



FOCUS

Taking A Closer Look



Volume 15, Issue 2 February 2024

Detachment Officers

- Detachment Commander – Kevin Chaplin
- Detachment Vice Commander— Tyler Vanice
- Detachment Vice Commander—Jarrod Vass
- Detachment Vice Commander— Jay Rarick
- Detachment NEC—Willie Morgan
- Detachment Alt-NEC– Jeff Lee
- Detachment Adjutant—Joe Gallagher
- Detachment Asst Adjutant— Scott Williams
- Detachment Finance Officer— David Boggs
- Detachment Chaplain— Robert Wilson, Sr.
- Detachment Sgt At Arms– Mark Young, II

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Be The One to Be The One



A few weeks ago, a friend of mine, told me about a Veteran who took his life in front of his wife and young child. That was a sad day when another veteran takes his/or her own life. It is real...all too real.

Detachment Commander Chaplin's theme this year follows in step with what the American Legion's theme of 'Be The One' Commander Chaplin's theme is 'Be The

One' campaign focused on Veteran Suicide and Mental Health Awareness. 17 to 22 veterans a day take their own lives. The mission of The American Legion's Be the One initiative is to reduce the rate of veteran suicide. It aims to lessen the stigma associated with mental health treatment and empower everyone to take appropriate action when a veteran or servicemember may be at risk.

What are warning signs?

A veteran or servicemember in crisis might talk about wanting to die, express guilt or shame, or mention being a burden to others.

They also might feel like they have no reason to live or show feelings of emptiness, hopelessness or being trapped. They might appear extremely sad, anxious, agitated, or full of rage.

Behaviors to look for include: isolating, giving away belongings, indulging in risky behavior and using drugs and/or alcohol more often. **Cont'd pg. 7**

About This Issue

This is the Mid Year issue of The Focus. February is Americanism Month—see article on page 9.

We also look at the SAL National Commander's 4 Pillar Awards for Squadrons who choose to work toward that goal—see page 3.

American Legion Commander, Seehafer attended a ceremony honoring the Four Chaplains in late January - see article on page 11.

The American Legion Legislative Priorities for the second session of the 118th

Congress are on page 14.

The Squadrons in the Detachment have held many events since the Fall Conference. Check out the pictures on 18 through 20.

Hope to see you at Spring Conference!!

Commander's Corner—Kevin Chaplin



Greetings fellow Sons and Legion Family members,

Our Spring Conference is right around the corner, March 1st – 3rd at the Renaissance Portsmouth-Norfolk Waterfront Hotel. Our SAL National Commander Don “JR” Hall, Jr. will be attendance along with the Auxiliary National President Lisa Williamson and the Legion Nation Commander Daniel J. Seehafer. The Spring Conference is a great place to learn more about the programs, share ideas among the Squadrons, and learn about the programs we are supporting for the current year.

The National Commander has issued a commander's challenge to all Squadrons to support the Four Pillars and become a National Four Pillar Squadron. To do so, all you need to do is raise one dollar per member each for Operation Comfort Warriors (VA&R), the Child Welfare Foundation (Children & Youth) and your department's Boys State program (Americanism) and hold a blood drive (National Security). You will then receive an award for being a National Four Pillar Squadron. That is not that hard to do, if we plan and work to get it done. The forms for the Commander's Challenge can be found on our website, www.vasons.org

My personal project this year is to raise funds and support Veterans and Athletes United, an all-volunteer 501c3 non-profit organization run by veterans, whose mission is **Cont'd pg. 4**

Adjutant's Blog—Joe Gallagher



We are in the midst of Winter and our legion year has passed the halfway mark. How is your squadron tracking. It is a great time to take a little time and pull together your information to date for your CSR that will be completed in just a few short months. If you pull together the year to date your squadron can see where they may have a hours or contributions needed to finish the year strong. Also there are squadrons who have items needed to be turned into the Detachment and some subsequently to National. All our squadrons contribute to the overall of our Organization and all of you should make sure that simple paper work is submitted so that you get proper recognition as well as the correct amount of

your squadron dues being returned to you for those members who elect to renew online. So Check and see if your squadron has done the following:

- Turned in your SDR report with your officers and their contact information, showing your squadron dues amount.
- Remind your members to track their volunteer hours. If you want this to be automated reach out to Commander Kevin or myself about how that can easily occur.
- **Detachment Committee Chairs, your Spring reports are due by Friday February 23 2024. THIS IS A MUST (Using the report template sent out by the Adjutant, earlier this month).**

Comrades, let's exceed all our goals, Membership, Volunteer Hours, Contributions and as a special goal from yours truly your Detachment Adjutant, for 100% of all paper work submitted by every squadron. If there is something of interest to you or your squadron that you would like to have sent to you from National, IE: Legislative, Membership, etc. Let me know via email to saljgallagher@gmail.com **Cont'd pg. 3**

Adjutants Blog—Continued from Page 2

so that I can help you get registered at national or department to get these emails that are sent out on a regular basis. It is always good to stay informed as to what is going on in The Sons of the American Legion. Your Detachment DEC stands ready to assist you and support you, so don't hesitate to reach out to us for assistance. If you aren't getting a response let me know please. Also, if you would like to serve on a detachment committee let us know that as well. **WE NEED YOU!!!!** **Joe Gallagher, Detachment Adjutant**

SAL National Commander Message - January

Make your Squadron a National Four Pillars Squadron

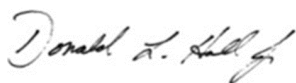
Happy New Year American Legion Family,

I hope everyone has had a safe holiday season and now is ready to get rolling in 2024. While 2023 saw the Sons reach a new all-time high in membership, we cannot spend too much time celebrating that. We need to use that as fuel to keep doing what we are and getting even better. I know by the commitment that we see from all of our members that this year can be better!! Thanks to everyone that is still working membership and knows how important it is to our organization.

Has your Squadron made plans to support the Four Pillars Challenge? If not, now is the time to do so; as you get rolling in 2024, make your Squadron a "National Four Pillars Squadron." Taking part in this challenge is truly doing exactly what we should all be doing, supporting the Four Pillars of The American Legion. Just a dollar a member based on 2023 ending membership to Operation Comfort Warriors (VA&R), Child Welfare Foundation (Children & Youth) your department's Boys State program (Americanism) and have or support a blood drive for National Security. You can do it!! Let's do it together and raise money and awareness of our programs of The American Legion Family. We have Squadrons that have completed the challenge and we say, "thank you." It's time we all "Step Up to The Challenge" to support The American Legion. We will make the effort to award Squadrons as the year goes on when leadership travels to your departments.

Washington Conference is just around the corner, and if you watch the news, you can see that in these times it is important that we stand up and fight for the rights of our veterans. Many say, "I will do anything to support our veterans," yet they don't get on the legislative bus and ride it. We need to make sure our elected officials know that we are part of the Legion Family, and we support the American Legion's agenda. "Representing More Than Me" is just that - your opportunity to help the members of your family and our veterans get what they deserve from our government. I look forward to seeing everyone in D.C. as we continue to work to make our organization strong.

God Bless The USA,



Donald L. "JR" Hall, Jr.

National Commander, Sons of The American Legion

"Representing More Than Me"



Commander's Corner—Continued from page 2

This organization provides adaptive sports/recreation activities, accessible retreats, and networking opportunities through its VetNet program. Additionally, it exhibits the travelling Global War on Terror Memorial Flag at special events in the eastern portion of the U.S., and another was recently completed to travel west of the Mississippi. The purpose of these travelling GWOT Memorial Flags constructed of dog tags of the fallen is to raise awareness of the sacrifice paid by America's heroes to protect our freedom. For more information about the great work done by Veterans and Athletes United, go to <https://www.vetsau.com/> I encourage every Squadron to have a fundraiser or donate some funds to support Veterans and Athletes United. Please send your checks to the Department Headquarters, payable to SAL Detachment of Virginia and put Commander's Project in the memo. We will be grateful for any and all support you can give. **Kevin Chaplin, Detachment Commander**

February is Americanism Month

Celebrate Americanism and the American Legion Family

Hello again, American Legion Family,

February is Americanism month and time for all of us to get busy spreading the great works of our organizations in the Americanism pillar. We should all be taking time to celebrate being an American in our great country.

Let's start with the basics. Americanism isn't taught in the schools like it once was; we as members of the American Legion Family need to make sure that our youth know just what that flag stands for. We need to make sure they know the pride of being a patriot and caring about what our families have fought for. History cannot be left in the past; we must carry on the 100% Americanism banner. Let's join together to lift our flag and celebrate Americanism together as a Legion family.

As the months are moving quickly, many programs are heading our way under Americanism. Oratorical, Junior Shooting, and Boys and Girls State all are great programs that are starting up and plans are being made for them. Find out what you can do to help these programs; there is a part we can all do. It is when you witness these programs take place that you realize our future is better than the news portrays. So many young men and women take part in these programs which lets us know we are doing the right thing by keeping these programs going strong. The American Legion Family has had so many success stories that have come from the youth who have taken part in our programs, so let us all be a part of more success stories of the future.

At the end of the month, many members of the American Legion Family will gather in Washington, D.C., to make sure that our voices are heard. I look forward to the opportunity to represent the Sons and lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and other memorials. I hope that I will see many of you there taking part in our meetings and learning from each other.

Representing our departments, detachments and our family as the American Legion Family makes our voice so much stronger. "Representing More Than Me" isn't just my slogan; it truly is what we all are about.

Representing More Than Me,

Donald L. "JR" Hall Jr.,

National Commander, Sons of The American Legion



SONS OF THE
AMERICAN
LEGION

NEXT MEETING: FEBRUARY 19, 2024
NATIONAL AMERICANISM COMMISSION

ACTION ALERT

JANUARY 2024

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SONSAMERICANISM



TOP NEWS

- BOYS STATE RECRUITMENT IS IN FULL SWING. MAKE SURE YOU ARE MAKING PERSONAL CONTACT WITH SCHOOLS.
- HAVE YOU PLANNED A FLAG EDUCATION EVENT? BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR GUIDANCE FROM THE COMMISSION ON YOUR OWN EVENT!
- REMEMBER TO HOST A BLOOD DRIVE AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE CWF IN ORDER TO BECOME A NATIONAL 4 PILLAR SQUADRON.

AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY DAY IS APRIL 27, 2024.

THIS IS A DAY WHERE THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY IS ENCOURAGED TO OPEN THEIR POSTS TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TO SHARE WHAT WE DO!

MAKE PLANS NOW TO ASSURE AMERICANISM IS ON FULL DISPLAY. HOST A BLOOD DRIVE, FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY, ETC.

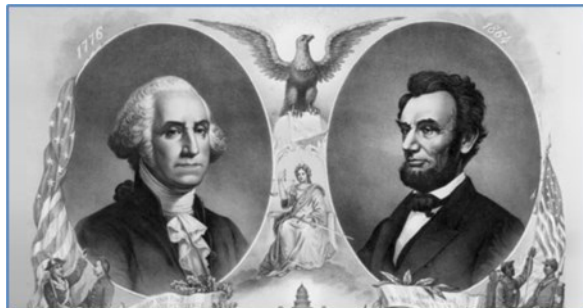
FLYING FLAGS FOR HEROES

THIS IS AN ONGOING PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL AMERICANISM COMMISSION. PLEASE REMEMBER TO REGISTER YOUR FLAG PLACEMENTS AT WWW.FLYINGFLAGSFORHEROES.COM. THE GOAL IS PARTICIPATION FROM EVERY DETACHMENT.



DON'T FORGET

George Washington's Birthday (A.K.A., Presidents' Day)



Generally called “Presidents’ Day,” this holiday is still officially referred to as “Washington’s Birthday” by the Federal Office of Personnel Management (OPM). It has been celebrated on the third Monday of February since Congress passed HR 15951 in 1968. Before that time, it was celebrated on the 22nd of February in honor of the birth of our First President, George Washington.

By the early 19th century, Washington's Birthday had taken firm root in the American experience as a bona fide national holiday. Its traditions included Birthnight Balls in various regions, speeches and receptions given by prominent public figures, and a lot of revelry in taverns throughout the land. Then along came Abraham Lincoln, another revered president and fellow February baby (born on the 12th of the month). The first formal observance of his birthday took place in 1866, the year after his assassination, when both houses of Congress gathered for a memorial address. While Lincoln's Birthday did not become a federal holiday like George Washington's, it did become a legal holiday in several states.(1)

In fact, the largest celebration of the birth of George Washington occurs right in his hometown of Alexandria, VA with a Birthnight Ball at Gadsby’s Tavern and the mile long annual Washington’s Birthday Parade.

As mentioned before, the holiday was originally celebrated on the date of Washington’s birth. But do we actually know when General Washington was born? That is a more complicated and interesting question than you may suspect and was a matter of confusion even in his lifetime.

When George Washington was born, the British Empire followed the Julian calendar which had survived from the days when it was proposed by Julius Caesar in 42 B.C. (*708 Ab Urbe Condita*) . By 1582, the Julian calendar was out of step with the seasons by 10 days. Under the sponsorship of Pope Gregory XIII, a new calendar, the “Gregorian,” was adopted which proved more accurate. For example, the Julian calendar gains one day, relative to the seasons, every 128 years whereas the Gregorian only gains one day every, 3,030 years.

Most Catholic countries of Europe adopted the new calendar fairly quickly. Protestant countries on the continent followed suit. The main holdout was England, later the British Empire, which did not convert their civil calendar to the Gregorian until 1752. By this time, the Julian calendar was 11 days out of step with the seasons. When the British Empire (including the American colonies) finally changed, the day after Wednesday, September 2nd, 1752 became Thursday, September 14th, 1752. Interestingly, this change led to demonstrations **Continued on Page 7**

September 1752

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Phases of the moon: 15☾23☽30☾						

DEVOTION TO
MUTUAL
HELPFULNESS



RENEW
ONLINE
TODAY

George Washington's Birthday (A.K.A., Presidents' Day)-continued from page 6

by people demanding, "Give us our 11 days back!"

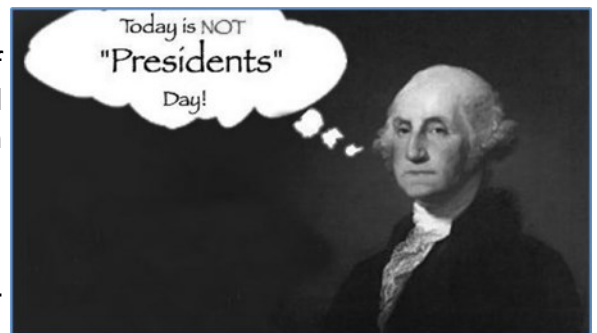
To make matters more complicated, the Romans had established January 1st as the beginning of the year, which the Gregorian calendar of the Roman Catholic Church continued to do. However, many countries' calendars changed year on either December 25th (the Nativity of Jesus) or March 25th (the Incarnation of Jesus). From 1087 to 1155 the English year began on January 1st and from 1155 to 1751 began on March 25th. In 1752 it was moved back to January 1st. Thus, the days of the week from January 1st to March 24th are still 1751 and the year did not turn to 1752 until March 25th.

By the time of his 21st birthday in 1753 these changes combined to effectively slide the date of George Washington's birthday by 11 days and change the year, from February 11th, 1731 to February 22nd, 1732, during his lifetime! To Washington and his contemporaries 1752 would appear to have been only 9 months and 6 days long.... from March 25th to December 31st.

Confused? You can bet our predecessors were too! The Julian and Gregorian calendars are today 13 days out of step. So, whenever you are teaching about patriotism and Americanism from our early colonial period, take care when you cite dates!

Happy birthday Mr. President...?

Jay Rarick, Detachment Vice Commander-West; American Legion Post 364 Newsletter-2018



(1)-Handbook of Instruction for the National Patriotic Instructor, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Revised 2016, page 12.

Cover Story—Be the One to Be the One—from page 1

What should I say?

Ask them what's going on. Let them know they aren't alone. Ask the direct question: Are you having thoughts of suicide?

Encourage them to keep sharing.

Offer to connect them to someone who can help.

What should I not say?

DO NOT tell them you know how they feel. DO NOT condemn or minimize their thoughts or feelings.

DO NOT tell them to be thankful for what they have.

What else should I know?

In these cases, remember your mission is not to act as a mental health professional. Your mission is to connect them to the professionals. It is best to listen carefully, take any comments about suicide seriously, and look for cues in their words and behavior.

Reassure them that it is OK to ask for help and offer to connect them with resources. DO NOT ignore warning signs. DO NOT keep it a secret. **American Legion**

The logo for the Sons of the American Legion, featuring the text "SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION" in a blue oval with a stylized American flag graphic.

SONS OF THE
AMERICAN
LEGION

National Americanism Commission
American Legion Family Day
2024 Guidance

Purpose: to be observed annually on the last Saturday of April (April 27, 2024). It encourages posts to open their doors to members of their community for a day and celebrate our accomplishments.

S.A.L. members can coordinate with their sponsoring Posts to showcase Americanism in the following ways:

- Make sure there is a serviceable American Flag present
- Pamphlets for all Americanism “Youth Programs” should be available.
- Contact your Department regarding the availability of the “Star-Spangled Kids Kits created by the Auxiliary.
- Host a blood drive (falls under Americanism in the S.A.L.).
- Host a flag-etiquette program, including a flag retirement ceremony.
- Place flags to honor veterans and record your event on the Flying Flags for Heroes website.
- A laptop and video screen could be utilized to showcase American Legion Programs supported by your Post.
- Have comic books and coloring books available. They can be ordered from American Legion Emblem Sales.
- Recognize individuals and businesses in your community at the event by utilizing the “SAL Flag Appreciation Certificate”

**Questions: email Chairman Casey at
aproudpatrot1776@gmail.com**

 @SonsAmericanism



SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
FOR GOD AND COUNTRY
OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL ADJUTANT

PO BOX 1055, INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206-1055 * WWW.LEGION.ORG/SONS * P: 317-630-1205

TO: 2023-2024 SAL NATIONAL DIRECTORY

MEMO: SAL NATIONAL RESOLUTION FLOW PROCESS

Resolutions should be submitted at least 30 days before NEC or Convention.

All resolutions will be timestamped by the National Sons of The American Legion (SAL) Liaison with the National Adjutant being informed through each step of the process. Once a resolution is numbered, the original number will stay attached with possible revision numbering added on if necessary. All resolutions will be reviewed by the TAL Resolution Screening Committee (RSC) before being reviewed by the SAL commission or committee.

- 1) Resolution sent to National Liaison for recording. National Liaison assigns a number and acknowledges receipt of the resolution to the sender.
- 2) National Liaison informs the National Adjutant of the status of resolutions. The National Adjutant will coordinate with the TAL RSC chairman to coordinate a meeting time.
- 3) Three weeks before the meeting (NEC or Convention), RSC meets, reviews the resolutions, and returns to the National Liaison for the next step. (If the resolution has financial intent, RSC will forward it to the National Liaison to record receipt and (24hrs) send the resolution to TAL Finance Commission for review.
- 4) The National Liaison sends the numbered resolution to the SAL commission or committee for them to champion and will cc the SAL Sub-committee on resolutions.
- 5) The commission or committee will meet at the NEC or convention for disposition status. Approved resolutions are sent to the Sub-committee on resolutions. When the commission or committee has reviewed, modified, or rejected the resolution it will return to the national liaison. Approved resolutions are officially sent to the Sub-committee on resolutions. Rejected resolutions will be returned to the sponsoring detachment as well as the commission or committee with an explanation.
- 6) Sub-committee on resolutions meets at the NEC or convention before going to the SAL NEC. Rejected or held for further study are notated in the report of the commission to the NEC, but not presented to the NEC.
- 7) All SAL NEC resolutions are given to the TAL IA commission in the IA report to the TAL NEC for review and approval. Once approved, all resolutions are placed on the website.

Respectfully,

Anthony W. Wright (PA)
 National Adjutant
 Sons of The American Legion

Americanism

Here are some easy opportunities to gain recognition for your Squadron and to support Americanism in the Detachment!

Detachment Commander Kevin Chaplin's Commander's Project: Commander Chaplin has selected Veterans & Athletes United (VAU) for his Commander's Project. You can find out more about this worthy organization at <https://www.vetsau.com/Veterans> and Athletes United strives to empower wounded, injured and ill veterans to fully live their lives and honor our fallen military heroes. If you wish to donate, either individually or as a Squadron, please make a check payable to "Detachment of Virginia" with "Commander's Project" in the memo line. The Detachment will send a collective check to VAU. Please mail to: Sons of the American Legion Detachment of Virginia | 708 Commonwealth Avenue Richmond, VA 23230

National Commander's Challenge — Four Pillar Squadron Criteria & Validation Form. This is an easy program for any size Squadron with minimal effort to support the Four Pillars of the American Legion, receive recognition (a certificate) from the SAL National Commander and generate inputs for your Consolidated Squadron Report! Please reference the form for the requirements and note that "Donate \$1.00 for Squadron's membership total as of July 31, 2023" refers to \$1.00 for each Squadron member as of that date. (For example, my Squadron 17 has 14 members as of that date, so it would be \$14 minimum for each category (you can always give more). See the attached form.

American Legion Child Welfare Foundation - 100% Per Capita Banner Program Request Form 2023 – 2024 — the goal is for each American Legion Post, American Legion Auxiliary Unit, Sons of The American Legion Squadron, American Legion Riders Chapter or Eight and Forty Salon donating at least one dollar for each member during the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation's award year (1 June - 31 May) may receive a beautiful banner/streamer.

To qualify for the 2023-2024 year a post, unit, squadron, riders, or salon must donate one dollar per member based upon its official membership total from their national organization as of June 1, 2023. The post, unit, squadron, riders, or salon has from June 1, 2023, to May 31, 2024, to submit the attached form, along with the donation, to the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

Please remember to submit your Americanism activities to me before April 1st (no kidding....) for inclusion in the Detachment Americanism Report for the Spring Conference in Portsmouth, VA. Hope to see you all there! **Jay Rarick-Detachment Vice Commander—West and Detachment Americanism Chairman**

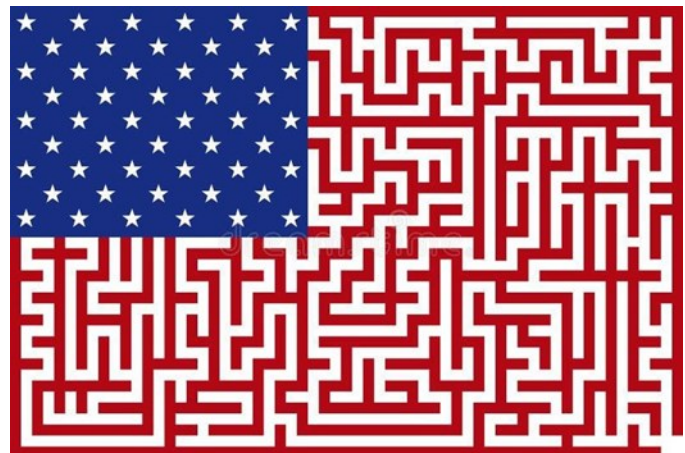
SAVE PAPER.
SAVE POSTAGE.
SAVE TIME.



www.legion.org/SAL-renew

QUICKLY AND EASILY RENEW ONLINE
MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

SONS OF THE
AMERICAN
LEGION



Voter Voice Sign Up

VoterVoice is a comprehensive digital advocacy solution to help the American Legion mobilize American Legion Family Members, amplify the American Legion message, and take action on the legislation and regulations that matter to you.

The American Legion’s Legislative Division uses VoterVoice as its grassroots advocacy platform for connecting the American Legion Family members and advocates with their members of Congress. VoterVoice allows The American Legion to contact every member of Congress on large, national campaigns as well as target specific members on key committees that pertain to The American Legion’s legislative priorities.

It's Simple & Painless and just freaking easy!! Take two minutes and become an advocate for all veterans! Joining VoterVoice allows you to continue supporting the ideas and beliefs of The American Legion, The American Legion Family, and the individual who gave you eligibility to join the Sons and become the Sons member you are today.



BE THE ONE

If you're a veteran in crisis or concerned about one, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive 24/7 confidential support. Dial 988 then Press 1, chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat) or text 838255.

Membership Pointers



1. Please make sure your Squadron has turned in their Squadron Data Report Form.
2. Please make sure your Post Adjutant has updated the Post Records with the current Squadron Commander and Adjutant’s name.
3. Please make sure that your Squadron Adjutant has access to MyLegion.org..
4. If you have not renewed your membership, please do so as soon as possible.
5. Please do not hold any memberships!!!
6. Please direct all Membership Questions to the Detachment Commander or Detachment Adjutant.



2024 IS NOW
SONS OF THE
AMERICAN
LEGION
RENEW TODAY!!!

2024 National Membership Target Dates			
1	September 13, 2023	10%	6 ♥ February 14, 2024 ♥ 75%
2	October 18, 2023	25%	7 March 13, 2024 80%
3	November 15, 2023	35%	8 April 10, 2024 90%
4	December 13, 2023	45%	9 May 15, 2024 100%
5	January 18, 2024	60%	10 July 24, (DSTG) 105%

MEMBERSHIP
RENEWAL
TARGET DATE
March 13, 2024



The selfless service of the Four Chaplains

There is perhaps no greater example of selfless service in the military than the story of the four chaplains who made the ultimate sacrifice during World War II.

“We have a perfect example here of four individuals who exhibited that and give us a legacy that we have to carry on,” said retired Navy Capt. Louis A. Cavaliere, vice chairman of the Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation board of directors.

He was among those attending a Four Chaplains Day ceremony, conducted by American Legion District 9 in Florida on Jan. 28. While American Legion posts throughout the nation conduct similar remembrances near the Feb. 3, 1943, anniversary of the USS *Dorchester* sinking, this one is particularly impressive.

“I have been to many ceremonies not only in the United States but all over the world, and I would say this ranks as one of the more moving ones that I have been to,” Cavaliere said.

American Legion National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer, a chaplain, also attended the ceremony.

“Today is an awesome event,” the Navy veteran proclaimed. “As we remember something that happened on Feb. 3, 1943. And why is that day so important to remember? It’s the day we call ‘Four Chaplains.’ Four individuals, men of God, gave their lives, to save lives.”

Army veteran George “Geo” Bograkos, judge advocate for Post 92 in Hollywood, Fla., coordinated the event.

“We are honoring the four chaplains that went down with the USS *Dorchester*,” he said. “They, in effect, sacrificed their lives for four other sailors. We honor them every year.”

The ceremony has been taking place for at least 20 years. But this year, American Legion members rallied to find a new location. The usual location — the I.T. Parker Community Center in Dania Beach — is currently undergoing major repairs due to flooding last April. This year, the ceremony was held at the NSU Guy Harvey Oceanographic Center Campus in Dania Beach.

“It means a great deal to us to have Commander Seehafer here with us,” Bograkos said. “The fact that he is a chaplain is a plus. We are very pleased and enthused to have him here.”

Seehafer drew a comparison from the four chaplains of the 1940s to what American Legion Family members can do today.

“We remember the great sacrifice, we remember the courage, we remember the bravery. It’s a selfless act. Putting self last and others first. This is a prime example of servant leadership.” **American Legion Website—Henry Howard and Hilary Ott**, January 31, 2024

Squadron CSRs are Due On May 18, 2024!!!!

Links to 2024 American Legion Legislative Priorities and Washington Conference:

<https://www.legion.org/legislative/agenda>

<https://www.legion.org/washingtonconference/information>



3rd Annual Car Show & Open House

AMERICAN LEGION POST 28

May 11, 2024 11AM - 3PM

17934 LIMING LANE, TRIANGLE, VA 22172



Cars, Trucks & Motorcycles



JOIN US FOR MUSIC, FOOD & DRINKS, GAMES, & RAFFLES

\$25 ENTRANCE FEE

RAIN DATE: JUNE 1, 2024

Things To ‘Think About’

Food For Thought...

Over the years, I have heard people say, or have read things that were written that made me wonder where it came from. I’m sure that some of you have had the same questions pop-up in your head, but never got the answer. Maybe someone can help answer these questions?



What is this “ladies” or “women’s” auxiliary everyone keeps talking about? The American Legion Family has no such affiliate to my knowledge. We need to call the organization by its proper name, The American Legion Auxiliary. It is now even more important since ALA’s membership is now open to females and males.

What’s a “sal?” I thought we were Sons. I think Sal could be short for Salvatore. Is he a member?

Why do Squadrons hold cards? I was trained many years ago that when a member pays his dues, you immediately send them to Detachment headquarters, or now submit them via MySAL. Holding cards could cost Squadrons and Districts in the long run.

What’s with the rhythmic clapping during meetings? As a sports official at many levels, I am around many crowds. I have spoken at many events in front of large audiences. I have not heard this anywhere else. Anyone know the origins of this ovation?



Where’s all the kids? Every Squadron has members who are under the age of 18. Why don’t we see more of them at the Mid-Winter Conference or National and Detachment Conventions? I know that meetings can be boring for younger people, but how else will they learn about our amazing organization?

Where’s the event? Too often I see flyers, email announcements, social media announcements asking folks to attend their functions. Many do not list the address or the town. They simply say something like, “Event at Squadron XX.” For someone who may want to attend from out of town, how will they know where to go?

I pay my dues in the spring. Who came up with that? It is unheard-of to wait so long. In other organizations I am a member of, one in particular, we have a 30-day window to get our dues paid. If we decide to pay after the 30-days, there is a hefty late fee. What’s the deal?

All in favor... I have heard leaders of meetings say the following: “All in favor signify by saying aye, opposed same sign.” Here’s the question, if voting AYE is in favor of a motion, and we say, “opposed same sign,” is everyone voting in favor of the question? I believe it’s the Ayes and Nos or the Yeas and Nays. Just asking. Maybe Roberts knows.

Since I mentioned officiating earlier, let’s bring some of what I learned there into the Sons. We are always told, “Speak the language so everyone understands each other.” This is a vital part to the success of a sports official. If players, coaches, and officials all use the same terminology to describe something, everyone ends up on the same page.

When we work for The American Legion Family, we need to do the same. Let’s make a concerted effort to say American Legion Auxiliary, Sons, and to use the words that are part of the organization. If we do, there will be less of a communication breakdown. **Jeff Vrabel, Sr. Editor**, Round-Up, February 4, 2024

Suicide prevention, safeguarding veterans benefits among Legion's 2024 legislative agenda

Ahead of The American Legion's Washington Conference, taking place Feb. 25-28, the Legion has released its legislative agenda for the second session of the 118th Congress.

Among the priorities on the agenda:

Suicide prevention and mental health. Suicide remains a top issue in the veteran community. The suicide rate among veterans is nearly double that of civilian counterparts. It is imperative that we simultaneously destigmatize mental health assistance, while increasing access. The American Legion encourages Congress to robustly fund VA's suicide prevention outreach budget and peer support programs. We encourage all Americans to "Be the One" who is willing, ready, and able to have a difficult conversation about suicide and other mental health issues. Legislation supported by The American Legion include PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support Program (H.R. 2768) and VA Zero Suicide Demonstration Act (H.R. 1639).

Alternative treatments. Data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) shows that in 2021, approximately 2.8 million veterans experienced an illicit drug or alcohol use disorder, with 92.4 percent not receiving treatment. More must be done to ensure veterans have access to the effective treatments they desire. This includes expanding research and access into alternative treatments and emerging therapies. Legislation supported by The American Legion includes TBI and PTSD Treatment Act (H.R. 105).

VA healthcare modernization. The biggest issue in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Healthcare Modernization is the implementation of the new electronic health record modernization program (EHRM). VA has experienced difficulties as the EHRM rollout has progressed. Some issues identified were the differences in the training software compared to end-user software, along with inexperienced instructors providing the training to VA staff. VA made improvements on these identified issues. As the EHRM rollout is set to resume in 2024, The American Legion continues to call on Congress to provide oversight and to hold VA and other relevant parties accountable for the implementation and functioning of the EHR system. Legislation supported by The American Legion includes The Department of Veterans Affairs Electronic Health Record Modernization Improvement Act (H.R. 592).

PACT Act implementation and oversight. Since the implementation of Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act, VA has screened more than 5 million veterans for toxic exposure. The average time to complete a PACT Act-related claim is 157 days. It is imperative that VA fully leverage the resources made available in the PACT Act to assist in the continued modernization of Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) information technology systems as well as the hiring of additional employees to ensure claims are adjudicated in a timely manner. The American Legion urges Congress to provide the necessary oversight and funding to ensure VA has the resources to properly implement this legislation.

Safeguard veterans benefits. Veterans are facing a growing threat from exploitative entities aiming to capitalize on the benefits rightfully earned through military service. These predatory actors range from claims companies charging exorbitant fees to lawyers seeking sizable portions of VA disability benefit payments. The American Legion urges Congress to pass legislation to restore criminal penalties for persons or companies that represent or charge veterans fees to file; prepare or prosecute initial VA claims without VA accreditation; and to oppose any legislation that would allow unaccredited parties to become legal representatives without completing the accreditation process. The American Legion's advocacy role remains focused on safeguarding the well-deserved benefits of those who have served. Legislation supported by The American Legion includes Veterans Benefits Improvement Act (H.R. 1530). *The American Legion, February 2, 2024*

LEGISLATION



*The Son's of the
American Legion
Squadron 2
820 Winfield Rd
Petersburg, VA
ST. Patrick's Day Bash
March 16th 2024*



*Dinner from 6 p.m - 8 p.m
Cost \$10.00
Corn beef & Cabbage
or
REUBEN Sandwich
W/Fries
Dessert*

*Music By the band
Shooters
7 p.m to 10:15 p.m*



Sons of The American Legion Membership Application

Detachment of _____ Squadron No. _____ Birth Date _____ Date _____
 Name _____ (First) _____ (Initial) _____ (Last) Recruited by _____ (Initial) _____ (Last)
 Address _____ (Street) _____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip)
 E-mail Address _____ Telephone _____

Veteran through whom eligibility is established _____
 (a) Above is a member in good standing of Post No. _____ Dept. of _____
 OR (b) Above is a deceased veteran who served honorably from _____ to _____
 (c) Relationship of Applicant to Veteran _____

I hereby subscribe to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion, apply for membership, and transmit \$ _____ as annual membership dues.
 Signed _____ (By Applicant or Parent)
 Eligibility certified by _____ Post Adjutant _____ 00-001 2019

RECEIPT

Date _____
 Received of _____
For God and Country

\$ _____ in payment of dues for 20 _____ in
 Squadron _____, Detachment of _____
 By _____

DD-214
 Available Online

Great news for Veterans!
 The National Personnel Records
 Center (NPRC)
 Has provided the following website
 for Veterans to gain access to their
 DD-214 online:

[HTTP://VETRECS.ARCHIVES.GOV/](http://VETRECS.ARCHIVES.GOV/)

Americanism

...is an unflinching love of Country; loyalty to its institutions and ideals; eagerness to defend it against all enemies, undivided allegiance to the flag; and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity

Men and women returning from all quarters of the globe stand before our altars of comradeship, pledging loyalty to the Nation and to one another. Through the generations we give life to our impressive ritual, for it solemnly binds young and old who have fought for America on land, on sea and in the air

April is Children and Youth Month

WHAT CAN I DO?

The American Legion has been actively involved with children's issues since the early 1920s. In many instances, The American Legion has been the driving force on behalf of children on the federal, state and local levels.

In 1938, April was formally designated as Child Welfare Month (now called Children & Youth Month) and has continued on an annual basis. During this special time, we encourage each of you to show your community that the American Legion Family is dedicated to America's youth.

Each year the Committee on Children & Youth focuses on three primary areas of concern. They may include:

Child health-Immunization programs, School nutrition programs, Teen pregnancy prevention programs.

Child safety- Child pornography, Drug abuse prevention, Drug trafficking, Alcohol abuse prevention, Child/sexual abuse and neglect, Teen suicide prevention.

Family support-National Family Week activities, Day care safety, Foster care, Temporary Financial Assistance, Missing and exploited children.

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

To start, consider:

Obtaining speakers to talk about particular concerns or topics within your community.

Asking local law enforcement to do a bike safety demonstration, finger printing or to talk about internet safety.

Conducting a community project with and for children.

Forming a Community Committee on Children & Youth to discuss current problems, generate solutions and then take action.

Sponsoring a carnival or talent show featuring young people to raise money for a community project.

Featuring a youth panel at a local school where participants can discuss some of their concerns.

Using videos, if applicable, enlisting the aid of an individual familiar with the subject matter to both present it and be available to answer questions following the viewing.

Use these suggestions, or develop your own projects, but get involved. Remember, the only limitation you have for youth programs and activities is your own imagination!

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Legislation to improve conditions for children is a focal point of The American Legion's Children & Youth program. By working on behalf of sound legislation, The American Legion, in accordance with mandated positions, strives to bring into enactment the laws necessary to meet the needs of all children.

Whether the legislation involves a local matter, pertains to a problem of a particular state or is an item of national concern, it requires the efforts of all interested in the well- being **Continued on page 18**

April is Children and Youth Month-cont. from page 17

of children and youth if it is to become law.

Most state assemblies begin their sessions early in the year. This is the best time to present legislators with any new legislation or changes needed in current laws.

Within each community, there is a great deal of local legislative action, which deserves continued attention: city ordinances affecting children and

youth, appropriations for schools and school budgets, immunization, child abuse and neglect statutes, juvenile courts, local public welfare departments, playgrounds, traffic regulations and other such matters relating to the health and welfare of children.

There is a great need for informed public participation in local government matters. And when it comes to local matters affecting our children and youth, The American Legion should make itself heard.

PROMOTE YOUR ACTIVITIES

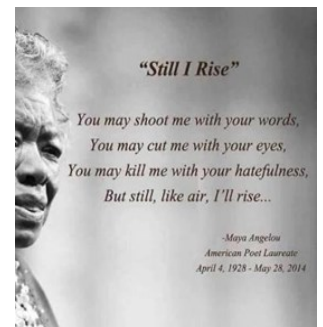
You should publicize your programs and activities. Have the mayor or another local official issue a proclamation declaring April as Children & Youth Month. The post commander should issue a news release proclaiming April as Children & Youth Month and list what the post will be doing for this annual observance.

Remember, programs supporting the children and youth of your community are news! Invite the news media to your activities and keep them informed.

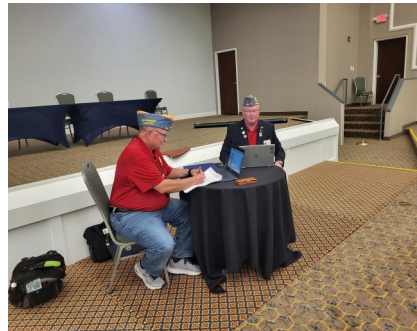
REPORT SUCCESSES

Following the observance of Children & Youth Month, the Children & Youth chairmen need to turn their attention to the annual reporting of expenditures and activities. Be sure you have an accurate record of all money spent for the benefit of children and youth by your post/unit during the current year, as well as the number of children who received services and assistance.

Shortly after the first of the year, American Legion departments receive copies of the Consolidated Post Report (CPR) for later distribution to posts. This form has been developed to track necessary information about The American Legion's overall program. It is the responsibility of the post Children & Youth chairman to report his/her program activities to the individual designated in the post to complete the Consolidated Post Report. The CPR can be done online at MyLegion.org by the post adjutant. **From The American Legion—April is Children and Youth Month brochure**



Around the Detachment in Pictures Fall Conference 2023



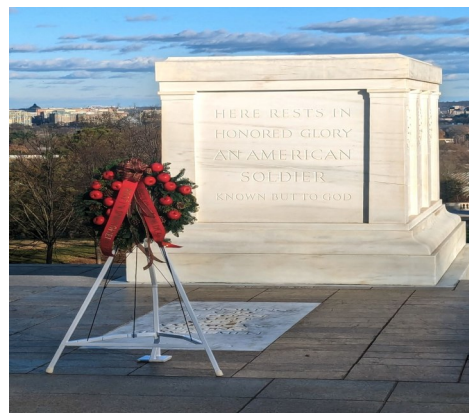
Pictures from the 2023 Detachment of Virginia Fall Conference in Williamsburg, VA—Top Left Squadron 320 Commander, Timothy Fincher and Alt NEC Jeff Lee working the Detachment CWF Table. Top Middle and right are from the Detachment DEC Friday Night Meeting—with Adjutant, Joe Gallagher and Detachment Commander, Kevin Chaplin and Detachment Officers in the right photo. Middle row—Friday night Detachment Dinner with Detachment Officers and wives. Middle and Right photos are opening ceremonies for our Fall Conference on Saturday. Bottom 2 pictures are awards being presented by Southeastern Region National Vice Commander, Linwood Moore to Detachment Vice Commanders Jay Rarick and Tyler Vanice. Right photo is Past Detachment Commander, Fred Vaccarella presenting the National VE & E Award to Squadron 327 Member, Evan Glendenning.



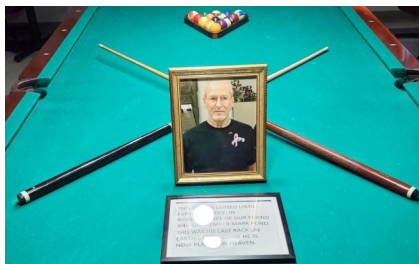
Around the Detachment in Pictures



Thank you Liam & Keagan for being DMs on Nov 17th during our monthly D & D Adventures League. From Squadron 280-Chesapeake.



Squadron 176 (Springfield) Commander Linwood Jones and Vice Commander Ted Miller placing a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier alongside Post Commander Kevin Gaddis-December 2023.



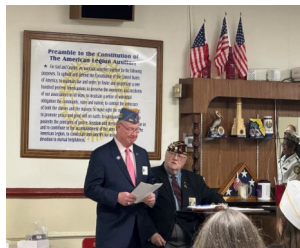
Pictures from the Pool Tournament hosted by the Son's of the American Legion Squadron 2 in October 2023. Son's Commander James Marsh attending Luminary Program- Poplar Grove National Cemetery in November 2023—Middle picture. Squadron 2 Petersburg-Son's Commander James Marsh and President of Rolling Thunder Mel Mason giving Christmas gifts and check to family from Fort Lee in December 2023.



Around the Detachment in Pictures



Here Squadron 17 Commander Jay Rarick presents a check to a representative of Calvary Baptist Church in Lovingston, VA in support of their Red Cross blood drive. Blood drives come under the heading of National Defense in the Four Pillars. Picture on left.



The American Legion Oratorical Contest for Post 17 was held at Nelson County High School this evening. We had two contestants who both are to be commended. Thanks to Nelson County High School and to the folks from Post 17, Squadron 17 and Auxiliary Unit 17 (provisional) for making this event a success! Middle Picture.



Here are the contestants and staff of the American Legion Oratorical Contest for District 10. The District Contest was held January 2024 at American Legion Post 16 in Lynchburg, VA. Thom Guthrie, the District Chaplain, was master of ceremonies and Jay Rarick, SAL Detachment Vice Commander (West) was the Chief Judge. Picture on right.



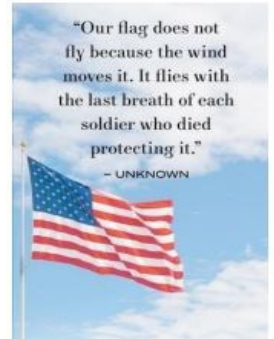
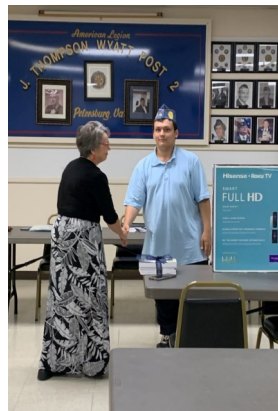
Second Row-left and middle picture—Post 327's 53rd Law & Order was held tonight January 30, 2024. Here's a couple of pictures of our Detachment Commander Kevin Chaplin. Second Row—picture on right are the Awards for the Squadron 293 (Purcellville) Annual Chili Cookoff-Mayor's Choice Award plus First, Second, and Third Prizes. Third Row pictures are from the Squadron 293 Chili Cookoff held in January 2024. Middle picture is Squadron Commander Andy Rider, Detachment Commander, Kevin Chaplin, the Mayor of Purcellville—Stanley J Milan, Sr. and the winner of the Mayor's Choice Award. Picture on right is Detachment Commander, Kevin Chaplin verifying the results of the Chili Cookoff. Squadron 293 raised \$3,600 for American Legion Programs. Fourth Row are pictures from Squadron 17's Four Chaplain Ceremony in February 2024. A big Thank-You! to everyone who helped make our 2nd Four Chaplains' Commemoration a success this last Friday (Feb. 2nd). We were short a couple of clergy due to family commitments and illness, but we will keep them in our prayers. Unfortunately our Methodist participants were unable to attend. A big shout out to Mr. Len Thompson, LCDR USN (Ret.) of the St. Mary's Catholic Church's Knights of Columbus for filling in for Father Roger Abadano, to the Rev. Donna Steckline of Trinity Episcopal Church, Chaplain Thom Guthrie of American Legion District 10, and to Rev. Daniel Magan of Jonesboro Baptist Church who delivered the message for the night.

Thanks to Commander Ric Siler and the men of Squadron 93 for their hospitality. This dynamic Squadron is extremely active in their community of Buchannon, Virginia. Well done gentlemen!

Squadron Everlasting

Please keep the families of the following members in your thoughts and prayers— Howard Alexander (5), Dale Angell (148), Theodore Apostolakis (177), John Archdeacon (199), Donald Chenault (284), Floyd Cline (176), James Dawson (327), Alan Foster (146), Alfred Garrett (146), Jay Hall (148), Perry Howard (159), Steven King (146), George Lussier, III (28), Jacob Nicholas (177), George Shipe (53), and Colton Talley (144). If your Squadron has any members who have passed away, please notify our Detachment Adjutant, Joe Gallagher (kchaplin@lexacom.net) and Detachment Chaplin, Robert Wilson, Sr.

(robertwilsonsr54@gmail.com).



Pictures from around the Detachment— First and Second Rows are pictures from 2023 Legion College— Unit 2 and Squadron 2 receiving their Legion College Diplomas; Detachment Commander, Kevin Chaplin assisting in the presentation of Legion College Diplomas; Third Row—Squadron 2 (Petersburg) donates Flat Screen TV's to a local Women's Shelter; Fourth Row—Detachment Vice Commander, Jay Rarick meets with members from Squadron 7 Pulaski; Evan Glendenning of Squadron 327 is presented with the Marvin P Nay award from the 2023 National Convention. Bottom Row—PMCC Chairman, Kevin Chaplin gives is report at Fall NEC and National Convention.

RENEWAL IS THE KEY TO MEMBERSHIP SUCCESS
MEMBERSHIP IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

WANT TO ADD A SQUADRON?

If your post does not have a Squadron and is interested in starting up a Squadron, you need 10 members to charter a Squadron. It also needs to be approved by the sponsoring American Legion Post.

If you need more information about starting a Squadron, please feel free to contact Detachment Commander, Kevin Chaplin, Detachment Vice Commander, Jarrod Vass (Eastern Region), Detachment Vice Commander, Jay Rarick (Western Region), Detachment Vice Commander, Tyler Vanice (Northern Region), or Detachment Adjutant, Joe Gallagher. We would be glad to help you in any way to get a Squadron started.

THE FOCUS

The Focus is the Detachment of Virginia, Sons Of The American Legion's E-Letter or newsletter. This is a great tool for our Squadrons to promote their activities and accomplishments. Every Squadron does something within the Detachment. It can be putting flags on veterans graves to a Fisher House Fundraiser to having a Squadron Member who is an Eagle Scout to a Child Welfare Foundation Fundraiser. We want to hear what your Squadron is doing.

It does not take that much time to put a simple article together for The Focus. A few of our Squadrons contributed articles to this issue. The basic points or questions the article needs to answer are as follows: 1. What was the event? Dinner, Raffle, etc. 2. Who held the event? 3. What was the event for? 4. When was the event held? 5. Where was the event held? 6. Other highlights from the event... 7. What were the results from the event? How much did you raise?

We are in REAL need of getting articles from our Squadrons on their various activities. We know Squadrons are active. We want to hear from you! Please send your articles to Scott Williams at SonsVADetADJ@comcast.net.

Find us on 

Like us on Facebook - Sons Of The American Legion, Detachment Of Virginia. This is one great way to promote our activities and accomplishments. Please like us today to keep up with our Detachment Activities.



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, [American Legion Auxiliary](#) 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.



Detachment Officers and Committee Members Needed - If you are interested in serving at the Detachment Level—either as an officer, committee chairman, or committee member, please contact Detachment Commander, Kevin Chaplin, NEC, Willie Morgan, Alt NEC, Jeff Lee, or Detachment Adjutant, Joe Gallagher. It is a great honor to serve and represent your Squadron.



SONS OF THE
AMERICAN
LEGION

Sons Of The American Legion Detachment of Virginia

"The Focus"

Articles and information contributed by: Detachment Commander Kevin Chaplin, Detachment Adjutant, Joe Gallagher, Detachment Assistant Adjutant, Scott Williams, Detachment Vice Commander, Jay Rarick, SAL National Commander, Don, 'JR' Hall, The American Legion, American Legion Children and Youth Month Brochure, Jeff Vrable, Sr. SAL Roundup, February 4, 2024, American Legion Website—Henry Howard and Hilary Ott, January 31, 2024 **Photographs provided by:** Scott Williams, Detachment Vice Commanders, Tyler Vanice and Jay Rarick, American Legion Post 327, and various other Detachment Members.

Edited By: Scott Williams