Kraetzer found three names, but not a fourth. Father Washington was remembered on the Catholic chaplains stone. Rev. Fox and Rev. Poling were celebrated on a monument dedicated to Protestant chaplains. *Con't p.* 7

The Four Chaplains and Its Legacy Today

Con't from page 6 But there was no mention of Rabbi Alexander Goode. In fact, as Kraetzer discovered, there was no monument to Jewish chaplains at all.

"When I realized that Jewish chaplains were not honored at Arlington," says Kraetzer, "I called the Jewish War Veterans. They were not aware of this. They, in turn, suggested I call Adm. Harold Robinson, and we have been on a mission ever since."

Retired Navy Chaplain Rear Adm. Rabbi Harold L. Robinson is Director of the Jewish Welfare Board's Jewish Chaplains Council. He served in the Navy for 36 years with many overseas active-duty assignments. In the latter years of his tenure he visited troops in Iraq. Afghanistan, Qatar and Ku-He has been awarded the wait. Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Naval Commendation Medal with two Gold Stars, and the Navy and Marine Corps Overseas Deployment Ribbon. The American Legion spoke with Rabbi Robinson recently about the campaign to erect a Jewish Chaplains Monument.

Rabbi Rombinson's involvement in this project came about after SAL Member Ken Kraetzer visited Arlington Cemetery and noticed that their was no memorial to Jewish Chaplains. Rabbi Robinson and Ken Kraetzer worked together on the design, raising funds, and presenting the project to sponsors in the House, Senate, and the U.S. Fine Arts Commission.

Rabbi Robinson said in an interview with The American Legion," It's time for them (the Jewish chaplains) to be memorialized, along with their compatriots. So we are doing that. I think it is a debt that we owe them.

Rabbi Robinson also said ,"(This project has) been very, very heartwarming and very moving, and I imagine the memorial's dedication will be altogether overwhelming, for me at least. I will give you one story that is only meant to evoke a tiny fraction of a feeling. Obviously as a chaplain I went overseas a number of times, mostly for Jewish holidays. Just before I retired I went to do the High Holidays in theater. Our kids by that time were grown and out of the house. My wife and I were alone and, as I was leaving, she hugged me, overwhelmed with tears - crying. Now, she had never said anything to me before as I was leaving other than "you're doing something wonderful, we're so proud of you, everything will be all right back here at home." But this time, overwhelmed with tears - and, remember, by this time the kids are out of the house - she said, "I can't believe you're leaving us again." She knew I was an admiral, I was going to be safe, but she had 36 years of pent-up emotion. And she had always gotten me home. Imagine how that would have been had I gone off 36 years ago and not come back, leaving her with two little kids. It's a touchstone moment for me, because it's only a tiny, fractional sense, just the aroma of the real taste of loss. I'll never forget that moment as a connecting point with how families must feel when a loved one is lost forever.

October 24, 2011 would mark the dedication of the Jewish Chaplain's Memorial at Arlington CemEtery. This was the product of the interest generated in an SAL Member, a Jewish Rabbi, The American Legion, House Sponsors, Senate Sponsors and many others.

We hope that you will take the time next February to attend a Four Chaplains Service at your post or in your community. Or better yet, research the Four Chaplains Story on the internet and work with your post to hold a Four Chaplains Service. It's a very heroic story that needs to be re-told each year. These chaplains must never be forgotten. Scott Williams, Four Chaplains Website, and The American Legion.



Detachment Vice Commander, Mike Butler participates in a wreath laying ceremony at the Joint 16th and 17th District Four Chaplains Ceremony at Arlington Cemetery in February 2014.



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"Established in 1954, The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation was developed as a repository of funds from individuals who wished to contribute to the betterment of children in this country. Our foremost philanthropic priority is to provide other nonprofit organizations with the means to educate the public about the special needs of children across this nation." Yes, The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation is 'Our Flagship Program.' The Sons Of The American Legion raised over \$5 million for Child Welfare Foundation. The support that goes to the non profit organizations is awarded in the form of grants. The Sons Of The American Legion have sponsored several grants.

Bob H. Beverly (Squadron 1976), Robert L. Thein (Squadron 75), Ronald L. Orrison (Squadron 293), William L. Shull (Squadron 148), Jennings Cook (Squadron 77), Michael J. Feld (Squadron 24), Calvin L. Herring (Squadron 10), Hans E. Brooks (Squadron 10), Hans E. Brooks (Squadron 16), Teven Douthat (Squadron 16), Wellman C. Pirkey (Squadron 180), Robert W. Scurto (Squadron 180), and Matthew W. Wondolowski (Squadron 180).

Please keep their families in your thoughts and prayers.

If your Squadron has any members who pass on to Squadron Everlasting, please send their names to the Detachment Chaplain, Robert Wilson at robertawilsonsr@gmail.com and Detachment Adjutant, Scott Williams at SonsVA-DetADJ@comcast.net.

Additionally, if there is any Squadron member in need of prayer or sick, please contact our Detachment Chaplain, Robert Wilson at the email address above or at 757 234-9933.

Children and Youth 'Our Flagship Program'

Virginia has been the recipient of several grants totaling over \$1 million in grants.. This represents more than a one hundred fold return on our investment or donations our detachment made to the Child Welfare Foundation.

This year Virginia was the recipient of over \$100,000 in grants.

Organization for Autism Research of Arlington, Virginia was awarded a \$67,400 grant for their project 'Autism Tuned-In' sponsored by The Sons Of The American Legion.

Partnership for Food Safety Education

Squadron Everlasting





Arlington, Virginia was awarded a \$20,600 grant for their project 'Phase II of the BAC! Fighter National Youth Campaign' sponsored by The Sons Of The American Legion.

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors of Arlington, Virginia was awarded a \$26,500 grant for their project 'Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors Children's Bereavement Guide' sponsored by The American Legion Auxiliary.

The Child Welfare Foundation is doing the \$1 per Capita Banner program this year. The form is available at www.cwfinc.org.

We would like to see all of our Squadrons to participate in this program this year. It does not matter how big or small the donation is. America's kids are counting on us!! *Scott Williams*









Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

David Tuck, from Squadron 2 (Petersburg) is our Detachment VA & R Chairman. Chairman Tuck has been working closely with McGuire's VA Hospital to collect items that the Veterans need.

David said that they have a Fisher House there at McGuire VA Hospital. Fisher House Foundation is best known for a network of comfort homes where military and veterans' families can stay at no cost while a loved one is receiving treatment. These <u>homes</u> <u>are located</u> at major military and VA medical centers nationwide, close to the medical center or Hospital they serve. Fisher Houses have up to 21 suites, with private bedrooms and baths. Families share a common kitchen, laundry facilities, a warm dining room and an inviting living room. Fisher House Foundation ensures that there is never a lodging fee. Since inception, the program has saved military and veterans' families an estimated \$200 million in out of pocket costs for lodging and transportation.

There are currently three Fisher Houses in Virginia. They are Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA MedIcal Center, and Fort Belvoir Community Hospital.

Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) provides a structured volunteer program under the supervision of VA compensated employees to serve America's Veterans with dignity and compassion. This program assists in the delivery of VA healthcare by improving access to care, assisting with long-term care, improving patient satisfaction, and much more.

Volunteers and supplies are needed at all VA Hospitals and Fisher Houses. *David Tuck, Scott Williams, and various websites.*

MySAL.org—SAL Membership Tool

We have been talking a lot about renewals over the past several months. Well, the Sons now have a tool available to all Squadrons that will help maintain membership records, reduce the need for the Member Data Form, and most importantly help with our renewals.

MySAL.org was introduced at the Fall NEC as the tool for Squadrons to use to do all of the above.

What can you do with MySAL.org? A squadron can view and edit Squadron Membership Information, do Squadron Inquiries, download and print rosters and reports, work with membership data using comma delimited format (csv files).

If a member has a change of address, phone number, needs to add his birthdate, or other data, MySAL.org is the place for you to do that for your member(s).

This tool is an invaluable resource to help us get our renewals. A squadron can download their roster in comma delimited format and then create mailing labels. You can use these mailing labels to send letters or other communication to your Squadron Members to publicize your Squadron's events. You can also create these labels to send renewal letters to your members.

My squadron did just that back in November and have received over 50% back in renewals because of the tools available via MySAL.org. Our Squadron is at almost 100% and most of those came in because of the new tool.

We strongly encourage all Squadrons in our Detachment to sign up for MySAL.org. If we can reach the 90% renewal rate here in Virginia, we can reach another all time high in membership for this year.

Communication with your membership is vital to the success of your Squadron and our organization. It makes your members feel a part of something larger.—*Scott Williams, Membership Chairman*





Department Auxiliary President's Project: STARS

We are using donations to purchase over-sized wheelchairs for the Virginia VA Medical Centers. It is already difficult for many of our servicemembers to struggle through the recovery process. The least we can do is make sure that there are appropriately sized wheelchairs to transport every veteran from their room to treatment in a dignified manner.

The wheelchairs we are looking at will hold someone who weighs up to 400 pounds and the cost is approximately \$350.00 per wheelchair. Poppy funds may be used to support this project. Any and all donations are sincerely appreciated...thank you! *Cindy Kokernak, Department of Virginia, Auxiliary President.* Founded in 1932, Sons of The American Legion exists to honor the service and sacrifice of Legionnaires.

SAL members include males of all ages whose parents or grandparents served in the U.S. military and were eligible for American Legion membership. Members of The American Legion, <u>American Legion Auxiliary</u> and Sons of The American Legion comprise the Legion family, which has a combined membership of nearly 4.2 million.

Although Sons has its own membership, the organization is not a separate entity. Rather, SAL is a program of The American Legion. Many Legionnaires hold dual membership in SAL.

Help Wanted!

The Detachment is looking for an Assistant Detachment Adjutant. We are looking for someone to help compile, maintain, and distribute the Detachment Directory in Microsoft Access or another Database program.

If interested, please contact Detachment Adjutant, Scott Williams at 571 236-4831(Cell), 703 310-6532(Home), or by email at SonsVADetADJ@yahoo.com.

WANTED!!

Interested in serving at the Detachment Level? Want to learn more about the programs The Sons Of The American Legion supports? We are looking for Sons Members to serve on our Detachment Americanism, Children and Youth, VA & R, and Homeland Security Committees. If interested, please contact Detachment Commander, Doug Ferrell, Detachment NEC, Steve Gower, or Detachment Adjutant, Scott Williams.



'It's not what we do, it's who we are!" - *Michael Peterson*

Sons Of The American Legion Detachment of Virginia

"The Focus"

Articles and information contributed by: Detachment Commander Doug Ferrell Josie Patrick (Department Headquarters), Detachment Adjutant, Scott Williams, Detachment Vice Commander, Mike Butler, David Tuck, Past Detachment Commander, Jeff Evans, Past Detachment Commander, Bob Borkovich. Photographs provided by: Detachment Adjutant, Scott Williams and Alternate NEC, Linwood Moore.

Edited By: Scott Williams