



FOCUS

Taking A Closer Look



Volume 17, Issue 1 March 2026

Detachment Officers

- Detachment Commander – Tyler Vanice
- Detachment Vice Commander— Jay Rarick
- Detachment Vice Commander—Timothy Fincher
- Detachment Vice Commander— Ted Kilby
- Detachment NEC—Jeff Lee
- Detachment Alt-NEC— David Boggs
- Detachment Adjutant— Kevin Chaplin
- Detachment Asst Adjutant— Scott Williams
- Detachment Finance Officer— Archie Scott
- Detachment Chaplain— Robert Wilson, Sr.
- Detachment Sgt At Arms- David Burnum

Inside This Issue

Commander's Corner	2
Adjutant's Blog	2
Detachment Accomplishments	6
National Accomplishments	7
Member Data	4
Squadron CSRs	8-10
Squadron Everlasting	15

Washington Conference 2026



The 2026 Washington Conference had 4 people from Virginia at the wreath laying ceremonies on March 1. Past Detachment Commander Kevin Chaplin, NEC Jeff Lee, Past National Vice Commander Linwood Moore and Candidate for American Legion Auxiliary President, Lisa Chaplin were in attendance from Virginia. Wreaths were laid at the World War I Memorial, Vietnam Wall, Korean War Memorial, Iwo Jima Memorial, and the Tomb of The Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery.

From the American Legion Website—'Teaching The Future To Celebrate The Past'

With the World War II Memorial closed for a construction project to modernize the memorial's lighting and fountains, the schedule for Sunday's annual Sons of The American Legion-led wreath laying in conjunction with the Washington Conference was different than years past. **Continued Page 3**

About This Issue

This is the first issue of the 2025-26 Year for the Detachment of Virginia. There will only be 2 issues of The Focus for this year.

This issue covers the SAL Wreath Laying Ceremonies at the Washington Conference on March 1.

There are a couple of articles in this issue about the importance of Member Engagement and the Squadron Consolidated Report Form. Both are lengthy articles but are really worthwhile. We hope you will take these suggestions in use some of them at your Squadron.

There is a brief article on the importance of Member Data and how that impacts how well a Squadron functions.

There are pictures in this issue from various Detachment Activities. We would like to hear from you!!

Commander's Corner—Tyler Vanice



The American Legion year is already over can you believe it? Around this time every year, I find it meaningful to look back on our goals and reflect on what we have accomplished together.

My theme for the year is Honoring America's History. As we approach our nation's 250th anniversary, this is a moment that calls on us not only to reflect on where we have been, but also to consider how we help shape the future. As someone who manages a museum dedicated to George Washington, this theme is especially close to my heart. I encourage every member to get engaged in their community by attending at least one Virginia250 event this year. Every squadron should be willing to help, aid, and assist in this semi quincentennial celebration, especially when events are hosted by an American Legion post in your district. Get out there and be engaged. Join your local parade, support a ceremony, volunteer; do anything but nothing.

I would also like to highlight this year's Commander's Project, Willing Warriors. Willing Warriors is a Virginia-based nonprofit that provides cost-free housing and support services to wounded, ill, and injured service members and their families while they receive medical care. Their mission directly reflects the values of the American Legion Family, taking care of our own and supporting those who have borne the cost of service. I encourage every Squadron to find a way to support this worthy cause through fundraising, awareness, or volunteer efforts. **Continued on Page 5**

Adjutant's Blog—Kevin Chaplin



How many of you reading this article are responsible for taking minutes for your Post, Squadron, or District meetings? Do you also find yourself taking notes for work meetings? As the Detachment Adjutant, I am tasked with taking minutes, preparing meeting summaries, and distributing them to all attendees. I can tell you from experience that taking and preparing minutes is often a thankless chore—and one I personally dread. It must be done because it is important work, but I still dislike the amount of time and effort it requires.

I have recently found a valuable tool that can make summarizing meeting notes and turning them into ready-to-distribute minutes much easier. I am talking about using AI, or Artificial Intelligence. I purchased a device from Plaud.ai that records the audio of meetings and phone calls, then provides an audio recording, transcript, highlights, and summary. The transcripts and summaries are very accurate. In most cases, I only need to spend a few minutes identifying and labeling speakers and reviewing the content for accuracy.

You do not need to purchase a dedicated device to use this technology. You can record a meeting on your phone and upload the recording to ChatGPT, Grok, or another AI model and request a summary. For me, the Plaud device simplifies the process, and its meeting summary templates make the workflow very efficient. Do not be afraid to try this new technology—it has been a significant time saver for me, and it can be for you as well. Feel free to reach out if you would like more information. **Continued on Page 5**



Washington Conference 2026—Cont. from page 1

But it gave the SAL and other members of the Legion Family the chance to visit the World War I Memorial instead — a fitting way to begin the day, SAL National Commander Bill Clancy said.

“Our organization was founded in 1932, it was founded by men from World War I. ... We’re fulfilling that mission laid out by those World War I veterans,” Clancy said.

Four busloads of Legion Family, as well as this year’s Samsung American Legion Scholarship recipients, circled around the D.C. area Sunday to place wreaths at the World War I Memorial, the Vietnam Wall, the Korean War Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, and the Iwo Jima Memorial.

Detachment of Indiana Alternate NEC Jimmy Martin has a flag tattooed on his arm to commemorate his grandfather’s service in World War II. Even without the opportunity to visit that war’s memorial, he was moved by the day.

“When you get here, you get cold chills. It’s great to see this many people show up,” Martin said.

Chris Herndon, commander of the Detachment of the District of Columbia, enjoyed welcoming the Legion Family to the nation’s capital.

“We love (having them here) because we can share successes with different engagements, with veterans and their families. We can also learn from each other ... about new methods of engaging with veterans on veterans’ issues, and of course their families,” Herndon said.

Detachment of Colorado Commander Rob Barry said, “It’s a great honor to just place wreaths and do things that we can constantly do to never forget.”

Clancy, whose own sons were unable to attend the conference due to school commitments, invited other young SAL members to join him in placing wreaths at the memorials. That included Detachment of Nebraska Sergeant-at-Arms Liam Casey and Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Kolten Kramer and Detachment of South Dakota Americanism Officer A.J. Lutt to accompany him at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

“I think getting young people involved is always so key,” Clancy said. “It ingrains the idea in people that it’s not just us doing it, it’s about teaching young people good values, teaching them to think about where we live, why we live in such a great place.”

Clancy said the Washington Conference is a great opportunity to have the entire family participate in the process.

“Seeing the monuments, seeing Congress, bringing kids up to do lobbying, which is phenomenal not just for me but it wakes up the politicians when they see young people in the doors. Taking in the sights; Washington has a vibe unlike any other city in the country, because it’s our nation’s capital, it’s where we all come together as a democracy to try to do what’s right always.

“I’d encourage anyone in the American Legion Family and even guests and friends of, to try to make this trip every year and bring kids. Take it all in and let them experience our country’s culture,” Clancy said.

Many of the SAL members were looking forward to supporting veterans through their visits to Capitol Hill.

“I’m looking forward to talking to some of the legislators and help get some of these bills passed,” Martin said.

<https://www.legion.org/information-center/news/washington-conference/2026/march/teaching-the-future-to-celebrate-the-past>

Article from the American Legion National Website written by Andy Proffet



Importance of Member Data

As a Squadron, have you asked the question ‘How can we support our Post more effectively?’ or ‘Do we have any members who would qualify for a scholarship award?’ or ‘Do we have any members who would qualify to participate in the 5-Star or 10-Ideals programs? The answers to these questions rests in your membership rosters.

The Squadron Membership Roster is key to doing many activities and fostering your squadron’s membership. Recently, we posted some information on the Detachment Website on Squadron Activities, Mentoring New Members, and Squadron Buddy Checks.

The key to these items is having accurate, member data-phone numbers, email addresses, and birthdates.

Why are Phone Numbers and Email Addresses important? These provide ways to maintain contact with your members with updates on Squadron Meetings, various Squadron activities and events, and Post events and activities where Squadron members can support.

This information can also be used to do ‘Squadron Buddy Checks’. Given the difficult times we are in, it is always a great idea to check in with Squadron members who have not been seen at the post or doing a general check in to see how they are doing. We need to do more of this which shows we genuinely care about our Squadron Members.

Why are Birthdates important? We can acknowledge our members birthdays. This is useful to set up a Paid Up For Life Membership Program for Son’s members. This information can also be used for determining if your Squadron has members to participate in a Junior Shooting Program, 5-Star or 10 Ideals program, or if you have any who would qualify for the many Scholarship opportunities available to Son’s members.

Next Steps:

1. When signing up a new member—please make sure you get their phone number, email address, and birthdate.
2. Verify the phone number, email address, and birthdate when processing a renewal.

Scott Williams-editor The Focus



**2025 - 2026
SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
SCHEDULE**



CUT-OFF DATE

RENEWAL MAIL DATE

1st NOTICE:

SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

SEPT 27 - OCT 3, 2025

2nd NOTICE:

FEBRUARY 11, 2026

FEB 21 - 28, 2026

3rd NOTICE:

APRIL 8, 2026

APRIL 25 - 30, 2026

Commander's Corner—Cont. from page 2

Together, we can make a meaningful impact for our veterans and their families while reinforcing our commitment to service beyond words. You can learn more about them by visiting www.willingwarriors.org.

Please remind your squadron that the Detachment is requesting a copy of your squadron's bylaws. Bylaws are important because they provide clear structure and accountability for the organization. They define how the Squadron operates, outline the duties of officers, ensure fair and transparent decision-making, and protect both members and leadership by establishing agreed-upon rules that outlast any single term of office. Most importantly, bylaws help ensure the Squadron remains compliant with Sons of The American Legion, Department, and Post requirements while preserving the Squadron's mission and long-term stability.

Please email a copy of your bylaws to our Detachment Adjutant at Adjutant@vasons.org. If your squadron does not currently have bylaws, there is no better time than now to put these core guiding documents in place. A template is available on our website to help you get started.

Finally, I want to remind every squadron that our lifeblood is our membership. While we have done well for many years bringing in new members, retention remains a challenge. I ask you to do a buddy check. You never know what someone may be going through, and a simple phone call or message can make a meaningful difference. **Tyler Vanice, Detachment Commander, Virginia**

Adjutant's Blog—Cont. from page 2

We will be sending out the Consolidated Squadron Report in a few weeks. This report documents all volunteer hours and monetary donations made in support of The American Legion programs and your local community. It is critical that every Squadron submit this report to either the Commander or the Adjutant. This information is used by The American Legion National Commander when testifying before Congress, and it demonstrates the immense value the American Legion family provides to our Veterans, children and youth, communities, and Nation.

Last year, the Detachment of Virginia donated \$340,513 and volunteered 76,639 hours. With each volunteer hour valued at \$34.79, that equates to \$2,666,271 in donated time. Combined with monetary donations, Virginia SAL volunteers contributed a total of \$3,006,784. We achieved this with only 48% of active Squadrons reporting. Please ensure your Squadron submits a report this year so we can accurately reflect the great work being done.

Please remember to submit your SAL Officers Report after electing new officers this year. These forms can be found on our website at <https://vasons.org/> under Resources – Forms and Manuals. We need this information to ensure effective communication with your Squadron. We will also update the National Membership Portal, MyLegion.org, with this information. Once updated, the new Commander and Adjutant will gain access to the membership processing section of MyLegion.org. Please submit this form even if there are no changes.

Finally, a reminder regarding forms: the Squadron Data Report (SDR) only needs to be submitted if there is a change to your dues, meeting time, or meeting location. If nothing has changed from last year, no submission is required. **Kevin Chaplin, Detachment Adjutant, Virginia**



Sons of The American Legion
Accomplishments



June 1, 2024 to May 31, 2025
for

DETACHMENT OF Virginia

Overall Totals	
Dollars Donated	\$ 314,292
Hours Volunteered	67,971
Value of One Vol. Hour*	\$29.95
Volunteer Hours Value	\$ 2,035,716
Total Volunteer Value	\$ 2,350,008

Pillar	Donations	Hours	Hours Value*
Americanism	\$170,070	38,061	\$ 1,139,927
Children & Youth	\$21,880	4,155	\$ 124,427
Vets Affairs & Rehab.	\$65,799	9,004	\$ 269,655
Vets Employ & Edu.	\$7,593	4,297	\$ 128,695
Internal Affairs	\$48,950	12,455	\$ 373,012

Americanism	
<i>Boys State / Girls State</i>	with \$8,906 in Donations to Boys State / Girls State 400 Hours of Participation
<i>Legion Ed. Programs</i>	with \$64 in Donations to 5-Star / 10-Ideals Progs. 3 Hours of Participation
<i>Flag Programs</i>	with \$1,660 in Donations to Flags Presented (All) 1,671 Hours of Participation 1,390 Flags Presented (All Sizes / Events)
<i>Flag Education</i>	with \$1,626 in Donations to Flag Education Progs. 174 Hours of Participation
<i>Other Ed. Programs</i>	with \$10,073 in Donations to Scholarships Awarded 552 Hours of Participation
<i>Oratorical Contest</i>	with \$71 in Donations to Oratorical Contest 16 Hours of Participation
<i>Color Guard</i>	with \$573 in Donations to Color Guard 504 Hours of Participation
<i>Community Service</i>	with \$87,168 in Donations to Other Organizations 20,139 Hours of Participation
<i>Scouting</i>	with \$10,034 in Donations to Scouting 5,324 Hours of Participation
<i>Jr. Shooting Sports</i>	with \$5,523 in Donations to Jr. Shooting Sports 351 Hours of Participation
<i>Am. Legion Baseball</i>	with \$2,422 in Donations to Am. Legion Baseball 1,216 Hours of Participation
<i>Other Teams</i>	with \$2,609 in Donations to Other Teams 827 Hours of Participation
<i>Blood Drives</i>	with \$20 in Donations to Blood Drives 89 Hours of Participation
<i>N.E.F.</i>	with \$3,225 in Donations to Nat'l Emergency Fund 170 Hours of Participation
<i>Legacy Schol. Fund</i>	with \$1,473 in Donations to Legacy Scholarship Fund 27 Hours of Participation
<i>Other Amer. Projects</i>	with \$34,622 in Donations to Other Amer. Projects 6,599 Hours of Participation

Children and Youth	
<i>CWF</i>	with \$5,230 in Donations to Child Welfare Found. 171 Hours of Participation
<i>Special Olympics</i>	with \$1,950 in Donations to Special Olympics 43 Hours of Participation
<i>CMN</i>	with \$1,080 in Donations to Children's Miracle Net. 43 Hours of Participation
<i>Ronald McDonald House</i>	with \$500 in Donations to R. McDonald House 13 Hours of Participation
<i>C.O.T.A.</i>	with \$500 in Donations to Child. Org. Trans. Assn. 13 Hours of Participation
<i>T.A.L. Vets. & Child. Found.</i>	with \$1,775 in Donations to T.A.L. Vets. & Child. F. 29 Hours of Participation
<i>Other C&Y Projects</i>	with \$10,845 in Donations to Other C&Y Projects 3,843 Hours of Participation

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation	
<i>VAMCs & Facilities</i>	with \$5,379 in Donations to VAMCs & Facilities 532 Hours of Participation
<i>State Vets Facilities</i>	with \$40 in Donations to State Vets Facilities 48 Hours of Participation
<i>Nat'l Vets Assn. Day</i>	with \$0 in Donations to Nat'l Vets. Assn. Day 80 Hours of Participation
<i>O.C.W.</i>	with \$2,307 in Donations to Op. Comfort Warriors 535 Hours of Participation
<i>Fisher House</i>	with \$1,250 in Donations to Fisher House 58 Hours of Participation
<i>Other VA&R Projects</i>	with \$47,993 in Donations to Other VA&R Projects 5,030 Hours of Participation
<i>Homeless Veterans</i>	with \$3,365 in Donations to Homeless Veterans 625 Hours of Participation
<i>Troop & Family Support</i>	with \$5,465 in Donations to Troop & Family Support 2,096 Hours of Participation

Internal Affairs	
<i>Other Totals</i>	with \$48,950 in Donations, Not Covered Above 12,455 Hours, Not Covered Above

Veterans Employment and Education	
<i>VE&E Projects</i>	with \$7,593 in Donations to VE&E Projects 4,297 Hours of Participation

*As reported by: [Independent Sector](#) in [April 2023](#) .

Sons of The American Legion
2024-2025 Accomplishments



Consolidated Reports Summary
Published: July 22, 2025

National Overall Totals	
Dollars Donated	\$12,150,235
Hours Volunteered	7,740,001
Value of One Vol. Hour*	\$34.79
Volunteer Hours Value	\$269,274,628
Total Volunteer Value	\$281,424,863

Pillar	Donations	Hours	Hours Value*
Americanism	\$5,379,768	6,570,287	\$228,580,267
Children & Youth	\$1,675,501	345,958	\$12,035,861
Vets Affairs & Rehab.	\$2,274,325	249,837	\$8,691,838
Vets Employ & Edu.	\$134,989	32,307	\$1,123,961
Internal Affairs	\$2,685,652	541,613	\$18,842,701

Americanism	
<i>Boys State / Girls State</i>	\$404,976 in Donations to Boys State / Girls State with 46,549 Hours of Participation
<i>Legion Ed. Programs</i>	\$19,711 in Donations to 5-Star / 10-Ideals Progs. with 15,564 Hours of Participation
<i>Flag Programs</i>	\$245,337 in Donations to Flags Presented (All) with 855,050 Hours of Participation 437,794 Flags Presented (All Sizes / Events)
<i>Flag Education</i>	\$37,268 in Donations to Flag Education Progs. with 35,548 Hours of Participation
<i>Other Ed. Programs</i>	\$688,251 in Donations to Scholarships Awarded with 19,561 Hours of Participation
<i>Oratorical Contest</i>	\$18,815 in Donations to Oratorical Contest with 4,006 Hours of Participation
<i>Color Guard</i>	\$287,500 in Donations to Color Guard with 107,967 Hours of Participation
<i>Community Service</i>	\$1,613,514 in Donations to Other Organizations with 4,816,041 Hours of Participation
<i>Scouting</i>	\$260,704 in Donations to Scouting with 122,726 Hours of Participation
<i>Jr. Shooting Sports</i>	\$92,758 in Donations to Jr. Shooting Sports with 14,249 Hours of Participation
<i>Am. Legion Baseball</i>	\$426,654 in Donations to Am. Legion Baseball with 34,908 Hours of Participation
<i>Other Teams</i>	\$240,958 in Donations to Other Teams with 20,288 Hours of Participation
<i>Blood Drives</i>	\$25,134 in Donations to Blood Drives with 10,351 Hours of Participation
<i>Nat'l Emer. Fund</i>	\$136,022 in Donations to Nat'l Emergency Fund with 9,749 Hours of Participation
<i>Legacy Schol. Fund</i>	\$85,424 in Donations to Legacy Scholarship Fund with 7,007 Hours of Participation
<i>Other Amer. Projects</i>	\$796,742 in Donations to Other Amer. Projects with 450,725 Hours of Participation

Children and Youth	
<i>CWF</i>	\$297,511 in Donations to Child Well-Being Found. with 84,969 Hours of Participation
<i>Special Olympics</i>	\$247,187 in Donations to Special Olympics with 75,237 Hours of Participation
<i>Children's Miracle Net.</i>	\$44,749 in Donations to Children's Miracle Net. with 62,087 Hours of Participation
<i>Ronald McDonald House</i>	\$20,881 in Donations to R. McDonald House with 2,175 Hours of Participation
<i>Children's Organ Transplant Assn.</i>	\$67,688 in Donations to Child. Org. Trans. Assn. with 3,465 Hours of Participation
<i>TAL Vets. & Child. Found.</i>	\$82,223 in Donations to T.A.L. Vets. & Child. F. with 14,696 Hours of Participation
<i>Other C&Y Projects</i>	\$915,263 in Donations to Other C&Y Projects with 103,329 Hours of Participation

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation	
<i>VAMCs & Facilities</i>	\$281,271 in Donations to VAMCs & Facilities with 34,469 Hours of Participation
<i>State Vets Facilities</i>	\$184,280 in Donations to State Vets Facilities with 18,059 Hours of Participation
<i>Nat'l Vets Assist. Day</i>	\$15,018 in Donations to Nat'l Vets. Assist. Day with 5,516 Hours of Participation
<i>Op. Comfort Warriors</i>	\$82,117 in Donations to Op. Comfort Warriors with 15,680 Hours of Participation
<i>Fisher House</i>	\$93,053 in Donations to Fisher House with 8,208 Hours of Participation
<i>Other VA&R Projects</i>	\$907,183 in Donations to Other VA&R Projects with 167,906 Hours of Participation
<i>Homeless Veterans</i>	\$423,618 in Donations to Homeless Veterans with 26,826 Hours of Participation
<i>Troop & Family Support</i>	\$287,784 in Donations to Troop & Family Support with 60,293 Hours of Participation

Internal Affairs	
<i>Other Totals</i>	\$2,685,652 in Donations, Not Covered Above with 541,613 Hours, Not Covered Above

Veterans Employment and Education	
<i>VE&E Projects</i>	\$134,989 in Donations to VE&E Projects with 32,307 Hours of Participation

*As reported by: [Independent Sector](#) in April 2025 .

Importance of Squadron Consolidated Reporting - Building a Documented Legacy of Service

We are halfway through our Administrative Year. Have your Squadrons been tracking their activities to complete their Squadron CSR for this year?

SAL National Membership & Squadron Activities Vice Chairman, Jason Miller, posted the following on social media earlier about Squadron Consolidated Reporting – importance, why we need to do these, and its impact on Membership Engagement. It is lengthy but worth the read. These are great points to consider. Please share with your Squadron Leadership. Remember, if your Squadron does only one thing, it needs to be reported on the CSR.

BUILDING A DOCUMENTED LEGACY OF SERVICE

The importance of Consolidated Squadron Reports and Awards...

What our squadrons do everyday matters—but if it is not documented, it is invisible beyond our four walls.

Why the Consolidated Squadron Report Matters

The Consolidated Squadron Report (CSR) is not paperwork for the sake of paperwork. It is one of the most critical documents a squadron can complete. Information reported by squadrons is combined nationwide, used by The American Legion, forwarded to the U.S. Congress, and relied upon to apply for and verify many awards.

Every volunteer hour served and every dollar donated turns good intentions into verifiable proof of impact. The CSR captures how Sons of The American Legion support veterans, youth, military families, and local communities. When documented, local service becomes part of a statewide and national narrative that proves relevance, effectiveness, and mission execution.

Accurate CSR reporting protects the organization's nonprofit standing. It demonstrates transparency, accountability, and charitable purpose—essential when facing audits, regulatory reviews, or public scrutiny. Service that is not reported cannot be defended, validated, or verified.

CSR data strengthens the organization's ability to secure funding, grants, donations, and partnerships. Grantors, donors, and sponsors expect measurable outcomes. Squadrons that document their service help justify continued support and position the organization for future opportunities.

At the department and national levels, consolidated CSR data drives advocacy, visibility, and influence. Leadership relies on these numbers to speak with authority to legislators, government agencies, and community partners. Real data—not anecdotes—demonstrates the true scope of our nationwide impact.

The CSR also preserves institutional history. It ensures today's service is permanently recorded, honors the work of our members, and ensures future leaders understand the legacy they inherited. Unreported service may still occur—but it is effectively lost to time.

If a squadron does not submit a Consolidated Squadron Report, its service cannot be included in national tabulations and cannot be considered for awards verified at National Convention. The work may have been done—but it will not be counted.

Why Awards Matter Beyond the Consolidated Squadron Report

Awards are not about bragging rights, and they are not limited to CSR-based recognition. **Cont'd Page 9**

Importance of Squadron Consolidated Reporting - Building a Documented Legacy of Service-Cont. from page 8

Awards establish standards of excellence across membership growth, retention, engagement, leadership, administration, and community service. They define what “good” looks like and push squadrons beyond minimum compliance toward continuous improvement.

Recognition drives member engagement and retention. Members are more likely to remain active when their service is acknowledged, when they see tangible results from their efforts, and when their squadron takes pride in striving for excellence.

Awards build credibility and trust. Squadrons that earn recognition are viewed as organized, accountable, and effective—by members, donors, sponsors, community partners, and the public. That credibility attracts new members and strengthens long-term support.

Pursuing awards develops future leaders. It requires planning, coordination, delegation, accountability, documentation, and follow-through—the same skills required to lead at the district, detachment, and national levels. Awards programs are, in practice, leadership development pipelines.

Many awards rely on CSR data to validate service and impact, but many others recognize leadership, innovation, growth, professionalism, and excellence that cannot be captured by any single report. Together, these programs ensure well-rounded, mission-focused squadrons.

When squadrons participate, the benefits extend beyond the local level. Strong participation elevates the detachment, strengthens the department, and presents a unified, professional organization nationwide. One squadron’s excellence strengthens the credibility of all.

When squadrons fully document their service through the Consolidated Squadron Report and actively pursue available awards, they are not checking boxes.

They prove impact with real data.

They protect the organization’s mission.

They strengthen funding and advocacy efforts.

They preserve history.

They develop leaders.

They build credibility and trust.

They elevate the entire organization.

This is how service becomes proof.

This is how excellence becomes the standard.

This is how our mission endures.

That is what it means to build a documented legacy of service. **Cont’d Page 10**



Consolidated Squadron Report:

Importance of Squadron Consolidated Reporting - Building a Documented Legacy of Service-Cont. from page 9

Consolidated Squadron Report:

<https://www.legion.org/.../50ia1125-sal-consolidated>

Additional Resources:

<https://www.legion.org/.../sons-of.../publications-and-forms>

Jason Miller, Vice Chairman, SAL National Membership & Squadron Activities Committee

SAL Membership Engagement The Key to Membership Retention

Jason Miller, Vice Chairman of the SAL National Membership and Squadron Activities Committee, shared some really important points regarding Membership Engagement for the SAL. Membership Engagement is critical to Membership Retention for our organization.

Why Member Engagement Struggles—and How We Strengthen It...

Across volunteer organizations, declining engagement is a common challenge. This is not because members don't care—it's because engagement does not happen automatically. It must be intentional, consistent, and people-focused.

Too often, membership is treated as a transaction instead of a relationship. Members join, pay dues, receive a card, and then hear very little unless help is needed. Without connection, clarity, or purpose, even committed members begin to drift.

Many new members are never told what is expected of them, how they can contribute, or where they fit. Without guidance, people hesitate—not from disinterest, but from uncertainty. At the same time, a small group of leaders often carries most of the workload, leading to burnout and unintentionally closing the door to others who want to help.

Mentoring is a critical missing piece. Members who are paired with a mentor—someone who checks in, answers questions, and helps them navigate the organization—are far more likely to stay engaged. Without that personal connection, members are often left to figure things out on their own.

Training builds confidence. Many members want to help but don't feel prepared or worry about making mistakes. Clear, ongoing training—formal or informal—removes those barriers and empowers members to step forward with confidence.

Engagement also improves when organizations help members find their niche. Not every member wants the same level or type of involvement. Some thrive in leadership roles, some prefer hands-on service, some support behind the scenes, and others can help occasionally. Matching members to roles that align with their strengths, availability, and interests makes involvement meaningful rather than overwhelming.

Understanding a member's "why" is just as important. People join for different reasons—honoring a loved one, camaraderie, service, tradition, or personal fulfillment. When leaders take time to understand that motivation, they can connect members to opportunities that matter to them.

Consistent communication ties all of this together. Engagement cannot be occasional or crisis-driven. Regular updates, clear expectations, personal check-ins, and follow-through remind members that they matter even when nothing is being asked of them. Communication builds trust, continuity, and belonging. **Cont'd**

Page 11

SAL Membership Engagement The Key to Membership Retention- Cont. from Page 10

Meetings and events also matter. Long, inefficient, or outdated meetings discourage participation, while purposeful, well-run gatherings respect members' time and reinforce value.

Recognition should never be overlooked. Members who feel seen, appreciated, and acknowledged are far more likely to stay engaged. Recognition does not need to be elaborate—it needs to be sincere and consistent.

People do not disengage because they don't care.

They disengage when they feel disconnected, unprepared, undervalued, or unsure where they belong.

Strong organizations do not rely on a few to carry the many. They invest in mentoring, training, communication, and purpose-driven involvement. When engagement becomes part of the culture, participation follows—and so does long-term strength.

Today is the day to implement the needed changes to ensure a bright future...

Every member matters...**Jason Miller, Vice Chairman, SAL National Membership & Squadron Activities Committee**



Detachment of Virginia

\$1,500 Scholarship Award



Eligibility:

- ✓ Graduating HS Senior
- ✓ Current SAL Member
- ✓ Attending accredited University, College or Trade School in Fall 2026
- ✓ Active in your Squadron

Scholarship to be awarded at Detachment Convention in July 2026

Application Available at www.vasons.org

**DEADLINE:
June 10, 2026**

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.



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.



2025 - 2026 SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATES



MARCH 11, 2026	80%
APRIL 8, 2026	90%
MAY 13, 2026	100%

Renew Your Membership Online

Around The Detachment Pictures



Various Detachment Pictures—Top Row—Left Picture—Detachment Commander, Tyler Vanice with Detachment Children and Youth Chairman, Chase Harlow; Followed by Virginia Detachment attendees at the 2025 SAL National Convention in Tampa, FL; Top left last picture—Detachment Vice Commander, Jay Rarick working the SAL Table at the 2025 Fall Conference; 2nd row pictures are from the 2025 Fall Conference DEC Meeting followed by our Fall Conference Opening Ceremonies and guest speaker American Legion, National Vice Commander, JD Larson with NEC Les Clevinger; Third row-PNVC Steve Gower presenting Squadron 327 Fall Conference Donations; followed by Squadron 364 Officer Installation by Detachment Vice Commander, Jay Rarick; last picture Squadron 293 Chili Cookoff winners (1st place-Colt Taylor, 2nd place Laurie Cavalieri, and 3rd place Jeff Griessman); last row of pictures—PNVC Linwood Moore-with SAL National Commander Bill Clancy presenting a Blue Brigade Award at Fall Conference; Detachment Vice Commander, Teddy Kilby giving his report at the Fall Conference; Past Detachment Commander, Kevin Chaplin and Detachment Commander, Tyler Vanice presenting SAL National Commander, Bill Clancy gifts for his visit to Virginia. Last 2 pictures from Squadron 293 Chili Cookoff winners—Sponsor's Choice, Nicole Gibson, and Commander's Choice, Jimmy Hill.

2025 Detachment Convention Photos



2025 Detachment Convention Pictures—from the Joint Session (Friday Night), Friday Night DEC Meeting, Opening Ceremonies at the Detachment Convention on Saturday, Detachment Son of the Year Award presented to Jeff Lee and Detachment Scholarship Winner—Kameron Hill.

Detachment of Virginia—2025 SAL National Convention-Tampa, FL



Detachment of Virginia 2025 National Convention pictures from left to right—SAL National Centennial Committee Chairman, Tyler Vanice give his National Convention Report; Past National Vice Commander, Steve Gower giving the nomination speech for Bryan Hine-National Vice Commander; Past Detachment Commander Kevin Chaplin presenting Detachment Donations; Past Detachment Commander Kevin Chaplin receiving Detachment Awards.

Squadron Everlasting

Please keep the families of the following members in your thoughts and prayers—Charles Burch (Squadron 67), John Fridley (Squadron 25), Howard Perross, Jr. (Squadron 284), James Pronier (Squadron 159), Peter Pullman, Jr (Squadron 159), Granville Rouillard (Squadron 177), Kirk Sauerwein (Squadron 177), Curtis Smith (Squadron 25), David Tuck (Squadron 2), and Albert Zodun (Squadron 177). If your Squadron has any members who have passed away, please notify our Detachment Adjutant, Kevin Chaplin (kchaplin@lexacom.net) and Detachment Chaplin, Robert Wilson, Sr. (Roberwilsonsr54@gmail.com)

PDC Charles Burch—In Memoriam



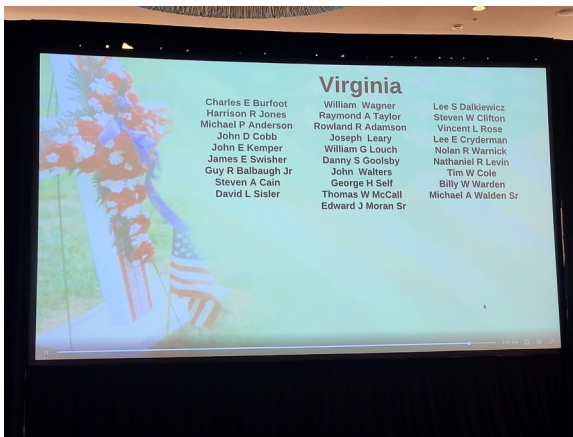
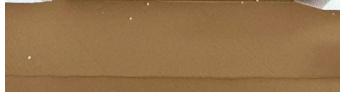
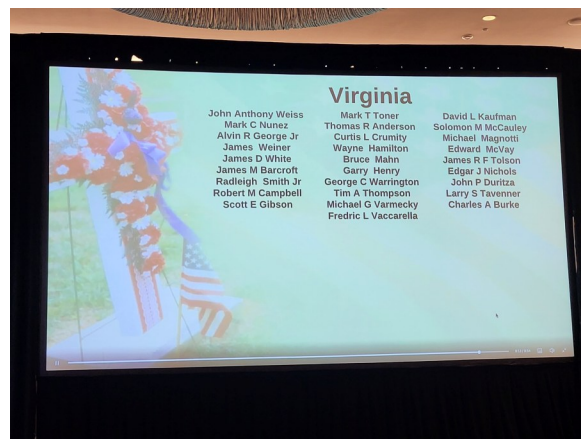
We are saddened by the passing of Past Detachment Commander Charles Burch, who passed away earlier this month at MCV in Richmond.

Mr. Burch was a Charter Member of Harry S. Foster Squadron 67 and served faithfully as Past Squadron Commander, Past Detachment Commander, and in numerous other leadership roles throughout his years of dedicated service. His commitment to the Sons of The American Legion and the American Legion Family left a lasting impact on all who had the privilege to work alongside him.

We extend our deepest condolences to his family, friends, and Brothers in the American Legion Family.



Sons of The American Legion National Convention—2025 Squadron Everlasting—Detachment of Virginia



Pictures above are from the 2025 SAL National Convention Memorial Service where SAL Members who passed away in the previous year were remembered. Two Past Detachment Commanders from Virginia passed away—Nolan Warnick (159) and Fred Vaccarella. Pictures to the left are from Colonial Beach Squadron 148 honors a local Veteran's family—Daren Joseph Chilton (USMC).



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, Tyler Vanice, Detachment Vice Commander, Timothy Fincher (Eastern Region), Detachment Vice Commander, Jay Rarick (Western Region), Detachment Vice Commander, Ted Kilby (Northern Region), or Detachment Adjutant, Kevin Chaplin. 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 Well Being 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, Tyler Vanice, NEC, Jeff Lee, Alt NEC, David Boggs, or Detachment Adjutant, Kevin Chaplin. It is a great honor to serve and represent your Squadron at the Detachment level.



SONS OF THE
AMERICAN
LEGION

Sons Of The American Legion Detachment of Virginia

"The Focus"

Articles and information contributed by: Detachment Commander Tyler Vanice, Detachment Adjutant, Kevin Chaplin, Detachment Assistant Adjutant, Scott Williams, Detachment, Andy Proffet-American Legion Website, Jason Miller -Vice Chairman-SAL National Membership and Squadron Activities Committee. **Photographs provided by:** Scott Williams, Detachment Vice Commanders, Kevin Chaplin, Squadron 148-Colonial Beach, Squadron 293 Purcellville, American Legion Post 284, and various other Detachment Members.

Edited By: Scott Williams