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Top Ten Detachments 2026 Membership Percentage

1. **Dist. Of Col.** 115.73%
2. **Utah** 108.75%
3. **Philippines** 108.33%
4. **South Carolina** 93.79%
5. **Wisconsin** 93.13%
6. **Florida** 90.40%
7. **Idaho** 90.17%
8. **Iowa** 89.54%
9. **North Carolina** 89.43%
10. **Latin America** 89.13%

Statistics as of 05 March 2026

BE THE ONE



Special to *The Millennium*—Clive R.A. Seydell (MI), Detachment Commander

Michigan Represented at the 92nd Annual National Pilgrimage

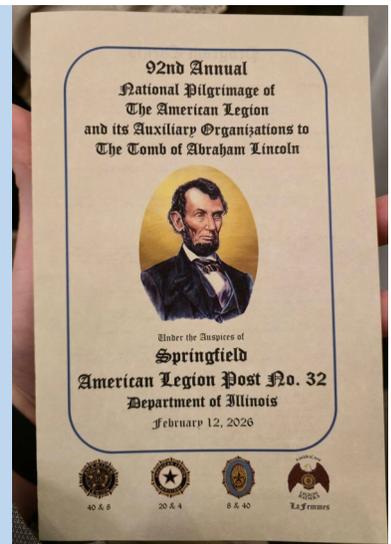
The 92nd Annual National Pilgrimage honoring President Abraham Lincoln began February 11, 2026 in Springfield, Illinois, with the American Legion Family Leadership Reception. National and Department leaders gathered in fellowship ahead of the annual observance, reinforcing the unity that defines The American Legion Family.

During the reception, National Commander Bill Clancy of the Sons of The American Legion addressed those assembled, emphasizing continued service and strengthening the bonds across the Legion Family. His remarks set the tone for the commemorative events that followed.

Hosted by Springfield Post No. 32, the Annual Pilgrimage to the Tomb of Abraham Lincoln has been held every year on February 12 since 1935, making it the longest-

running commemoration of President Lincoln's birthday. What began as a tribute organized by World War I veterans has grown into a nationally recognized tradition honoring our 16th President and the enduring principles he defended.

On the morning of February 12 — President Lincoln's birthday — members of the Legion Family attended the American Legion Family Breakfast before assembling at the President Abraham Lincoln Springfield Hotel. Participants then proceeded in procession to Oak Ridge Cemetery for the solemn wreath-laying ceremony at Lincoln's Tomb.



Submitted Photo: Commander Clive Seydell at the Lincoln pilgrimage, flanked by Commander's Lady Stephanie and National Commander Clancy

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

Our SAL Brotherhood: "...to do good is my religion"

I'm writing this editorial on the train on the way back from the Washington Conference, as I did last year.

That week is by far my favorite series of events throughout the year, because not only do we get to participate in some fairly emotional wreath laying ceremonies, I get to enjoy time in the nations capital with my NJ folks and connect with my friends from across the country who I really only see in-person two or three times a year.

It's a theme I write about more often than not—about our collective bond of brotherhood ... a brotherhood rooted in service. Hence the title of this editorial which comes from Thomas Paine, author of "Common Sense" ...

"...all mankind is my brethren, and to do good is my religion."

The people—my brother Sons as well as the extended American Legion Family—is what I truly enjoy the most about being a part of the SAL.

But it can't just be seeing these folks in person, or on Zoom calls. It needs to go so much further than that ... we need to cultivate and nurture those friendships by keeping in touch much more often.

And it's a place where a great many of us fall short ... I know I do ... we just don't maintain contact as good as we should. Not just in the Legion Family, but in life.

I had a moment a week before we left for DC which really hit home for me. It was a small gesture of kindness ... of caring and compassion, which left an endearing impression on me—one which I will pay forward.

We all talk about Be The One, and the importance of doing Buddy Checks for our vets, letting them know we're here for them. I know I don't do as much as should with Buddy Checks, though it's something that I know is terrifically important.

I woke up around 2pm (I work nights) on a Tuesday. Not two minutes later, I received a phone call from Joe Imperato, a dual member from Quintin Roosevelt Post 8 in Clifton, NJ.

"Hey Rusty, I'm just doing my Buddy Checks and wanted to check in on you and see how you and your family are doing", Joe said. "I make sure I check in on our entire Legion Family, which includes our Sons."

The call lasted perhaps 45 seconds, but I got off the phone feeling so flattered that someone took a minute just to say hi, and that he is thinking of me.

Because of that, I saw first hand why Buddy Checks make a difference.

For someone in crisis, it lets them know someone cares about them. It fills them with a feeling that they matter. That they're important. That someone out there is thinking about them.

I'm not in a bad place, nor am I in crisis ... but that phone call let me know that Joe thought enough of me just to check in on me. That small act of kindness really drove home for me the importance of keeping in touch.

That call impacted me in a much more profound way than I would have expected.

Thank you, Joe, for doing something which is in the greatest traditions of what this organization is about—the human element. The 'mutual helpfulness.' The friendships and paying doing good things forward. Thomas Paine was right ... doing good is our religion.

So pick up the phone and make a call.

And make that call not just to a veteran, but to a brother Son ... to a friend, to someone you think about but don't see much. Call your mom or dad. Call a sibling. Call a member who hasn't been to a few meetings.

Don't make that Buddy Check with an agenda, asking for dues or why they don't come around anymore. Just make the call to say hi. You will be amazed at what that does for someone.

Be The One isn't just a project or a program of The American Legion, it's a mission ... a calling. It is a core principle of who we are.

Let's live the mission.



**BUDDY
CHECK**

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

Continued from Page 1: Michigan at the Annual National Pilgrimage

Surrounded by history and tradition, patriotic music, invocation and ceremonial honors marked the occasion with the dignity it deserves. For ninety-two consecutive years, Legionnaires, Auxiliary members, and Sons have gathered at this sacred site to reflect upon liberty, sacrifice, and national unity.

Standing within the tomb serves as a reminder that leadership — especially in challenging times — requires courage, humility, and unwavering devotion to our constitutional republic.

Following the ceremony, attendees returned for the Lincoln Commemoration Luncheon, where national leadership again addressed those assembled. The event continues to draw Legion Family members, civic leaders, and distinguished guests from across the country.

Michigan was proud to be represented as part of this historic tradition. Participation in the National Pilgrimage is more than ceremonial; it is a reaffirmation of our shared commitment to veterans, service to community, and the preservation of American ideals.

As President Abraham Lincoln stated in 1864, "Honor to the soldier and sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country's cause." That charge continues to guide the mission of The American Legion Family today.

For those who have not yet attended the National Pilgrimage, I strongly encourage making the journey. Experiencing this tradition firsthand strengthens both perspective and purpose.



Facebook Photo: National leadership rubbing Lincoln's nose for good luck





Randy Timms (WI), Assistant Editor of *The Millennium*

Leadership Succession: Pass On Your Knowledge

Leadership Succession – If these two words strike fear in your heart, then you're not alone! In my State, we're taking a close look at where future leaders will come from, but perhaps more importantly, how were they trained for the job.

Clearly, squadrons will frequently echo the procedural and attitudinal characteristics of their posts. One would expect they follow the norms set by the sponsoring post. But consider a new member attending your squadron meeting for the first time. What will they see? In a previous article, I wrote about the best time to salute the flag and generally accepted procedures for placing the POW/MIA flag on an empty chair. These can be two important teaching moments. My fellow SAL member Mike Pook has also written several times on various areas of this learning process in "Mentoring Moments".

You may look at your members and think "oh, he'll be next". "I know 'Joe' and he seems interested in advancing". But what about the person after Joe? And after that? If we neglect to put some type of training in place, what will your squadron look like in 30 years?

One of the aspects I like about actively participating in a leadership succession plan is that each and every member can be involved. I prefer the idea of teaching rather than training. We can train an animal to do certain tasks, but did that teach them anything? Likewise, we can train a member to do a certain task, but have we taught him why we do it that way? Will they understand the history or meaning behind what they've learned?

Teaching a member on a skill or procedure can be done by anyone with the knowledge

and willingness to step up and help. I've always appreciated the adage "You Don't Know What you Don't Know". So simple, yet so true. New members are like that. They haven't been exposed to our culture. Our methods. They didn't sign-up for the SAL and automatically become knowledgeable in procedures or history. They need to learn it.

The trick for those already in leadership is to seek out those members who appear to have an interest in learning a new task/position and encourage them to learn more about it. One way to do that is to talk about our history and why we do things as we do, during meetings. I'm not suggesting every meeting should be about teaching, but what would happen if once/twice a quarter/year, your agenda showed a period for questions, answers and teaching? Or perhaps you select a specific topic and told members there would be allotted time for discussion. Or better still, since we should be communicating with all members via the Buddy Check method, you might send a questionnaire out asking what facet of the SAL they would like to learn more about?

I understand many members might not give this a second thought. But if you have one or two members who come with questions and clearly wish to learn, perhaps you've identified your future leaders?

Back home, our four Vice Commanders are working on an outline that we can share with our District Commanders to begin this dialog. Then, we can approach Squadron Commanders and inquire as to their willingness to adopt this idea. Hopefully, in time, every squadron in the state will be encouraging members to grow and helping them achieve their goals.

I'm interested in hearing your thoughts on this important subject so feel free to respond at email: wdvctimms@gmail.com



THE MILLENNIUM

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All information must be submitted no later than 12:00 noon the twentieth of each month and must be made electronically by emailing the editor at rusty.myers@ymail.com

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08 April 2026

13 May 2026

10 June 2026

08 July 2026

12 August 2026

09 September 2026



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





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

**Washington Wreath Laying
Program 2026**

"The weather made for a wonderful experience as the Legislative Commission put together a memorable day for members of The American Legion Family", writes National Legislative Chairman Bernie Kessler (OH). "A new standard of more than 210 'family' members made their presence felt."

Each year, Sons from around the country gather in our nation's capital to honor our commitment to the legacy of our veterans by placing wreaths at the Tomb of the Unknowns and at memorials throughout the city. This year, wreaths were placed at the World War I Memorial, the Marine Corps Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, and the Vietnam Wall. The SAL was a visible presence throughout the city, in the weekend leading up to American Legion National Commander Wiley's testimony before congress.

"The Commission wants to thank all who attended and appreciated your patience throughout the day", Chairman Kessler continued. "We look forward to seeing you in 2027."

Photos: National Historian Van Patten (NY), Editor (NJ), Charles Curtis (CA)





Celebrate the nation’s semiquincentennial by taking part in The American Legion’s USA 250 Challenge. Your participation, whether as an individual or part of a team, helps honor our veterans and uplift communities nationwide while promoting physical fitness, mental wellness, and community service.

Participants may engage in one, two or all three activities as an individual or as part of a team like an American Legion post, American Legion Auxiliary unit, Sons of The American Legion squadron and/or an American Legion Riders chapter.

For a \$30 registration fee, participants will receive their choice of a USA 250 Challenge tech shirt. The proceeds will go to the Veterans and Children Foundation (VCF).

Register Here
[www.legion.org/get-involved/
 community-programs/usa250/
 challenge](http://www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs/usa250/challenge)



Mike Monserud (IA), Trailing Candidate for National Commander

What is Your Purpose?

Our - my - purpose to is carry on the legacy of the American Legion and the veterans who have served this country. Now that is a good answer to suffice many, but is that really from the heart?

I grew up at the American Legion attending with my grandfather that I am eligible through. I remember attending functions at the Harpers Ferry, Iowa Post 722, from Bingo to pancake breakfasts, to me playing Legion Baseball. I remember sitting at his kitchen table as Grandpa would talk to members of the Post as they came by to talk and collect his dues. The stories they had that I did not quite understand until later in life. All I knew was that he was my hero and I looked up to him and always looked forward to the conversations that we would have when he talked about how we must take care of the Veterans and protect what they all fought for.

His conversations did not make sense and didn’t really sink in until I came from a Combat tour in Iraq and saw the effects of war had on people. When I started realizing that it had an effect on me also and I had to make a choice to go at it head on or let it win, I turned to the American Legion Family just like my grandfather did. I realized my life had gone full circle.

So, what is my purpose and why am I a member of the Sons of The American Legion? To carry on the legacy of my grandfather, to stand up and advocate for the ones who never made it home, are still missing, and carry the war within themselves every day. I will always be his voice to carry on what was taught to me. I know what I went through and what I saw and will advocate for everyone to make sure that when they all come home that we are taking care of them. We do not know them all, but we owe them all. God bless our Veterans and the American Legion Family. Stand and advocate and always remember who you are eligible through.

legion.org—29 January 2026
Pennsylvania: SAL Member raises fund and awareness for homeless

A tragic loss prompted an SAL Detachment of Pennsylvania member to spend part of the past two Januarys sleeping outside to raise funds and awareness to help homeless vets.

Paul Mills Sr., a member of Squadron 131 in Lock Haven, Pa., and the District 16 historian, began Operation Help Veterans in 2025.

“It’s in honor of a good friend of mine who was a veteran and he was homeless. He took his own life a few years back,” said Mills, who added that he found the veteran after his suicide. “I wasn’t able to really help him, you know, besides give him food, whatever. He was living in a tent. I’d go check on him every couple of days.”

Mills sat with the loss before coming up with the idea to spend a weekend sleeping outside Post 1 in Williamsport, Pa. He chose the second week of January because that’s when he found his friend.

“People ask me all the time why I don’t do it in the summer. Well, it was the second week of January when I found my friend, so it’s in honor of him,” Mills said.

The effort in 2025 raised over \$6,000, which Mills donated to American Rescue Workers. The local nonprofit has provided homelessness and hunger prevention services in Williamsport and Lycoming County since 1934.

Although he didn’t have final donation numbers yet, Mills’ campout the weekend of Jan. 16 brought in close to \$5,000, he said.

“I had to tap out early this year, I got ill, I got hypothermia,” Mills said.

That won’t stop him from doing it again next year, though.

“I’ll have a different setup next year,” Mills said. “We’ve got to remind (the government) every now and then that (the homeless veterans are) out there.”





CELEBRATE & EDUCATE

American Legion Family Youth Programs advance civics and responsible citizenship for our nation's 250th anniversary and beyond.



ORATORICAL CONTEST

The American Legion Oratorical Contest challenges high school students to explore and understand the U.S. Constitution while developing confidence, leadership and communication skills. National contestants compete for more than \$200,000 in scholarships each year.



BOYS STATE/BOYS NATION

American Legion Boys State and Boys Nation are government-education programs that have shaped thousands of careers in public service and leadership since 1935. Boys State offers students entering their senior year a glimpse into how government functions in a democracy. Two delegates from each Boys State program are selected to attend Boys Nation, where they form and operate a mock federal government, visit congressional delegations, military leaders and The White House to enrich their understanding of U.S. leadership.



GIRLS STATE/GIRLS NATION

American Legion Auxiliary Girls State and Girls Nation closely mirror American Legion Boys State/Boys Nation, for students entering their senior years of high school seeking understanding about participation in government. Two delegates from each ALA Girls State program are chosen each year to participate in Girls Nation in Washington, D.C. Participants leave with "leadership lessons for life" and an understanding of the fundamentals of U.S. government, rights, privileges, and responsibilities of citizens.



AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

More than 10 million young athletes have since 1925 learned the principles of sportsmanship, teamwork, discipline, fitness and responsible citizenship through the American Legion Baseball program.

JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program is a gun-safety education and marksmanship program that encompasses the basic elements of safety, education, enjoyment, competition and citizenship.



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY EDUCATIONAL CONTESTS

AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST: The Americanism Essay Contest of the American Legion Auxiliary teaches students the value of patriotism and what it means to be Americans. Students (grades 3 to 12) explore the fundamental rights and freedoms, following a theme.

Current Theme: "Celebrating America's 250th Birthday and the Veterans who Fought for Our Freedom."

POPPY POSTER CONTEST: American Legion Auxiliary units sponsor poppy poster contests in local schools across the country for schools and youth groups. Seven classes of contestants are available.



FUN WAYS TO LEARN ABOUT OUR FLAG

The American Legion publishes comic and activity books about the U.S. flag, veterans and the founding values of our nation. Many items can be ordered in bulk at discounted prices for classrooms or youth groups.

I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE: Early readers will learn the meaning behind the Pledge and the freedoms it symbolizes.

LIGHT OF LIBERTY: Advanced elementary-age readers meet a Revolutionary War minuteman who tells how and why America achieved independence and the rights and responsibilities of all U.S. citizens.

OUR COUNTRY'S FLAG: Set on the 4th of July, preteens learn the story of our nation's colors and how to properly display the flag.

OUR COUNTRY'S VETERANS: As a veterans memorial is dedicated, young people learn from one who served the importance of protecting our freedoms.

RISE OF OUR FLAG: The epic story of our nation's flag is illustrated in a "graphic novel" format for teen and adult readers who discover the reason behind The American Legion's sacred ceremonies to retire U.S. flags when their useful days are over.

INDIVISIBLE: THE STORY OF OUR FLAG: A 116-page, photo-filled bookazine shows the complete story of our nation's flag. Also available are flag decals, pins, stick flags, copies of U.S. Flag Code and pocket-sized U.S. Constitutions and Declarations of Independence.

Order online at emblem.legion.org
Or call (888) 453-4466



For more information and how to participate visit legion.org/usa250 or scan the QR code





Make Note of these Important Dates on The American Legion Calendar

15 March	American Legion Birthday
25 March	Medal of Honor Day
27-29 March	Northeast Unofficial Gathering
29 March	National Vietnam Veterans Day
April 2026	Children and Youth Month
10-11 April	National Commander Clancy's Homecoming in NYC
25 April	American Legion Family Day
1-3 May	Spring NEC Meetings
08 May	V-E Day (1945)
16 May	Armed Forces Day



Join the SAL's annual crusade to place one million flags and honor our veterans throughout the year.

Log the flags you place at:
www.flyingflagsforheroes.com/

Legion.org—09 January 2026

Follow National Commander Clancy's Journey on Facebook

A new Facebook page will feature pictures and more from National Commander Clancy's year.

SAL National Commander Bill Clancy has embraced the importance of communication to SAL members and Legion Family for his year of service, including turning to social media to share highlights of his travels.

A Facebook page, "[On the Road with SAL National Commander Clancy](#)," will include photo galleries and other posts from Clancy's year as national commander.

Clancy expressed his gratitude to Detachment of New York Commander Joe Guidice for helping with the Facebook page.

"I hope that these visitation pics and all of the exciting events will inspire you and your family, friends, all Legion Family members, and everyone in your social circle to the core messages of 'Supporting ALL of our Country's Veterans,' 'Encouraging all of our Nation's Youth to be Good Citizens' and 'Challenging ALL Americans to Service to their Community, State & Nation,'" Clancy wrote.

The official national SAL Facebook page remains at www.Facebook.com/AmericanLegionSons. Follow both pages to keep up on news about the SAL and the rest of The American Legion Family.

Editor's Photo: National Commander Clancy at Arlington, March 2026



 Visit "[On the Road with SAL National Commander Clancy](#)"



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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.



Legion.org— 01 February 2026

Legion Family attend National Training to Learn, Network, and Lead

Indianapolis was the third city to host The American Legion’s National Regional Information Conference on Jan. 31, where Legionnaires in attendance represented 21 departments and Sons of The American Legion attendees represented 23 detachments.

The daylong training provided an opportunity for Legionnaires and Sons members to receive information on the Legion’s mission, programs and operations, and to connect with other Legion Family members in attendance. Legionnaires attended training on the Legion’s suicide prevention mission Be the One, legal, how to run an effective post meeting, post operations and programs, and membership retention.

Robert Phillips, a member of Post 478 in Varna, Ill., came to the conference with his wife who attended the American Legion Auxiliary training to learn how to start a unit.

“We came here to get updated on Legion information, meet other people and get some basic points of contact,” said Phillips, a charter member of Post 478. “We felt it was very important for us to reach out to these national events and learn more about the brick and mortar of a post.”

Ken Boyd of American Legion Post 528 in Alto, Mich., brought his wife, two sons and daughter, all Legion Family members who attended the training for the Sons and Auxiliary. The training for him was “really good,” he said. “I’m not yet an officer at my post,

but I’m learning so much on how to be an officer and an effective leader. The networking and learning the many different ways on how to communicate with your members has been helpful. Some people use WhatsApp, some people use Facebook, some use texting to communicate. You have to use them.”

Jeffry Boyd, son of Ken, attended Michigan Boys State last summer and attended the Sons training to get more involved. “We have a small post and we kind of wanted to come down here to learn more, specially my parents really wanted to come down here because they want to help lead our post,” said Jeffry, a Squadron 528 member. “I have a lot of notes from the conference so far. And I’m going to get more involved.”

The National Regional Information Confer-

ence is the first national Legion training and event that Bonnie Glaze, commander of American Legion Post 69 in Reading, Ohio, has attended. “I am very excited to be here. I wanted to learn more what the Legion does and what I can do to help be a better commander. At the post, we do a lot of the stuff I’ve learned but a few things we don’t. So it’s good to take back to the membership and our officers and let them know.”



Legion.org Photos: Shawn Davis (MN) of the National Membership Training and Development Committee conducts a seminar at the NRIC in Indianapolis. Inset: Sons from 32 different detachments participate in the training.



Bryan Hine (TN), National Vice Commander Southeast

Reflecting on my participation in the Atlanta NRIC

skills needed to enhance their service to our nation’s veterans and communities.

The conference bridged the gap between new members and seasoned SAL leaders, offering a comprehensive curriculum designed to sharpen operational skills. NVC Bryan Hine shared his enthusiasm for the program’s success:

“I commend both Shawn and JR for an outstanding job. The feedback highlights a uniquely interactive and personalized learning environment that resonated with everyone involved. Given the high caliber of this program, I believe attendance should be strongly encouraged for all current and prospective SAL leadership.”

On February 7, 2026, the Sons of The American Legion gathered at the Westin Atlanta Airport for a high-energy National Regional Information Conference. The day was dedicated to providing members with the critical



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Photo by Ginny Kropf: The Medina chapter of Sons of the American Legion donated \$2,000 to the Veterans' Van Service in Albion on Thursday. Presenting the check to Phyllis Schrader, chair of the Veterans' Van Service, and David Kusmierczak, president of the Joint Veterans Council, are, from left, Wayne Hale and Phil Rudnick, SAL members; and Scott Carlton, Medina SAL commander.

Ginny Kropf, Orleans Hub.com—20 February 2026

New York: Squadron donates \$2K towards new van for veterans

Maintaining a fleet of vans to provide free medical transportation to Orleans County veterans would likely be impossible without the support of many local organizations throughout the county.

One of these organizations is Sons of the American Legion, whose Medina chapter on Thursday morning donated \$2,000 to the Veterans' Van Service. Making the presentation to Phyllis Schrader, chair of the Veterans' Van Service, and David Kusmierczak, president of the Joint Veterans Council, were SAL commander Scott Carlton and members Wayne Hale and Phil Rudnick.

Carlton said the SAL hold various fundraisers throughout the year, enabling them to support programs for veterans, such as the Van Service. One such fundraiser is clam night, starting at 4 p.m. today, until sold out, at the American Legion on North Main Street in Medina.

"We've supported the Van Service for many years," Hale said. "This makes about \$8,000 we've donated over the years."

The Veterans Van Service has been in operation since 1997, an idea of local veteran, the late Jim Andre.

"Jim saw a need for such a service and the idea was developed by the late Frank Tower, then the Veterans' Services officer, and the late Frank Berger, a legislator and a veteran," Schrader said.

Initially, the service started Dec. 13, 1996 with a card table, a phone and one van, operating out of the county office building. The first year in operation they provided 5,184 hours of service by the all-volunteer drivers and office schedulers. They had driven 37,099 miles on the first van when a second one was acquired.

"We started with one driver and now we have 20 drivers and 10 office staff, all volunteers," Schrader said.

For years, the late Owen Toale of Medina shopped for suitable vans.

Has your Squadron's Photo appeared in The Millennium since last July?

[Submit it and get National Recognition!](#)

Have a great picture or video? Enter it in

Snapshots of Service and Videos of Service

Annual Contests **Deadline: June 30th**

Click to go to the applications on the national website's publications page





ANEC Mike Pook (WI), Staff Contributor to The Millennium
Freezin' for a Reason

In the Detachment of Wisconsin, Valentine's weekend isn't about roses, candy hearts, or romantic dinners and gifts of admiration.

Since 2020, it means sleeping out in a cardboard box on a couple of chilly Wisconsin wintery nights. We are "Freezin' for a Reason."

Now in its seventh year, squadrons within the Detachment of Wisconsin have had several homeless veterans camp outs to bring awareness the issues facing veterans who

are homeless and living day by day. The funds raised have helped the homeless get back on their feet, provide housing and training to get jobs and become self efficient. Part of the benefit is to collect clothing, household items and food, which has a monetary value, along with cash donations and local corporate matching funds. The local communities near these squadron locations get involved in many ways. Beyond supporting the cause, the local business' donate funds, items that can be raffled off, and volunteers to work and educate during the camp out. The squadrons with assistance from their Auxiliary units provide meals and



Mike Vozar Photo

bake sales for those who support the mission personally by sleeping outside for a night or two. The American Legion and even the American Legion Riders supports the mission by helping out and sleeping outside.

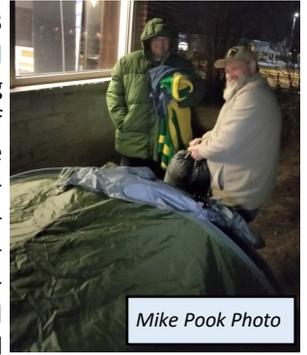
Hartland Squadron 294 just completed their 7th annual "Operation Homeless Veterans" encampment. National Sons of The American Legion Commander Bill Clancy, along with Detachment of Wisconsin Commander Chris Dannenmann, shared a cardboard box

for the Friday camp out. This event has a lasting impression where the Sons of The American Legion coordinates with the community for a successful event and fund raiser. Squadron 294 2nd Vice Commander Eric Remmick coordinated this years event. By the end of February, he estimates about 80K has come in, however more is still coming in. The Hartland Squadron 294 "Operation Homeless Veterans" event happens the second weekend of February, starting Friday afternoon and ending Sunday morning.

Another annual "Freezin for a Reason" encampment happened Saturday night February 14, about 60 miles to the north of Hartland. Fond du Lac Squadron 75 is on their third year for their two day and one night event to bring awareness to Homeless Veterans. Fond du Lac Squadron 75 starts out with a Saturday Night Spaghetti dinner in which the community attends, along with a Sunday morning Pancake Breakfast. In addition to the overnight camp out and community meals, the squadron has raffles. According to Fond du Lac Squadron 75 Commander Shawn McCrary, they brought in about \$12,5000 for our homeless veterans. The highlight of the Saturday night spaghetti dinner and social was the visit of National SAL Commander William Clancy along with Wisconsin Congressman Glenn Grothman, both in attendance and supporting "Freezin for a Reason"!

A week later, for the second time, District 2 of the American Legion Family hosted a "Freezin for a Reason" encampment. This time American Legion Post 457 in Mequon,

WI hosted. 13 people camped out including Detachment of Wisconsin Vice Commander Jeremy Mason, Detachment of Wisconsin Vice Commander David Hodgson, and



Mike Pook Photo

National Americanism Committee member and Squadron 75 Commander Shawn McCrary. Legion family members from six different posts camped out. In just one night and day, District 2 American Legion Family raised just under \$9,000. Coordinating the event for the 2nd District is dual member Joe Leone, who says donations are still coming in.

The reason why squadrons in the Detachment of Wisconsin started to fund raising for Homeless Veterans, was in 2019-20, the Detachment of Wisconsin, was Commander Robert C. Sirovina. His Commander's project was for Squadrons to donate \$100 towards his project. Hartland Squadron 294 donated \$500. Squadron 294 choose the month of February because that is one of the toughest months of the year for the homeless.

In the past seven years the following Detachment of Wisconsin squadrons hosted a homeless veteran camp out:

- Squadron 294, Hartland
- Squadron 209, Orfordville
- Squadron 52, La Crosse
- Squadron 75, Fond du Lac
- Squadron 278, Balsam Lake

District 2 of the American Legion Family, hosted by Squadron 522

The American Legion Family of Milwaukee County

Detachment of Wisconsin squadrons lead by example! Squadron members and elected officers believe in the mission as they themselves are willing to endure sleeping outside



Mike Pook Photo

in a cardboard box in "mid-winter" in Wisconsin!



Mike Pook Photo





Bill Towns (OH), Past National Historian and SAL 100 Committee

Squadron Records: Order or Chaos?

“Burn the records ... Destroy the records!”

Such has been the theme or rallying cry down through the pages of history from the Bolshevik anarchists to the draft board wreckers and research center bombers of the 60's and early 70's. This was their theme because they knew the importance of records to orderly process and effective management.

They knew that without records, chaos and confusion would reign. So, Squadron Commander and you, too, Adjutant, pause for a moment and consider the value of accurate and complete Squadron records. Without full and correct records, a Sons of The American Legion Squadron will also find itself in a chaotic state.

Insurance lapses. Gaming licenses expire. Members complain because their cards aren't issued promptly. District Commanders keep calling for reports that are late.

Nobody knows for sure whether the last dance made or lost money. Where did those proceeds get dispersed. Mail from the Detachment and National goes to the Commander of 2 years ago because no one has certified the current officers to Detachment headquarters. Members. Minutes. Money. These are the three areas in which every squadron must have basic records.

Membership Records. The Membership Roster each Squadron receives along with its preprinted membership cards at the beginning of the program year can, if kept up to date, provide essential information on each member year after year. Many Squadrons have more complete and flexible systems for maintaining records of their members, but the Membership Register can provide essential information — provided it shows when dues are paid, new members added, addresses changed, etc. Getting trained and utilizing the online membership tools in MyLegion.org, will enhance this ability and your efficiency in processing and maintaining accurate membership records.

Minutes. How many times have you heard an argument at a Squadron meeting that could have been resolved if someone had gone back to check the official record — or if there had been an official record to check?

At times the writing and reading of minutes might seem a needless ritual. But, without a record, every Squadron meeting is as though it were the first meeting. Every new Squadron officer is on his own without the guidance of the past. New projects are in danger of being overlooked, and old mistakes are repeated. With more than 90 years of history now behind The Sons of The American Legion, it becomes increasingly important to see that minutes are preserved. Your Squadron might want to consider having a laptop and an inexpensive digital scanner to copy all minutes and store documents, to be electronically filed away for easier future access. A copy stored on an external hard drive updated regularly so that, in case of fire or other loss, copies of the records would still be available.

Money: The casual handling of Squadron funds is a quick and easy route to major difficulties. A Squadron finance officer who has a healthy respect for the need to account for funds down to the penny and for maintaining complete, accurate, and audited records of all receipts and disbursements is a real asset to any Squadron and for the sake of your own successful year. Commander, and for the member who must follow you in the office, be sure that adequate records are maintained and passed on to your successor.

Author's Note: The above article was found researching information for the 100th Anniversary Sons of The American Legion Celebration in a file copy of a Post Commanders and Adjutants Newsletter “The Advance dated 1989”. Although it has been updated and edited for Squadrons the theme remains the same. Accurate record keeping is vital for historical research and continued growth.

Legion.org—08 February 2026

2025 Americanism Numbers Show Impact and Growth

The 2025 American Legion By-the-Numbers report for Americanism highlights the organization's commitment to youth. This is visible through youth program participation numbers and growth, amount awarded in scholarships, flag activities, veteran family financial support and more.

In 2025, the American Legion Boys State and Oratorical Contest programs saw growth from 2024. Boys State grew by 662 rising high school seniors and Oratorical grew by nearly 3,000 orators across 50 departments.

[Download the full report here.](#) Numbers below are from the 2024-2025 American Legion Consolidated Post Report. Among the highlights:

Legion Baseball – 52,308 youth from 2,906 teams played, representing 50 American Legion departments, Canada and Puerto Rico.

Boys State – 14,047 rising high school seniors participated in 50 American Legion Boys State programs.

Oratorical Contest – 9,370 youth participated at the post level.

Scholarships – 760 students were awarded over \$2.3 million in academic scholarships from the national level.

Scouting – 2,547 Scouting units are chartered by Legion Family across the nation.

Youth Cadet Law Enforcement – 22 American Legion departments have an established program.

Old Glory – 4,394 Flag Day activities were conducted by posts.

Get Out the Vote – 1,350 activities were conducted.

Citizenship – 380 citizenship and naturalization activities were supported by posts.

TFA – 69 minor children of 34 eligible veterans in 19 states received an American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance grant to help support the children's basic needs of food, shelter, utilities and clothing.

CWF – \$851,542 in American Legion Child Well-being Foundation grants were awarded to nine nonprofits.

**SONS OF THE
AMERICAN
LEGION**

Online Renewal QR Code





**Jesse Figueroa (PR),
Post 140 Dual Member**

I am a Son

I am a member of the Sons of The American Legion (S.A.L.) because my membership is a living tribute. Every time I attend a meeting or volunteer at a post event, I am carrying forward the legacy of my Great-Grandfather Ignacio Ramos, who served in the US Army during World War I.

Being a Son isn't just about honoring the dead; it's about standing in the gap for the living. It's a way to ensure that the sacrifices made by my family—and millions of others—are never relegated to the dusty pages of a history book. We are the keepers of the flame.

The Mission: Service Beyond the Self: Beyond heritage, I am a member because of the Four Pillars of The American Legion. Whether we are raising money for the Child Welfare Foundation, assisting veterans at a local VA hospital, advocating in the transportation and aviation industries, or supporting Boys State, the S.A.L. provides a structured way to give back to my community.

In a world that often feels divided, the S.A.L. offers a common ground built on:

- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation - Ensuring those who served have a hand to hold.
- Americanism - Promoting a deep, bipartisan love for our country and its symbols.
- Children & Youth - Investing in the next generation of leaders.
- The Brotherhood: A Family of Choice

Finally, I am a member because of the camaraderie. There is a unique bond between Sons. We understand the weight of the "Blue Cap." We share a shorthand of respect, duty, and shared history that is hard to find elsewhere. At the Post, I'm not just a volunteer; I'm part of a multi-generational family dedicated to something larger than us.

Looking Forward: I wear my cap with pride because I know that the S.A.L. is the future of the Legion family. By being an active member, I am helping to ensure that the "Devotion to Mutual Helpfulness" remains a cornerstone of American life for the next century.

Figueroa is a dual member with The American Legion, based on his service in the US Army on active duty via deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was honorably discharged since 9 July 2004.

**Travis Thayer, Eagle Country 99.3 FM—11
February 2026**

Indiana: Squadron makes Donations to Community Organizations

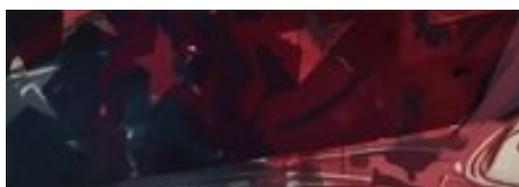
Sons of The American Legion from Squadron 292 (Dillsboro, IN) made recent donations to the Dillsboro Elementary PTO, the Dillsboro Community Food Pantry, Dillsboro Main Street, Aurora EMS, and the Dearborn County Clearinghouse.

The Dillsboro Sons of The American Legion distribute \$2,500 each year in donations and scholarships, supporting local organizations.

These contributions provide meaningful support for community events such as the PTO Carnival and the Dillsboro Easter Egg Hunt, while also helping the Food Pantry and The Clearinghouse meet the ongoing needs of families in our area.

In addition, the SAL proudly supports Aurora EMS, which provides vital emergency services to the Dillsboro community.

Photo by Dillsboro Main Street; Left to Right— SAL Commander Doug Kinnett, PTO President Trisha Caldwell, PTO Treasurer Mia Hofstetter, and Doug Baker SAL Treasurer and District 3 Dearborn County Council member.



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

THE MILLENNIUM

Have some news to share?

Monthly deadline is the 25th

Email us at rusty.myers@ymail.com

SPOTTED BY A SON

In February's newsletter, we asked if you could find the image of the Capitol Building. The Millennium went out on 11 February, and by 10:25am we had a winner...



Charlie Sullivan
Squadron 105
Phoenix, Arizona

Sullivan has belonged to Squadron 105 since 2019, and served as squadron adjutant, ALR Chapter 105 vice director and director for 4 years.

At the state level, he has been Detachment Vice Commander for 1 and-a-half years, planning on serving for one more term before he runs for Detachment Commander.

He is eligible for membership through his father who served in the US Air Force from 1973 to 1979, as a Missile Systems Analyst Technician stationed at Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota assigned to the 44 Strategic Missile Wing. He is pictured above with wife Charlotte.

2025-26 Membership Target Dates

08 April 2026	90%
13 May 2026	100%
29 July 2026*	105%

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



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

Butch's Bullet Points

February; the month of Love, Presidential birthdays, and this year the 2026 edition of the Winter Olympics!

Once every four years, the Summer and Winter Olympics place on the world's stage numerous examples of how, if an individual really wants to excel; it is going to take years of practice and drive to earn an Olympic Medal!

The same goes for the Sons of The American Legion and our annual drive to reach our goals in membership!

Higher membership means stronger advocacy. SAL members play an important role in supporting veterans' rights and benefits, disability access, healthcare funding, and national security initiatives. Our voice grows as we do.

By recruiting more members, we amplify the power to influence legislation and public awareness. Members are advocates in their communities, helping veterans receive the care and respect they deserve.

Participation in SAL means standing with America's heroes—providing practical support and a powerful voice when it's needed most. Every recruit strengthens this vital cause. This is even more important as we prepare for the annual American Legion Washington Conference where we get to see first hand how our combined voices make an impact!

The SAL welcomes men and boys of all backgrounds and ages—from young patriots just starting out to seasoned veterans' sons—and all bring something valuable to the table.

Just like in the Olympics; "The strength of the team is each member. The strength of each member is the team." - Unknown

"If recruiting one member is great, recruiting five is an Olympic Gold Medal!" (And you can earn an Individual Recruitment Award Pin!) The Olympics and numbers go hand in hand—turn recruiting into a fun competition with Olympic -themed challenges or prizes.

Use recruitment math humor to lighten the pressure and boost enthusiasm. Create charts tracking squadron progress and cele-

brate "Medal Counts" with prizes or recognition. This approach makes numbers feel attainable and exciting.

Friendly competition also builds camaraderie and spirit, helping members stay engaged and motivated for the long haul.

Our recent membership report says it all. To the time of this report, we the Sons of The American Legion have not missed reaching our targeted goals by their due dates! In fact 28 of our detachments have reached the target goal for the month of March as well as 4 of our 5 regions over a 4 weeks in advance! As of the February 16, 2026 membership report, we stand at 81.80% of our goal with a total membership of 334,744. Even better, our retention percentage is at 74.91%, which puts both percentages ahead of this time last year! My friends, Please keep up the GREAT work you are doing!

"In the end I know it's going to be worth it! I'm not there yet, but I'm closer than I was yesterday!" - Olympic Soccer Player Alex Morgan

Membership growth fuels all American Legion Family projects—from local community service and youth mentoring to national advocacy and VA hospital volunteering.

Show potential members how every contribution, big or small, feeds into these important projects. New members bring fresh energy and skills that help us go further than ever before.

Every Olympian begins with a dream — but it's their relentless drive, their teamwork, and their pride in representing their country, something greater than themselves that turns those dreams into victory.

The Sons of The American Legion share that same spirit! Our race is one of dedication, service, and brotherhood. Each new member we bring in, each goal we reach, strengthens the legacy we carry and honors the heroes who came before us.

"Winning doesn't always mean being first. Winning means you're doing better than you've ever done before." – Bonnie Blair, Olympic Speed Skater

So let's aim high, push harder, and keep our eyes on the gold! Together, we can make this a record-breaking year — forging a legacy of pride, strength, and unity for the American Legion Family.




NEXT MEETING MARCH 17, 2026

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

MARCH 2026
NEXT TARGET DATE: MARCH 11 – 80%

 RENEW ONLINE: [LEGION.ORG/SAL-RENEW](https://legion.org/sal-renew)


SQUADRON COMMANDER OF THE YEAR

Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a member in good standing (current dues paid)
- Hold the office of **Squadron Commander** at time of nomination
- **Demonstrate leadership** through action & involvement in squadron activities that benefit his community
- **Must obtain 100%** squadron membership or greater by **March 15** (*American Legion Birthday*)

Nomination Guidelines:

- Must be submitted by the Detachment Adjutant
- Must be received at **National Headquarters** 30 days prior to the opening of the Spring National Executive Committee Meetings
- **Only one** (1) nomination per Detachment may be submitted



SQUADRON DATA REPORTS (SDRs)

- **MARCH:**
 - Pre-printed Squadron Data Reports are shipped to all Departments
- **April 9, 2026:**
 - Completed SDRs must be forwarded to Detachment Headquarters
- **May 1, 2026:**
 - All SDRs must be received at **National Headquarters** (for processing before printing the first 2027 Renewal Notices)

Reminder:

A squadron does **not** need to submit an SDR if the pre-printed information is correct and no changes are required.

Submit to: PostSqdnUpdates@legion.org



EXPIRED MEMBERS

2025 membership cards are now expired.

Squadrons are encouraged to:

- Review rosters for members who have not renewed
- Contact expired members by phone, email, or in person
- Assist members with renewal at legion.org/sal-renew



MEMBER DEMOGRAPHICS & CONTACT INFORMATION

Accurate member information supports:

- Renewal notices
- Program communications
- Emergency & administrative outreach

Squadrons are encouraged to:

- Collect **telephone** numbers and email addresses
- Verify accuracy during renewals



SONS ON SOCIAL

THE SAL ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Squadron 141 (Howell, MI) have continued Bob Beck's Wild Game Dinner and raised \$17,000 for the Fisher House this year. Present during the check presentation were the volunteers that put on the dinner, Melissa Beck and representatives from the Fisher House.



Martin Widmer (NJ-286) spending the day with 104-year old WWII Veteran Tim Kiniry. He is from Minotola, NJ; having served in the US Army from 1942-1945. Tim was a medic at the Battle of the Bulge and at other European Theatre battles where his group treated thousands of prisoners in field hospitals located just behind battle lines. Tim treated prisoners at the Buchenwald Concentration Camp shortly after it was liberated.



The 4th Area of California Mid Winter Meeting



NVC Chris Casey (NE) handing a challenge coin to one of our young Sons.



At the North Carolina Mid-Winter Conference, PDC Gene Bellando, left, accepting a Dogwood 100% streamer



Matt Griffis (AZ) with Tommy Linquist, 17, a young man working his Eagle project for his Eagle Scout Badge. The project will be restoring the Veterans Purple Heart parking spaces located at American Legion Post 91 (Chandler, AZ). Tommy was presented with an ALLECA challenge coin for his efforts and dedication supporting veterans. ALLECA Director Griffis explained the ALLECA program, and Tommy will be signing up to attend ALLECA Class 2026.



Squadron 135 (Perryville, MD) donates \$1,000 to VA Maryland Health Care System's holiday account.



Kevin Baker (TX), Detachment Americanism Chairman supporting the Four Pillars Challenge by donating blood. [The national award application is available on pages 15 and 16 of the January Millennium \(click here\)](#)—and asks squadrons to show their commitment to The Four Pillars of Veterans Affairs, Americanism, National Security, and Children and Youth.



SAL members in South Dakota who have recruited a new American Legion member wore their 2025-2026 Recruitment Polos to the Go-Getters Banquet.





SONS ON SOCIAL
THE SAL ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Florida's Bill Kelly at the National Legislative Meetings at the Washington Conference



The Sons of South Dakota hold an in-person American Legion Basic Training session in February.



Squadron 181 (Bucyrus, OH) making a \$1,000 donation to Doug's Kids Memorial Fund, which financially assists kids in participating in extracurricular activities.



Squadron 116 (Fuquay Varina, NC) handing out awards to the winners of their annual SAL Soup Cook-off Competition.



Squadron 294 Commander Mark Pape (Hartland, WI) presents Tom Blanton with a Certificate of Appreciation from American Legion Post 294 for all the hard work and Good Will he provides to the Post.



Squadron 323 (Watsontown, PA) ran a Chicken BBQ, making it possible to donate \$2,000 to Ronald McDonald House Danville.

Below: A great turnout at a general meeting of Squadron 16 (Laurel, MD)



Squadron 298 Commander Jon Trimble (Marion, IA) receiving recognition for the 2025 Legacy Run benefiting VCF.

Squadron 927 (Green Island, NY) cooking for their Chicken Parm Dinner



Training Candidate for National Commander Mike Monserud visits Post 285 (Parkersburg, IA)



Brett Anderson (SD), Sergeant-at-Arms Lake Preston Post 63

Heroes of the Court

If you ever drive through the small towns of the Midwest, you'll notice three universal truths: a church that welcomes all with open arms, a deep love for the local school district, and an American Legion post. A member of the Lake Preston City Council once said, "There are two things you don't mess with in this town—God and the American Legion." It's incredible how everything seems to come together.

This past summer, the Lake Preston School District began a major remodeling project on its gymnasium. The community rallied behind the district with overwhelming support. I remember going to the very next Legion meeting with excitement, eager to see our post raise money for the school. At our joint February meeting with the Sons of the American Legion, I shared the district's plan to raise funds for the remodel. What followed was one of the more difficult, and enjoyable fundraisers I've ever been a part of.

Rather than focusing on our local post, we decided to find a way to recognize and educate the community about our veterans who didn't make it home. We named the fundraiser "Heroes of the Court." A town with fewer than 600 people has nine heroes who were killed in action—nine men, most of them Lake Preston High School graduates, who didn't return home.

The next challenge was telling the story of these nine brave men. Our two most recent losses were from Vietnam, and many local Legion and community members still remembered Gary and Curtis. Gary was killed by a mine after just 32 days in-country. Curtis, was a helicopter pilot. He saved hundreds of lives by stopping a Vietcong ambush. Unfortunately, he wasn't able to avoid the enemies' anti-aircraft cannons.

The real difficulty came when we turned to the other seven men, all of whom were lost in WWII—more than 80 years ago. Of these seven, only one had a family member who could remember him—his younger brother, now well into his 90s. The rest were known only through old newspaper articles, stories passed down through generations, and sometimes, if I was lucky, letters written home—letters to a little brother, or to a

mother. Every one of those letters stirred something deep inside me.

Porter was killed during the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. His son was born seven months later, and Porter's remains were returned to Lake Preston in 2018. Clarence, or Leroy as he preferred, was a flight engineer on a B-17. His plane collided mid-air with another B-17, and the munitions detonated. Leroy left behind a nine-month-old son he never met. Dennis jumped on a grenade to save two of his fellow soldiers. The two men in his bunker saw the end of the war. John's plane was lost at sea, and no remains were ever found. We couldn't even find a picture of him. Norman worked in a surgical unit in Australia. The horrors he witnessed—wounded soldiers coming into his hospital—are unimaginable. Shortly after being transferred to a mobile unit, he was reported "lost in battle." Six weeks later, the Army found him. Howard, a man who graduated high school in 1931, lived as a ghost for a decade, working hard and sending money home to support his family and farm. He was killed in Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge. His family still owns the farm because of him. And Douglas, a young 19-year-old, was killed the day before Corregidor was secured in the Philippines.

This is just a brief overview, but their stories are incredible. It was an honor to research them and share their memories with the public.

We began our fundraiser in September with the goal of raising money for a mural to be placed in the high school gym. Any funds raised beyond that would be donated to the

school. With the school's help, we found a company that could bring our vision to life. Someone suggested, "Let's place their names around the flag, and below it." After a few tweaks, we finalized the design. Then we received one more piece of advice from a former local who truly loved our idea: "Make sure you leave a blank spot up there. You never know what the future might bring."

This project became bigger than just our small town of Lake Preston. The mural behind the flag cost around \$2,800 and we easily exceeded our fundraising goal. We held a large ceremony to unveil it during the first home basketball game of the season. The gym was packed for a double-header, and the turnout was incredible—nearly 30 American Legion members, 30 Sons of the American Legion, past State Commanders, the current State Vice Commander, a National Committeeman, high school SAL members, family members of the fallen, and veterans who proudly saluted their long-lost brothers. It was the perfect way for the school to wrap up its gym remodel.

One thing I learned through this experience is how easy it is for history to be forgotten. I wrote each of their stories as though they were friends of mine. This was a unique fundraiser to be a part of. It's my hope that it will inspire other towns to remember their veterans who didn't make it home. It's a responsibility we all share. Millions of veterans' stories are fading with time, making them harder to research and tell. In Lake Preston, we honored our nine. I look forward to hearing about yours.



Peter De Angelis (NY) Facebook Photo: Sons from across the nation on the bus in Washington, DC on the way to visit with their congressional representatives. Legion Family members meet throughout the week of the Washington Conference with their lawmakers to advocate on behalf of our veterans. The week concludes with the National Commander testifying before a joint hearing of the Committee on Veterans Affairs. **Be The One!**



legion.org—18 February 2026

Communication Key to SAL Membership Growth

If there's one key to success in growing membership in the Sons of The American Legion, it's communication.

"If there's one thing I can suggest that aids in membership growth, it's communicate, communicate, communicate," said Detachment of South Carolina Adjutant Danny Rollins.

His response echoed the sentiments of Detachment of South Dakota Commander Wyatt Reis, who said "communication is key" in his detachment's growth.



South Carolina and South Dakota were among the 25 detachments who ended 2025 with new highs in SAL membership, part of a year in which the SAL as a whole set a new membership record for the third consecutive year. There were 404,941 members of the SAL at the end of 2025.

The Detachment of South Carolina finished 2025 with 1,886 members, a 10% increase over 2024 and a 25.6% increase since 2022.

"In the past four or five years, we've really gotten together and made an emphasis to contact all the squadrons, their commanders and their adjutants, and explain what's going on, tell them where we're going, and it has helped them advertise their programs," said Rollins, who served as detachment commander from 2021-23. "It's brought people in; the Sons of The American Legion, their name is getting out there. And people are coming to us to ask us about joining."

Likewise with the Detachment of South Dakota, where Reis said "it's been a team effort" to grow membership.

"All of our detachment officers have just been really gung-ho about growing the Sons in South Dakota," Reis said. "There's been a lot of excitement as we've gotten the word out. A lot of it's just going up to people and just asking the question, 'Are you interested in being a Sons member?' and explaining to them the reason and the 'why' you should

be. People just are super receptive to it and it keeps snowballing; they're telling their friends and buddies."

The Detachment of South Dakota finished 2025 with 2,284 members, a 15.9% increase over 2024 — second in growth only to the Detachment of Oklahoma (19.2%) among detachments setting membership records last year.

Both Reis and Rollins emphasized the importance of squadrons being active in their communities as another way to help membership growth.

"Absolutely the communities are the biggest part of this," Reis said. "Some of the things that we like to do ... we'll go into the schools and pay some delinquent lunch accounts, we're doing flag education in the schools, getting our youth involved in the communities with getting them involved in the honor guards and color guards. ... Giving them that education on why you have to give the flag that respect. Our communities across the state have just been excellent in supporting all our squadrons."

Rollins said, "Community outreach is vitally important to each squadron. Getting involved with the community and getting information out on who we are and that we are here to support all veterans and their families as well as the community."

But, Reis noted, it's OK that not every SAL member is "gung-ho."

"We would like everyone to be 100 percent active, but that's not how it works," Reis said. "We have three (types of) members in the Sons of The American Legion: we have the gung-ho, live-breathe-eat-sleep; we have the members that make a meeting here and there; and we have the members,

they have a young family, work just doesn't associate with our meeting times, or they may not live close to the squadron ... but all three of those are equally important to the common cause of the Sons of The American Legion.

"You being a member is huge."

Ultimately, it's the SAL's support of veterans that matters most.

Over the past few years, Rollins and the detachment commander have attended American Legion district meetings where they've been able to remind posts about the benefits of having an SAL squadron.

"We can expand on that (information for posts that do have squadrons)," Rollins said.

"This isn't about you as a member. You're honoring your veteran's service. Selfless service; you have to keep that in the back of your mind," Reis said.

"When you wear that blue cap, that's your veteran's blue cap that you're wearing."

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

New members are the lifeline of the organization. It is up to the existing members to make the new members feel welcome. Invite them to other Post functions. Sit with them and get to know them. Introduce them to members of the Legion family, so other personal connections can start up. Once a new member feels that connection, you'll see him coming back. There is always a need for assistance in volunteerism and leadership, who knows, they just be the next you!

Facebook Photo: New Squadron 166 (CA) Members being initiated, August 2025



SONS OF THE
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 LEGION **THE MILLENNIUM**

A newsletter of Sons of The American Legion

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



Postage
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To:

This Month, On The Back Cover

GEAR UP!



MERCH STORE

America's 250th anniversary is on the horizon—and we're celebrating early with our [USA 250 Pop-Up Shop](#), featuring exclusive, limited-time merchandise designed to honor our nation's history and those who served. Store closes on the 4th of July.

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!

This month—search for the poppy in this month's newsletter!

