



Memorial Day throughout the Detachments

TX: Legionnaires, Sons and Scouts join together to support wellness

Leading Candidate Skelley: Bricks of Honor Project

Trailing Candidate Monserud: Welcoming Home Pvt. Wright

Membership: July In, December Out

National Convention Update: Louisville '26

A Legacy Worthy of the Name: PNC J.R. Stillwell



Top Ten Detachments
2026 Membership Percentage

1. Philippines 145.83%
2. Dist. Of Col. 135.96%
3. Utah 118.95%
4. Latin America 110.87%
5. South Carolina 105.47%
6. South Dakota 105.05%
7. Idaho 104.46%
8. France 104.19%
9. Wisconsin 103.94%
10. New Hampshire 102.60%

Statistics as of 04 June 2026

BE THE ONE



Special to *The Millennium*: National Commander William Clancy III

National Commander Clancy as USA 250 Approaches: "We Have the Power to Shape the Future"

The 250th birthday of our country is upon us!!!

All of us, as members of the SAL, are privileged to be in the positions we are in at this time in our country's history!

So many Sons are also helping to lead events to celebrate America's quarter-of-a-millennium birthday across the country, and to those that are doing so I say bravo and well done.



As I travel around the USA attending so many amazing events and meeting so many of our members doing great things and running our great programs, I think a lot about America's next 250 years and the ongoing role of The SAL in shaping our country's future.

Keeping America strong and patriotic. Making sure that our veterans and those actively serving (sometimes in harms way) are ALWAYS taken care of and appreciated.

Making sure that each generation of young Americans grows up with opportunities to be leaders, and are instilled with the desire to serve community, state, and nation.

WE HAVE THE POWER TO SHAPE THE FUTURE!

THE SAL is ON THE GO! Our membership ranks are swelling. All of our programs are strengthening. We are inspiring all Americans that we encounter to think beyond themselves, and think about serving the greater good.

We need to keep up the great pace we are at! Reach more people. Make the SAL and The American Legion Family an organization that every citizen, every kid, and even every immigrant knows; more than just *knowing* us ... is inspired by our actions and the values we promote!

So get out there, my brothers! Make your Post the center of your town's 250 Celebration. Make your Post vibrant! Engage the public by filling your Post with not just fun, but **Fun with Purpose!**

God bless you all, and carry on!

Photo by Jennifer Blohm





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)

Legion.org—02 June 2026

Speech Available to Commemorate America's 250th Birthday

As we approach July 4, American Legion posts and departments are preparing to celebrate America's 250th birthday in a variety of ways. For those doing so, we've drafted a speech for use at such celebrations.

The speech is meant only to be a guide. Posts and departments are urged to tailor the speech to their respective events or audience.

[Download the speech here.](#)

Events already scheduled for July 4 include the Freedom Rings celebration at American Legion Post 64 in Flint, Mich. The post is inviting the community to explore local vendors, handcrafted goods and community booths in a farmer's market atmosphere. Food trucks will be on site, as will activities for children that include face painting, a bounce house and other games designed just for them. The evening will end with music from a live DJ.

In Pelham, N.Y., American Legion Post 50 and the Pelham Civic Association are teaming up to host the Pelham 250, a run to celebrate America's 250th anniversary and the Battle of Pelham, a pivotal battle in the American Revolution. The race will cover 2.5 miles and is open to both runners and walkers.

"The post thought that we should have a special event this July 4th as part of our community's celebration of the bravery shown in the Battle of Pelham," [Post 50 Commander Phillip Kiamie said](#). "Teaming up with the (Civic Association) made a lot of sense because they support our town and love to put on a race."

In addition to specially designed Pelham 250 shirts, all finishers will receive a medal commemorating the race and the Battle of Pelham.

Other posts commemorating the nation's semiquincentennial include:

- American Legion Post 136 in James City, Fla., is sponsoring both a parade and fireworks on July 4. Post 136 is inviting the public and local businesses to participate in the events to commemorate the nation's 250th birthday.
- Camp Jackson American Legion Post 112 in Brownstown, Ind., is planning a special Fourth of July parade for this year titled "250 Years, the Story of Us."
- American Legion Post 229 in Corpus Christi, Texas, is organizing Flags of Freedom, a patriotic display of 250 American flags along Park Road 22 during the week of Independence Day.

The American Legion Magazine wants to know what your post or department is doing to mark the semiquincentennial. Email magazine@legion.org with details, or post a preview at legiontown.org in the America 250 category.

In March during the organization's annual Washington Conference, The American Legion signed a [memorandum of understanding](#) making the Legion an [official national resource partner](#) with America 250.



"We want this to be the largest and most inspiring celebration and commemoration in our nation's history," America250 Executive Vice President Jennifer Condon said during the signing. "Let me emphasize – this is not just about a big

fireworks show on July 4, 2026. This milestone gives us an opportunity to reflect on our past and what we want to be 250 years from now. It's a chance for all of us to ask, 'What is the spirit of America?'"

Learn more at america250.org.





Squadron 130 (Palmer, MA) members Matthew Nay and son Luke were among the volunteers to flag Pine Knoll Cemetery



JD Bass Photography: Squadron 90 (Ashland, WI) Memorial Day services



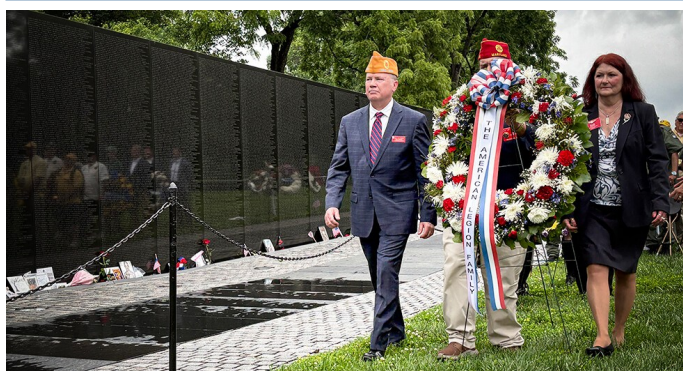
Landon Marciano (Squadron 34; Chester, NJ) carrying the Department colors at BG William C. Doyle Cemetery.



The Sons of Squadron 1788 (La Fargeville, NY) as part of their post's honor guard. This photo is from the fourth stop of the day, at Omar Cemetery.



The Sons of Squadron 257 (Loudonville, OH) raising their states flag.



Left—Legion.org Photo: National Commander Clancy, American Legion National Vice Commander J.D. Larson, and American Legion Auxiliary VA&R Chair Lisa Chaplin place a wreath at the Vietnam Wall.

Right: Taps being provided by Sons of The American Legion Squadron 351 member Craig Titzein (Elberfeld, IN).





**Michael Vozar (IL), Alternate
National Committeeman**

IL: Flags For Vets

The Detachment of Illinois proudly participated in the sixteenth annual "Operation Flags for Vets" at All Saints Cemetery in Des Plaines, Illinois on May 23rd. All Saints is one of the largest private cemeteries in Illinois. It is always humbling to honor and pay respect to our fallen veterans. This year was even more special; our participation helped honor and support the founder of this event - National Executive Committeeman and Past Detachment Commander Kevin O'Connell - as he continues his courageous fight against terminal cancer - while also helping honor veterans with 5,800 flag placements on veteran gravesites.

Illinois has always been proud of our devotion to mutual helpfulness ... the close knit support, encouragement, and camaraderie we share. Our desire to continue supporting Kevin with his courageous health battle combined with knowing his long term passion for this special program made it clear to us with the mission was. And we executed.

Detachment Adjutant Jeff Van Horn and Commander Wayne Madson organized a secret "flash mob" of Detachment leadership coming out in force to help place flags. The Leadership team (along with a special guest, Kevin's Auxiliary President Janet Bacon) rolled up in a 15 car caravan. To say Kevin was surprised is an understatement. It truly was a very emotional time for every-



The Detachment of Illinois proudly participated in the Sixteenth annual Operation Flags for Vets at All Saints Cemetery in Des Plaines, Illinois

one.

O'Connell was instrumental in starting this program back in 2010. As a former Des Plaines police officer well known in the community and a charter member of Squadron 36 in Des Plaines, Kevin wanted to honor the WWII service of his father and other veterans buried here after noticing many veteran gravesites did not have flags placed.

From humble beginnings with 50 volunteers placing 2,000 flags, the event has grown to 350 volunteers placing 5,800 flags this year.

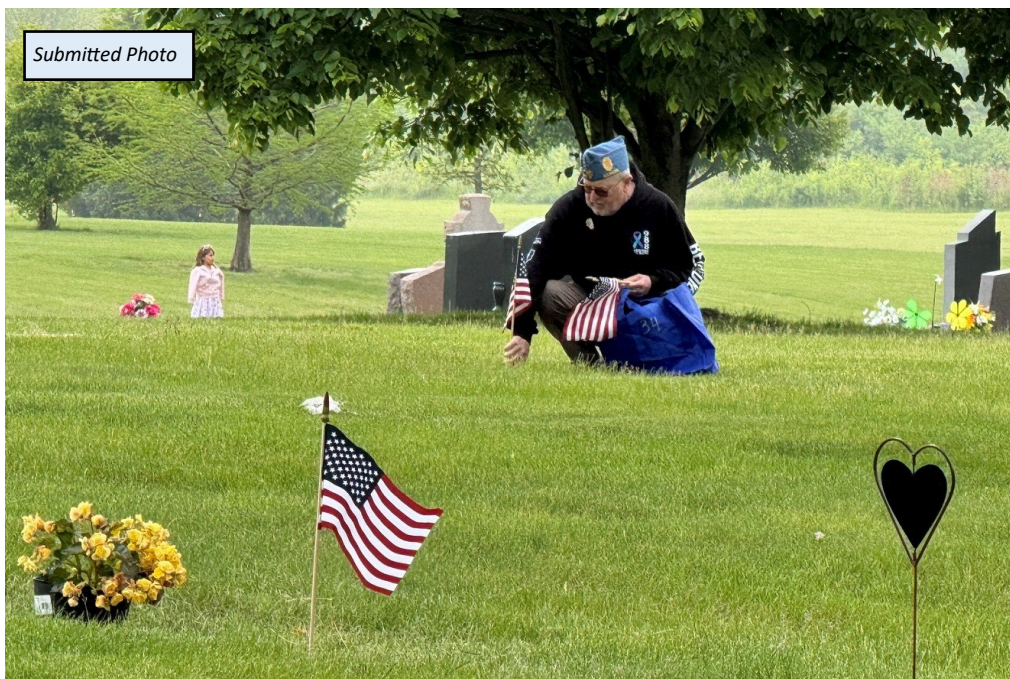
To help guide the flag placement when starting out, a young Scout physically canvassed the cemetery and recorded the number of veteran graves in each section as part of his Eagle Scout project. This provided a starting point for purchasing flags and assembling carry bags for volunteers with the proper number of flags per section for

planting. Since that original census, the number of veteran gravesites have increased significantly - and the count is revised annually based on the number of additional flags needed for each section.



This event draws widespread support from the Des Plaines Post 36 American Legion Family, Des Plaines VFW Post 2992, Scouts, local service clubs, government leaders, and several corporate sponsors. It truly is a family affair - as Kevin's fiancé, two brothers, three daughters and their spouses, and four grandchildren pitch in to help with fund raising, flag procurement, marking new flags, assembling and packing bundles for volunteers to place, picking up flags the following week, event registration, and a host of other tasks to make this a successful event.

We are incredibly proud of our fellow Son Kevin O'Connell and the tremendous credit and honor he brings to the American Legion Family thru his dedication to veterans. Thank you Brother.



Submitted Photo





Pennsylvania Detachment Commander Mark Nave with 103 year-old Benjamin Berry, a Battle of the Bulge and World War II veteran at the ACES Veterans Museum.



On behalf of Post 137 (Jacksonville, FL), NEC Bill Kelly presents school medals at Enterprise Learning Academy.



At the PA 29th District Meeting, Squadron Commander Scott Earll and Squadron 237 (Union City, PA) donate a Metalheads 250 flag to raffle for Pennsylvania Medal of Honor Ride.



PNC Rick Cook (1999-2000) at Oklahoma Boys State check-in.



Squadron 184 (Savannah, GA) presents a \$1,000 check to Mark Lindsay and the Frank Callen Boys & Girls Club to help sponsor underprivileged youth attending summer camp this year.



California Detachment Commander Curtis and his team visit Palm Springs Squadron 519.



Post 11 (Lancaster, OH) Commander Richard Beck accepts a \$10,000 donation from Squadron 11 and SAL Commander Kyle R. Cox, to be used to pay off the balance of the mortgage on the Post 11 property.



The Post 514 Family (Lambertville, MI) Color Guard on Memorial Day.



Squadron 323 (Clearwater, MN) makes a \$2,500 donation to the Minnesota Veterans Pantry.



Squadron 1711 (Levittown, NY) placing flags over Memorial Day Weekend.





The **National Americanism Commission** of the **Sons of The American Legion (SAL)** has adopted ongoing support of the *Flying Flags for Heroes* program through SAL Resolution VI, approved during the Spring NEC 2022 meetings.

The purpose of the *Flying Flags for Heroes* program is to inspire genuine patriotism within our communities while promoting national pride in our country, its flag, our military, and our veterans throughout the entire American Legion Family.

Reporting the flag placements of your Post, Squadron, Unit, or Chapter prior to **August 8, 2026**, will assist the Commission in achieving its goals of 1,000,000 flag placements and 100% Detachment participation before the 54th SAL National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

For additional information, visit FlyingFlagsForHeroes.org or use the QR code to access the reporting section of the website directly.



SONS OF THE
 AMERICAN
LEGION

Legiontown, USA—17 May 2026**TX: Legionnaires, Sons and Scouts join together to support wellness**

On May 16, members of Holley-Riddle American Legion Post 21, Sons of the American Legion Squadron 21 and Scout Troop 226 came together with one shared mission — serving the community and supporting mental health awareness at the NAMIWalks North Texas event.

Giving up their Saturday morning without hesitation, these dedicated volunteers brought energy, encouragement and heart to every step of the walk. Stationed along the 2-mile course, they manned the water stop, handing out dozens of bottles of water to hundreds of walkers. But they offered far more than hydration — their cheers, smiles and enthusiasm motivated participants to keep pushing forward and reminded everyone that they were supported every step of the way.

One of the most popular stops on the course was Post 21's special "Doggie Hydration Station" for the four-legged walkers joining the event. Tail wags were everywhere as thirsty pups stopped for a drink before rewarding volunteers with plenty of happy wet kisses. The stop quickly became a favorite highlight for participants and spectators alike. Scout Troop 226 stepped up in a tremendous way throughout the morning. The Scouts enthusiastically cheered on walkers, helped keep participants hydrated, and provided directions to ensure everyone stayed safely on course. Their positive attitudes and willingness to serve demonstrated the very best of community spirit and adherence to the Scout Oath of service and helping others. Events like NAMIWalks are about more than completing a course — they are about coming together, supporting one another, and showing that no one walks alone. Thanks to the combined efforts of Post 21, SAL Squadron 21 and Troop 226, the event was filled with encouragement, compassion and smiles from start to finish.

When organizations unite in service, incredible things happen — and this event was a shining example of our community at its very best.

**Terra Temple, the Metropolis Planet—28 May 2026****KY: Volunteers 'trying to do our part' by placing flags**

Conor Riley proudly placed the flag at the stone of a Massac County veteran.

His dad Wes removed it, reminding Conor and his younger brother Casey the flag goes at the top corner of the stone.

The Rileys were among the volunteers who spent a portion of their Saturday morning, May 23, assisting Metropolis American Legion Post 306 in placing flags on veterans' graves at Metropolis Memorial Gardens, IOOF Cemetery and Masonic Cemetery in observance of Memorial Day.

It was a day of passing on the tradition.

4-H volunteer leader Karen Cox explained to her group what insignias and abbreviations to look for on the stones, noting there are several differences between those who served during the Revolutionary War or Civil War and those who served in World War I or the Vietnam War.

Cox said while the day provided the 4-H members community service hours, "it's also to honor the veterans for the service they provided for our country."

With "a family full of veterans" to being a veteran himself, for Riley, the volunteering is personal. The Army combat veteran served for seven years, from 2005-12, including two tours — Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

"We're trying to do our part," he said.

As member of the Sons of the American Legion Post 306, Eddie Ozga said volunteering on the Saturday before Memorial Day is "the right thing to do."

Legion members commented on the number of volunteers who assisted Saturday. Junior vice commander Jeff Crippen said the day had a "good turnout."



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

Editorial: USA250

As I put this newsletter together this month, I'm thinking about what to write as my editorial ... and I don't think there is anything I can put into words that would be more powerful than all of the demonstrations of patriotism we all had witnessed over Memorial Day Weekend—demonstrations of remembrance, of tribute, of reflection, and of gratitude. This newsletter doesn't even scratch the surface telling those stories.

This was the weekend which encapsulates everything we are as "*Proud Possessors of a Priceless Heritage*" - where either by marching in parades, handing out poppies, attending a ceremony, or placing flags in cemeteries we honor our collective legacy of service.

It is what being a Son is about. Honor the past by keeping its memory alive.

This year's Memorial Day Weekend was much more profound than normal, though, because our great nation turns 250 years old in a few weeks. This 2026 Memorial Day served as a chance to reflect on 250 years of service and sacrifice.

250 years of the struggle to keep that dream of freedom, justice and independence alive. 250 years of fighting to keep that torch lit showing America as a universal beacon of hope and liberty.

Over the next weeks as we approach the semiquincentennial on the 4th of July, remember this is not only a celebration of our country reaching this milestone, it is a moment where we need to take stock of the sacrifices that have been made along the way to get here.





Mike Pook (WI), Staff Contributor
The Millennium

"Mentoring Moments"

Collecting can pull tabs is an easy and fun way to support the charities of the Ronald McDonald House and the families they support.

Remember, it starts with one pull tab, that's all!

Pull Tabs By-The-Numbers

Interesting facts: recycling is about \$0.30 per lb.

Each pound is about 1,267 pull tabs.

A gallon size bag of tabs = 2.5 lbs.



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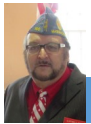
Make Note of these Important dates on The American Legion Calendar

- 14 June** **Flag Day & Army Birthday**
- 27 June** **National PTSD Awareness Day**
- 01 July** **CSR Deadline**
- 04 July** **Independence Day**
- 17—24 July** **Boys Nation in Washington, DC**
- 27 July** **Korean War Veterans Armistice Day**
- 04 August** **Coast Guard Birthday**
- 07 August** **Purple Heart Day**
- 11 Sept.** **Patriot Day – 25th anniversary**
- 18 Sept.** **Air Force Birthday**
- 19 Sept.** ★ **POW/MIA Recognition Day** ★ ★ ★



Submitted Photo: Young Son Zachary Anderson from Squadron 690 in Palatine, Illinois collecting for poppies on 2 May 2026.





**Clifford A. Smith (MA),
Past National Commander**

MA: Bowling For Kids

The day had finally arrived. It was a bright sunny day, but it was still a little cool outside. Everyone warmed up fast as they entered the Webster Timber Lanes Bowling Alley. People were shaking hands and extending pleasantries to those they had not seen for a while. Then the thunder of the balls going down the alleys began, as the strikes into the pins made a sound like fireworks on the Fourth of July. You could hear loud cheers as the pins began to topple, and friendly jeers if the ball went into the gutter from the lanes all across the alley. The tournament was now in full swing.



This is not just a simple bowling tournament, though. It's an annual reunion for comrades to come together and raise needed dollars for children that are facing some of the most difficult challenges in their young lives. Everyone who comes to support this program every year knows they are making a change in their hearts and minds and fostering mutual helpfulness to thousands of children across Massachusetts.

This year many people donated raffle baskets, which made a tremendous impact on the monies raised on this day. It was fun to see people anxiously waiting to see if their number would be called. It was also funny to see people gasp in disbelief when they were just one number off from the winning ticket. We also had individual donations made.

We have a special award program called "Pins for Partnership", where we ask bowlers to see if someone will sponsor them for so much a point or even donations to add their total. This year, the award went to Nonamtum Squadron 440. They raised an

incredible amount of \$3,600 for this award program. That is the highest amount that has ever been presented in the history of the tournament. What an incredible and outstanding achievement.

After all the raffles and donations were counted and the expenses were paid, the total raised for the tournament was the absolute extraordinary and unbelievable amount of \$11,697.30. This means each hospital - Baystate Children's Hospital, UMass Memorial Healthcare and Boston Children's Hospital—will be receiving \$3,899.10. This brings our total raised in the 15 years of having this tournament to \$114,393.00.

The "Partnership for Kids" program has been in existence for 17 years. Many Posts, Units, Squadrons, Rider Chapters and individuals make donations directly to the hospitals in their area. We have reached a major milestone this year. With the combination of direct donations and the proceeds of the bowling tournament combined we have now eclipsed the \$200,000.00 mark with an absolute fantastic amount of \$211,939.55

This year, Baystate Children's Hospital received \$5,900.77, UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center received \$6,400.77 and Boston Children's Hospital received \$6,600.76 for a total of donation in 2026 in the amount of \$18,902.30.

Words cannot express the gratitude and dedication that has been shown by everyone who has ever been on one of the bowling teams, all the people who have helped with the tournament and those who have just come to join in with the fun and comradery of the day making this program a major success. Also, a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has donated directly to the hospitals.

You have put a smile and uplifted the dreams of thousands of Children as they deal with the most trying times they will face in their young lives. This past 17 years is a true testament of what The American Legion stands for in helping our veterans and our children.



**Thom Skelley (TX), Leading
Candidate for National Commander**

Bricks of Honor Project

To help preserve "the memories of our former members and the association of our members and our forefathers in all wars," I am humbly asking for your participation in the Bricks of Honor Project.

These personalized bricks will serve as a lasting tribute to the men and women of our military who gave us our eligibility in the Sons of The American Legion. Each brick may be personalized with your service member's name, rank, branch of service, and dates of service. The bricks will be placed in the northeast quadrant of the circle surrounding the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Indianapolis and will include a certificate of placement.

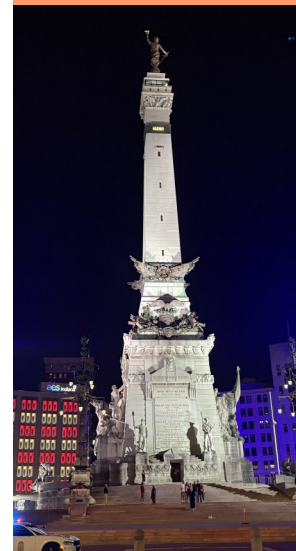
An official dedication ceremony is planned, hopefully in conjunction with our Fall 2026 NEC meetings. Available options include:

\$125.00 – Memorial Brick to be placed on the Circle

\$175.00 – Memorial Brick on the Circle and a Souvenir Brick (shipped to the certificate address)

\$50.00 – Souvenir Brick only (3" x 1.5" x .5")

Please visit bricksofhonor.org for more information.



When completing the order form, please enter the code SAL 2026 in the Additional Requests section to ensure your order is placed in the correct quadrant.

The deadline to order is Flag Day, June 14.

As a courtesy, the Indiana War

Memorial Foundation has waived the requirement for proof of military service.

This opportunity is open to all American Legion Family members, so please share this request with your Post, Unit, Squadron, and Chapter.





Mike Monserud (IA), Trailing Candidate for National Commander

Welcoming Home Pvt. Wright

One year ago, I visited the Detachment of Oklahoma as the National Vice Commander from the Midwest Region. I was on a flight to Oklahoma City and when I boarded, I noticed a Marine in full dress sitting in front. As I took my seat my wife told me that the Marine must be an escort. It then hit me that we had a fallen hero on the plane.

Upon arrival in Oklahoma City the Airplane Captain came on the speaker and asked everyone to remain seated so the Marine escort could deplane to escort our hero off the plane. You could have heard a pin drop as the procession came to the plane and removed the Marine hero from the plane and placed him in a hearse. Eventually we had to be told to deplane so they could prepare it for the next flight. Humbling and honored will never be able to describe the feeling of seeing that.

The Fallen Marine was Private Richard Gordon Wright United States Marine Corps. According to his Marine record Private Richard Wright served with King Company, 2nd Marines during the invasion of Tarawa. He was among the newest members of the company, having joined their ranks on 9 October 1943. On 20 November 1943, Wright's battalion was assigned the task of spearheading the assault on Betio's Beach Red One – a curved stretch of sand running several hundred yards from the "bird's beak" in the west to Red Two in the east. The natural shape of the beach created a crossfire for the defenders, and the area became known as "the Pocket." Slow-moving landing craft were quickly targeted from multiple angles, and many were knocked out as they approached the shore. Hundreds of men were killed or wounded before stepping foot on dry land. Those who survived faced a network of obstacles manned by determined Japanese defenders, and the fighting was close-in and savage. "On approaching the beach, the first two waves of LVTs were hit by machine gun and anti-boat gun fire from beaches Red 1 and 2 and Beach Green firing over the point," reads an official report.



Pvt. Richard G. Wright, USMC

"This fire damaged several LVTs and caused severe casualties. The assault waves landed generally at about 0910. The left half of Company K was partially stopped about 150 yards from the beach by anti-boat fire and suffered very heavy casualties. The remainder of Company K and Company I were also heavily hit by machine guns both in LVTs and while disembarking. The log barricade in front of Company I offered some cover and an opportunity to organize, but Company K had no cover and many of those who made the beach were hit on the flat terrain." At some point during the landing operation, Private Wright was hit by an exploding shell. Multiple fragment wounds resulted in his death on 20 November 1943.

Pvt Wright was laid to rest on July 18, 2025 at Memorial Park in Oklahoma City. The time between returning to Oklahoma and his burial, Pvt Wright was provided security and an honor detail for the week at the Funeral Home while he was waiting for his burial from the Edmond American Legion Post 111 from Edmond, Oklahoma. They stayed at his casket the whole time until his burial.

In the American Legion POW ceremony, it states a POW/MIA Empty Chair is placed at all official meetings of The American Legion, as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America. This is a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty and a full accounting of those missing. Let us rededicate ourselves for this vital endeavor.

Pvt. Wright is one of many who fought and died overseas and never came home until his remains were identified. If this doesn't make you proud to be a member of the Sons of The American Legion, then what will? This is our mission; this is what we are supposed to be doing, assisting the American Legion with making sure we bring all our hero's home. God bless our troops and never forget the ones who are still waiting to come home.



The American Legion's National Oratorical Contest challenges high school students to explore and understand the US Constitution while developing confidence, leadership, and communication skills. Since 1938, the program has prepared young people for citizenship through critical thinking and public speaking, while producing notable alumni such as former Vice President Mike Pence, commentator Lou Dobbs, and presidential candidate Alan Keyes.

Shown above at the Oratorical Contest at Hillsdale College are (left to right) National Vice Commander Chris Casey (NE), National Americanism Commission member Mike Vozar (IL), National Children and Youth Chairman Jeff Trout (IL), and National Adjutant Anthony Wright (PA).

**AMERICAN
LEGION**



ADVOCACY ALERT



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





**Greg Shaffer (NJ),
National COTA Liaison**

COTA Corner

Children's Organ Transplant Association has been around for 40 years. As was mentioned in the May issue, we would like the American Legion Family to continue supporting these COTA children and their families. Every donation made in your state stays in your state.

Some brief COTA overviews:

- There are no costs for services; 100% patient benefit.
- All COTA families are eligible for Challenge Grants once their fundraising team is trained and \$2,500 is awarded for every \$25,000 raised up to a maximum of \$10,000.
- Deductibility of gifts which translates into zero tax consequences for families working with COTA.
- Direct deposit for families and weekly expense reallocations.
- Other funding is also available after fundraising begins depending on eligibility, such as American Legion funds and state or diagnosis funds.



I am asking you to help these children and their families by hosting an event at your Post. Make COTA a Legion Family project for Children and Youth. COTA will provide you with resources to make your event a success. They can also contact a COTA family and ask them to attend your event. The family can give a brief description on how COTA helped them. Each month I will be giving you more information about COTA and what they do. Some might be repetitive, but repeating information is not so bad. This is a good way to keep getting the word out about these children and their families. Send me pictures from any events you may have. Along with a few words letting us know how things went. This way we let other states see what you are doing. Also, I would like to keep a running total of all donations being made. I will be keeping these donations by state. Every so often I will send out a copy of the totals so everyone can see how much we are helping these children and their families.

40 years with many more to follow. We are helping them to live a better life. You can get more information on their web site, COTA.org.

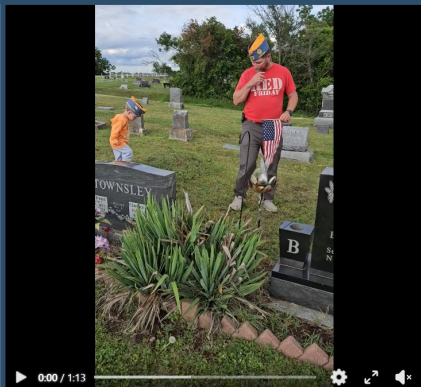
You can also reach out to me at, shiftyshaff@gmail.com. I will do whatever I can to help you out or put you in touch with the proper people. COTA is near and dear to my heart.



Marri Krupco is with Matthew Krupco.

June 1 at 10:57 AM · 🌐

This post is a few days late but life has sure been busy recently and I knew I wanted to share it anyway. Each year our local American Legion family decorates veterans graves with flags and auxiliary members graves with a cedar sprig with three poppies on it for Memorial Day. This year Matthew, Byron, and I started a few minutes early and decorated some special graves on our own before the rest of the team arrived. We put a flag on my grandpa's grave and poppies on my mom and my grandma's. Byron was a big help putting out all the flags and poppies for Memorial Day. Here is a little video of daddy training him. See less



Facebook Video:

Click the screengrab of the video at left to watch the clip from Marri Krupco, Past Department Commander of Kansas. A great example of teaching the next generation of Sons.



Facebook Photo: Ohio ANEC David Dilts installs the officers of Squadron 29 (Zanesville, OH)






SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

National Membership & Squadron Activities

JULY LAUNCH

THE MEMBERSHIP YEAR!

July In. December Out.

EXECUTE EARLY. BUILD MOMENTUM.



1

START RENEWALS IMMEDIATELY

- Begin outreach on July 1
- Do not delay initial contact
- Prioritize members who are active and engaged

Early action drives early results.



2

FOCUS ON ACTIVE MEMBERS FIRST

- Contact your most engaged members
- Secure early renewals quickly
- Build visible progress within the first weeks

Build momentum from the start.



3

USE PERSONAL OUTREACH

- Call or text members directly
- Keep communication simple and personal
- Avoid relying only on mass messaging

Personal contact increases response rates.



4

CONSIDER AN EARLY BIRD INCENTIVE

- Introduce optional early renewal incentives
- Allow flexibility for each squadron
- Keep it simple and easy to understand

Incentives create early action.



5

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

- Maintain updated records of renewals
- Monitor outreach efforts
- Identify members who still need contact

Track it. Manage it. Grow it.



6

COMMUNICATE CONSISTENTLY

- Use meetings, texts, email, and social media
- Reinforce July In. December Out.
- Keep messaging clear and repeated

Consistent messages drive consistent results.



7

BUILD MOMENTUM EARLY

- Recognize early renewals
- Share progress with members
- Encourage peer-to-peer outreach

Momentum now. Success all year.



8

HOST A KICKOFF EVENT

- Hold a July membership event or gathering
- Use it to encourage renewals
- Create energy and engagement early

Great events create strong engagement.

KEY MESSAGE

The membership year has begun. **Renew now.** Stay active. **Stay involved.** Honor does not expire—and your membership should not either.

LEADERSHIP REMINDER

A strong July builds a successful year.
Early momentum matters.

FINAL REMINDERS

- 1 Renew Early: legion.org/sal-renew
- 2 Ensure every member has updated telephone and email contact information.

LAUNCH STRONG. STAY ACTIVE. FINISH STRONG. JULY IN. DECEMBER OUT.



A National Newsletter of the Sons of The American Legion

12



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

Butch's Bullet Points

Memorial Day is more than the unofficial beginning of summer. It is a sacred day of remembrance; a solemn pause in the life of our nation to honor those who gave their lives in defense of liberty. It is a day defined by duty, honor, country, sacrifice, and reverence. In America's cemeteries, flags are placed upon hallowed ground, bugles sound "Taps," and families gather in quiet gratitude for freedoms purchased at a terrible cost.

Too often Memorial Day and Veterans Day are confused, yet they carry different meanings. Veterans Day honors all who have worn the uniform of the United States Armed Forces. Memorial Day specifically honors those who never came home — the fallen heroes who gave what President Abraham Lincoln called "the last full measure of devotion."

Few places symbolize that sacrifice more powerfully than Arlington National Cemetery. Considered the cornerstone of America's military remembrance, Arlington serves as the final resting place for thousands who answered the call to serve. Among those buried there are President John F. Kennedy, General Douglas MacArthur, and the crew members lost aboard the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster. Yet Arlington's deepest meaning is found not only in the famous names, but also in the countless rows of white headstones marking the graves of ordinary Americans — farm boys, factory workers, teachers, parents, sons, and daughters — whose devotion to country became extraordinary through sacrifice. Walking through Arlington leaves no doubt that it is truly hallowed ground.

As our nation approaches America's 250th birthday in 2026, Memorial Day reminds us how fragile and precious freedom truly is. Since America's military origins in 1775, historians estimate that fewer than 8% of Americans have ever served in uniform. Through every generation, that small percentage has carried the responsibility of protecting the liberties enjoyed by all Americans. Their service preserved the ideals upon which our nation was founded and ensured those principles could be handed to future generations.

President Ronald Reagan once said,

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction." Those words remind us why Memorial Day matters. The freedoms we enjoy today were not inherited automatically; they were preserved by sacrifice and passed from generation to generation by Americans committed to duty and service.

Another timeless reminder comes from author G. K. Chesterton, who wrote, "Courage is almost a contradiction in terms. It means a strong desire to live taking the form of readiness to die." Memorial Day asks Americans to remember those who demonstrated that courage in defense of others.

Today, honoring sacrifice must also include caring for those who are still carrying the burdens of service. The American Legion continues this mission through its "Be the ONE" initiative, encouraging Americans to help prevent veteran suicide by reaching out, listening, and supporting veterans during times of struggle. Remembering the fallen also means ensuring the living is never forgotten.

Memorial Day should always keep its solemn atmosphere. The fluttering of flags, the echo of "Taps," and moments of silence in cemeteries across America remind us that freedom has endured because generation after generation answered the call of duty. As we prepare to celebrate America's 250th anniversary, may we recommit ourselves to the values of Americanism, service, and gratitude.

May we always remember that no matter in which cemetery you see a small flag on Memorial Day; that beneath every stone marker lies a story of courage, sacrifice, and love of country — and may we remain worthy of the freedoms they died to preserve.

myLEGION.ORG TRAINING VIDEO SERIES

Learn the ins-and-outs of the myLegion platform, and how it can help you and your Sons manage membership in these videos produced by National Headquarters.

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/8339635>

THE MILLENNIUM

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

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CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS. Our goal is to promptly correct errors. Please email the Editor to report a mistake, error, to request a clarification. Please reference the edition, page number, and title of the article in question.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Distribution Schedule:

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

08 July 2026

12 August 2026

09 September 2026

14 October 2026

11 November 2026

09 December 2026





Bryan Hine (TN), National Vice Commander Southeast

Sons of The American Legion Cap Etiquette

When you place the Sons of The American Legion cover on your head, you aren't just accessorizing—it is the official uniform. Whether worn with a suit or civilian clothes, the cap carries nearly a century of tradition and a strict code of etiquette.

The SAL "Color Code": While all SAL caps feature red, white, and blue piping, the body color indicates a member's current level of service: Cap Style

Solid French Blue: Squadron

The standard "bluecapper" at the local Squadron level.

Blue w/ White Top: District

Officers representing a regional district within their state.

Blue w/ Gold Top: Detachment

Leadership at the state level.

Solid Gold: National

The highest level of leadership on a national scale.

Anatomy of the Cap: To maintain the dignity of the organization, decorations must be placed correctly:

- **The Left Side (The Sacred Side):** Reserved exclusively for the official SAL emblem and location lettering (city, county, or state). No pins or patches should ever be placed here.
- **The Right Side (The Personal Side):** This is where you display your squadron

number, officer titles (e.g., Past Commander), and authorized membership stars. Fraternal or civil organization insignia cannot be used on SAL caps.

- **Pro Tip:** Names or nicknames of individual members cannot be used on any part of the cap.

The "In Uniform" Rule: Because the cap is the uniform, you must behave as if you were in full military dress. This means rendering a proper military salute at appropriate times when "covered". If you aren't wearing the cap, you should follow standard civilian etiquette for saluting the flag (hand over heart).

When to "Doff" (Remove) the Cap: In SAL etiquette, removing the cap is a profound sign of reverence. You should doff your cap and hold it over your heart (emblem facing outward) during the following moments:

- **Sacred Moments:** During the Pledge of Allegiance, prayer (invocation and benediction), or POW/MIA ceremonies.
- **Places of Worship:** Unless you are part of an active Honor Guard or Color Guard in marching order, remove the cap upon entering.
- **Graveside:** At the graveside, the cap should be held in the right hand over the heart during the entire service. (exception) During cold and inclement weather, the cap may remain on to ensure the health and safety of the members.
- **Meals:** Never wear the cap while eating. Place the cap flat on the table with the emblem facing up.



Facebook Photo



SPOTTED BY A SON

In May's newsletter, we asked if you could find the image of the Battlefield Cross.

The Millennium went out on 12 May, and by 12:13pm we had a winner...



Larry Nigh
Squadron 182
New Palestine, Indiana

Nigh has been a SAL member since 2017 and, Squadron Commander since 2019. He became a member to honor his father, Eugene Nigh, who served in the Army during 1944-46. He was an ambulance driver in New York and in Washington, DC, transporting the injured from ships to the hospitals.

Nigh served as a Reserve Police Officer from 1982-1994 in Greenfield, Indiana.

SAVE PAPER.
SAVE POSTAGE.
SAVE TIME.



www.legion.org/SAL-renew

QUICKLY AND EASILY RENEW ONLINE

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

SONS OF THE
AMERICAN
LEGION





Allen Watry (WI), National Convention Committee Chairman

National Convention Update

Excitement continues to build as preparations move forward for this year's convention in Louisville. Several commemorative items have now been fully designed and officially approved, with ordering scheduled to begin soon. Attendees will be able to purchase these exclusive convention items around the convention room throughout the event.

Available merchandise will include:

Pins: \$5.00

Coins: \$15.00

Mugs: \$15.00 (limited quantities available)



Be sure to stop by early, as some items are expected to sell quickly.

Friday Evening Social: On Friday, August 28, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., American Legion Post 220 will host a special fish fry and social gathering featuring live entertainment. This event is being organized as a Legion Family event by the Department of Kentucky and will operate on a first-come, first-served basis. Members and guests are encouraged to arrive early and enjoy an evening of fellowship, food, and entertainment.

Enjoy Louisville While You're Here: Convention attendees will also have the opportunity to experience many of Louisville's most popular attractions and activities during their stay.

Baseball fans can catch the Louisville Bats, the AAA affiliate of the Cincinnati Reds, during home games scheduled August 25–30. Discounted tickets will be available for purchase.

Visitors can also take advantage of discounted admission and tour opportunities at several well-known Louisville attractions, including:

- Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory
- Old Forester Distilling Co.
- Angel's Envy Distillery
- Evan Williams Bourbon Experience
- Belle of Louisville
- Kentucky Derby Museum

Additional information about attractions, dining, entertainment, and local activities can be found through [Louisville Tourism](https://www.louisvilleky.com/tourism).

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



**John Davies (MD),
National Veterans Employment and Education Commission**

VE&E Events in June; Preventing Homelessness, Providing Opportunity

The VE&E Commission is committed to helping preventing homelessness among our veterans. To this end, the VE&E commission is promoting VA endorsed job fairs. Below is a list of job fairs for June. Other listings can be found at: https://www.vaforvets.va.gov/vaforvets/events/pages/upcoming_hiring_event.asp

06/16/2026: Hiring our Heroes (HOH) will be hosting a Career Summit at Keesler Air Force Base. Their goal is to connect world-class military community talent with American employers. The event is expected to attract over 30 employers with more than 10,000 open positions. To register go to: <https://www.hiringourheroes.org/event-registration/>

06/16/2026: HOH will be holding a Virtual Amplify event. The event is focused on helping military spouses in career preparation, professional development and networking. Registration information can be found at: <https://www.hiringourheroes.org/event-registration/>

06/17/2026: HOH will be hosting a virtual spouse hiring event. Registration information can be found at: <https://www.hiringourheroes.org/event-registration/>

06/19/2026 and 07/10/2026: GI Jobs will be holding a virtual Vetrepreneur Franchise Coaching information session. The event is

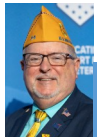
open to veterans and their spouses and provides information on owning a business franchise. Registration information can be found at: https://vetrepreneur.com/franchise-coaching-info-session/?utm_ID=vet

06/23/2026: HOH will be hosting a virtual SkillBridge fellowship information session. Their fellowships offer professional training and hands-on experience in the civilian workforce. They will offer the virtual sessions on a variety of dates. Registration information can be found at: https://uschamberfoundation.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1qRqhT7kS9KJ81DBaF7wrQ#/registration

Stand Down events are also helpful to veterans and their families. Stand Downs are typically one- to three-day events during which VA staff and volunteers provide food, clothing and health screenings to homeless and at-risk Veterans. In addition, Veterans also receive referrals for health care, housing solutions, employment, substance use treatment, mental health counseling and other essential services. These events are held throughout the country. A complete list of these events can be found at: <https://department.va.gov/homeless/stand-down-events/>

If you know a veteran in need, pass this information on to them. You could Be The One!





Harl "Butch" Ray (IL),
Contributor to *The Millennium*

**A Legacy Worthy of the Name:
PNC J.R. Stillwell**

In the proud history of the Sons of The American Legion, there are members who serve faithfully, members who lead boldly, and then there are those rare individuals whose dedication helps shape the very future of the organization itself. Past National Commander Richard "J.R." Stillwell belongs firmly in that final category.

For nearly seven decades, J.R. Stillwell has stood as a symbol of unwavering commitment, servant leadership, and devotion to the principles of God and Country. His remarkable journey in the Sons of The American Legion began on July 1, 1955, when he joined the organization at the age of 20. Today, as a Paid-Up-For-Life member with 69 continuous years of service, his record reflects not merely longevity, but a lifetime devoted to building and strengthening the SAL for generations to come.

J.R.'s contributions came during some of the most formative years in the organization's history. Alongside a select group of visionary members, he helped lead the reorganization of the "Modern" Sons of The American Legion during the critical SAL Workshops of the late 1960s. At a time when the future direction of the organization was still being defined, J.R. worked tirelessly to help establish the structure, purpose, and identity that members know today.

His influence did not stop there. J.R. was instrumental in helping convene the very first National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion, a historic milestone that cemented the organization's place within the broader The American Legion family. He also played a key role in revising the National SAL Constitution, helping lay the legal and organizational groundwork that would guide the Sons into the future.

Long before his national leadership roles, J.R. answered another call to service. From 1955 to 1958, he served honorably in the United States Army while stationed in Germany. That military service not only made him eligible to join The American Legion, but also reflected a lifelong pattern of duty, patriotism, and commitment to others.

Throughout his decades of involvement, J.R. held some of the organization's highest offices. He served two terms as National Chairman of the early SAL Workshops and is recognized as the third Past National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion. His leadership and legal insight were further demonstrated through two terms as National Adjutant and three terms as National Judge Advocate.

Perhaps even more impressive than the titles themselves is the consistency behind them. By nearly every recollection, J.R. Stillwell never missed a National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion for more than 50 years. That kind of steadfast dedication cannot be measured merely in attendance records — it is measured in friendships forged, leaders mentored, traditions preserved, and lives influenced.

It is only fitting that such a legacy be permanently honored. In recognition of his lifetime of service, the National organization of the Sons of The American Legion established the Past National Commander J.R. Stillwell National Legacy Award, ensuring that future generations of SAL members will know the name of the man whose efforts helped shape the organization they proudly serve today. J.R. was presented a plaque to honor this award on April 29, 2026 in Savoy, Illinois by members of the Illinois American Legion family leadership.

The naming of the award is far more than ceremonial. It serves as a lasting reminder that organizations are built not only by grand moments, but by decades of faithful service, hard work behind the scenes, and a willingness to answer the call year after year. J.R. Stillwell exemplified all of those qualities.

As the Sons of The American Legion moves forward into the future — approaching America's 250th anniversary and continuing its mission of veterans service, patriotism, and youth mentorship — the example set by Past National Commander J.R. Stillwell remains a guiding light.

His legacy is not simply written in resolutions or awards. It is written in the very foundation of the modern Sons of The American Legion itself.

Submitted Photo: PNC J.R. Stillwell receives the award created in his name.





**Shawn Morecraft (IL),
Vice Commander 18th District**

IN: Returning Home

Author's Note: Today I attended the service for this gentleman, and honestly it was quite moving. Standing there reminded me that this is part of my "why" for belonging and staying involved, to honor and pay respects to those who gave so much so we may enjoy our freedoms today.



Submitted Photo

After more than 84 years, U.S. Navy Seaman 1st Class Wayne E. Newton has finally returned home to Terre Haute, Indiana.

Newton, a 22-year-old Terre Haute native, was killed during the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, while serving aboard the battleship USS California.

Newton lost his life alongside more than 100 fellow crewmen when Japanese aircraft attacked Pearl Harbor. He is officially recognized as the first person from Indiana to be killed during World War II. For decades, his remains were listed among the missing.

In 2018, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency began exhuming unidentified remains from the USS California.

Newton was officially identified in September 2025.

In May 2026, Wayne Newton's remains were escorted home to Terre Haute, where members of the community lined the streets with American flags to honor his sacrifice. He was laid to rest with full military honors at Grandview Cemetery on May 16, 2026, a powerful reminder that America never forgets those who gave their lives in service to the nation.

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

SHARE YOUR WHY

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

**CLICK TO TELL
YOUR STORY.**



Submitted Photo: The Officers of Squadron 375 (Mukwonago, WI), were presented a Child Well-being Foundation Challenge Coin as a thank you for their financial support

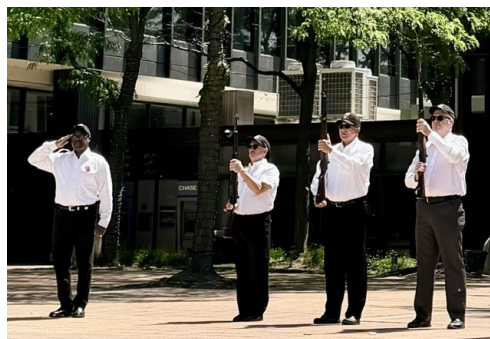


Submitted Photo: The Officers of Squadron 70 (Nutley, NJ) receive their CWF Streamer for their flag because of their 2025-26 per-capita donation.

[Read here to find out how to get yours.](#)

**David L. Kaput (IL),
Evanston, IL Squadron 42**

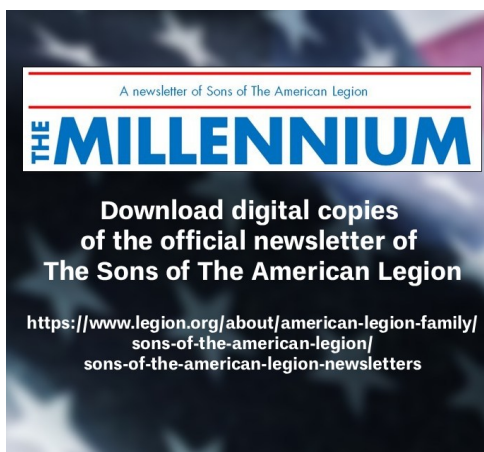
IL: Post 42 Rifle Team Salute at Memorial Day Remembrance Service



Submitted Photo: (L to R) Joe Jefferson (Team Leader), David Madison (Post 42 SAL Commander), David Kaput, John Powers, and, not shown, Ian Darbyshire (Armorer).

Evanston, IL Post 42 held its 2026 Memorial Day ceremony to remember and honor its citizen-soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice for our great nation. In addition to recognizing veterans in attendance, the Post 42 Rifle Team offered a salute before the playing of Taps and a closing invocation.

The Rifle Team joins the Evanston, IL Post 42 annual remembrance ceremonies on Memorial Day and Veteran's Day. They shoot WWII-era M1 Garand rifles using .30-06 Springfield blank cartridges in En bloc clips. During the year, the Rifle Team holds safety and practice sessions, meets for planning and camaraderie, and invites anyone interested in learning more to contact David Kaput at DKaput2000@gmail.com. No experience is required, but a dedication to remembering and honoring our fallen citizen-soldiers through committing to team participation is necessary. We look forward to welcoming you!



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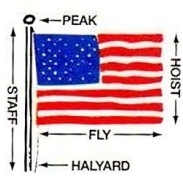
To:

This Month, On The Back Cover

HOW TO DISPLAY OUR FLAG



When the National Anthem is played, all present should face the flag with the right hand over the heart. Men should remove their hats. Persons in uniform should remain silent, face the flag, and salute.



The American flag features 13 horizontal stripes—seven of them are red and six are white. In the upper quarter of the flag next to the staff are white, five-pointed stars that designate each state.



When the flag is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, it should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.



When the flag is flown at half-staff, it should first be elevated to peak position, held there momentarily, and lowered. At the day's end, the flag should again be elevated to peak position before lowering.



The American flag, when carried in procession with another flag, should be on the marching right—its own right.



During the unveiling of monuments or statues, the flag should never be used as a covering.



When displayed with another flag in the crossed-staff format, the American flag should be on its own right—and in front of the other flags staff.



The American flag should be centered and at the highest point when displayed on its staff with other flags.



If other flags are flown on the same staff with the American flag, the American flag should be placed at the peak of the staff.

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!

In honor of Flag Day, look for the graphic below within this month's *Millennium*!

