



THE SOURCE

Detachment of Florida Newsletter

AUGUST 2026

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GROWTH ★ OPPORTUNITY ★ ACTION ★ LEADERSHIP ★ SUPPORT



DETACHMENT COMMANDER
MICHAEL NIGBOR
commander@floridasons.org

**GREETINGS FROM YOUR
DETACHMENT OF FLORIDA
COMMANDER!**

Thank you to everyone that attended our 54th annual convention. All the information and ideas that were exchanged was fantastic. Thank you to the MT&D Instructors, Adjutant Christian Rapp and your team, and all of the dedicated leadership for your time and input. This is going to be a wonderful year as the Greatest Nation in The World celebrates its' 250th Anniversary. We need to get the momentum going on our membership during this time and reach our goal of 32,000 members. We can do it, #1 Reinstate- our lost, 2 Renew- our current, #3 Recruit- our new.

As I have been travelling to our state attending installations, I am thrilled to hear the District Commanders use the script provided by Adjutant Rapp, teaching the attendees about our G.O.A.L.S. and this year's charity, C.O.T.A. Congratulations to the new incoming officers and thank you for your dedication to returning officers. Remember to challenge your members to recruit at least one new member this year and continue their "Buddy Checks".

June 14th was installation at Post 113 in Rotunda West. June 16 at 103 Punta Gorda and then June 17th at 135 Naples. June 20th installations at Posts 137, 197 and 129, District 5. June 21st continued at Posts 250, 202 and 233. June 23rd at Post 123 Sanibel Island. Then June 27th to District 16 Posts 14, 125, 305 and end at 158. June 28th at Posts 46 at 275, then 275, 252 and 104. July 1st, I traveled to District 3 for Post 57 installation as William Bell, dual member and his 3 sons were installed as S.A.L. Officers. July 2nd was installations at Post 107 and 224. July 4th, Asst. Adjutant John Jennings and I were invited to the annual Auxiliary Unit 238 Parade. Several of our officers were included and it was a fantastic day of Patriotism as we celebrated our 250th anniversary.

July 11th and 12th was the Leadership Retreat in Orlando and then Monday I was invited to attend the installation at Post 39, Vero Beach. July 18th will be installation at my home Post 303, Bonita Springs. On the 19th I will attend Post 321 and then July 20th at Post 415 Babcock Ranch. The 27th will be Post 254 and the 28th at Post K11.

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MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATES

Aug 27, 2026	25%
Sept 30, 2026	35%
Oct 29, 2026	45%
Nov 25, 2026	55%
Dec 30, 2026	65%
Jan 28, 2027	85%
Feb 25, 2027 *	90%
April 1, 2027	95%
Apr 29, 2027	100%
May 25, 2027 **	105%

* LEGION BIRTHDAY ** DELEGATE CUT-OFF



**SCAN THE
CODE TO JOIN
OUR EMAIL
GROUP!**



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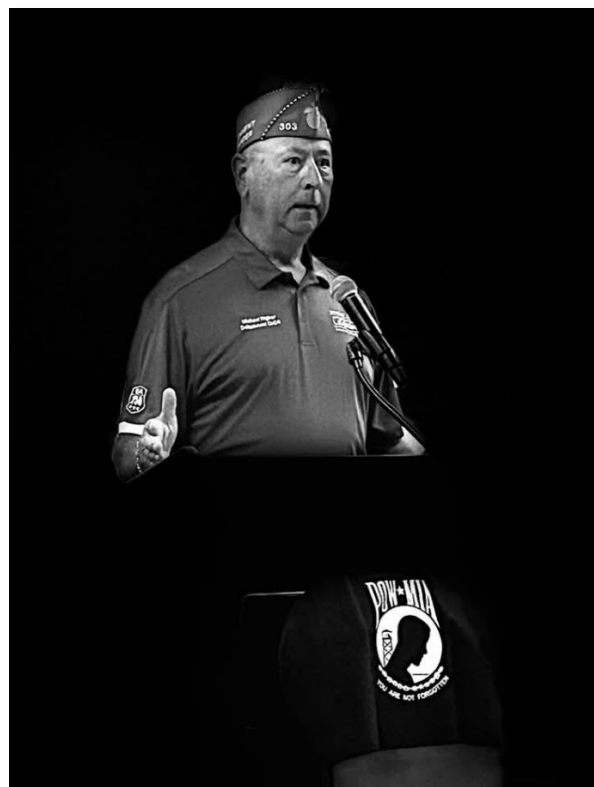
(Detachment Commander Continued)

Plans are for me to install the S.A.L. Officers at Post 323 on August 2nd. August 15th I will be in District 12 for Posts 22, 344 and 117. Several of us will be attending National Convention in Louisville Kentucky, August 27 to the 31st.

September 11th to the 13th, I have been invited to District 1 for their Children and Youth event. Department Commander, Auxiliary President and Riders Chairman are also invited to attend this wonderful event. The 26th will be the annual S.A.L. Car Show at Post 8 and later that day a great event supporting our charity, C.O.T.A. at Post 394. October 10th I and our C.O.T.A. representative have been invited to Bartow Post 3 for an event supporting our charity. Some National Officers might also be in attendance. I'm also getting invitations for events in January, February and March 2027.

By now, most of your installations have been done and you have been consolidation the SIR reports. Let's make sure we keep the momentum of our great year going strong and keep helping each other. We have a wonderful team of advisors that are always helping to assist with any questions you have to get all our reports completed. Call your members and get them engaged with your squadron. Teach them about our G.O.A.L.S., Growth, Opportunity, Action, Leadership and Support. Visit your neighbor Squadrons and invite them to yours. We are a team. We are stronger together. I look forward to working with all of you in the upcoming year. Let's go Team Florida, let's hit it out of the park. As always, if you would like me to attend any of your events, please feel free to contact me.

For God and Country,
Michael Nigbor





DETACHMENT ADJUTANT CHRISTIAN M RAPP

adjutant@floridasons.org

EQUIPPING YOU FOR SUCCESS ONE TIP AT A TIME

Welcome to a new Service Year! As Bob Dylan famously said, "The Times They Are a-Changin'." That certainly applies to the Sons of The American Legion this year.

Your Adjutant Team, along with several others, has been hard at work implementing new processes, improving existing ones, and developing new tools designed to make your jobs a little easier and help your squadrons become even more successful.

As you can imagine, wrapping up one service year while launching another is an extremely busy time. Between the normal end-of-year responsibilities, the beginning-of-year workload, and the development of these new resources, our time has been stretched thin. If I haven't been as responsive as I normally strive to be, please accept my sincere apologies. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work to provide you with the best support possible.

In this month's article, I'd like to address a few issues that have recently come to my attention, share some suggestions and best practices, and introduce several new tools and resources designed to make serving our organization a little easier. Whether you're a squadron officer, committee chairman, district leader, or simply an active member looking to make a difference, I hope you'll find something here to help make this Service Year even more successful.

2027 MEMBERSHIP CARDS

At the time of this writing the 2027 Membership Cards have been received by Department and are in the process of being packed and shipped to the squadrons. Please note that the lack of cards was not an issue with the Department of Florida, it was a printing and supply issue at the National level. Your patience waiting for the cards has been greatly appreciated - I know how frustrating it has been. If you haven't received your membership cards by the time you are reading this, please let me know ASAP and I will check into it.

NOTE: If you have a member that hasn't received their card yet and they want it right away, encourage them to renew through the myLegion.org portal. Once their payment is received they can print their card themselves right away.

MYLEGION.ORG ACCESS

Each year on July 1, the Department resets all myLegion.org membership processing access. Access is then restored based on the officer information submitted on your Squadron Information Report (SIR). If you no longer have access, the most likely reason is that your SIR was not submitted promptly following your squadron elections. If your SIR has been submitted and you still cannot access the system, please contact me and I'll be happy to assist.

Please also keep in mind that Bekki at Department is responsible for restoring access for



ADJUTANT TEAM

Christian M Rapp	Adjutant
John Jennings	Assistant Adjutant
George Steger	Assistant Adjutant
Ed Sheubrooks	Adjutant Emeritus



FALL CONFERENCE

Please join us for this year's Detachment Fall Conference which will be held **November 20 to November 22, 2026** at the **Caribe Royale Orlando**.

The hotel is located at 8101 World Center Drive Orlando, FL 32821.

The room block is now open
BOOK YOUR ROOMS TODAY!

Phone: 407-238-8000



SQUADRON PORTAL

You may have received an email from **Florida SAL Reporting Portal**. This is not spam. This is part of the new Squadron Portal system we're creating that will help with squadron information management and reporting at the end of the year. Take some time to explore the system. More information about the system will be coming soon.



ROAD TRIP!

COMMANDER NIGBOR LOVES TO TRAVEL!

If you are having an event that you would like him to attend, please email him at **commander@floridasons.org**.

Please note that he is being requested frequently. If you would like him to attend, please invite him as soon as you plan your event.



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(Detachment Adjutant Continued)

every American Legion Post and Sons of The American Legion Squadron across the entire state. With hundreds of organizations to update, it's understandable that an occasional account may be overlooked or take a little longer to process. We appreciate your patience and understanding as she works through this annual task.

COMMUNICATION WITH OUR MEMBERS

While we take care of business, we are not a 'business'. We are an organization of volunteers who dedicate our time to supporting something we believe in. Our volunteers, from the Detachment level down to the squadron level, come from all walks of life. Some have worked for Fortune 500 companies or large corporations, some work in the trades, and others have no formal business training. They are simply members doing their best to support our organization.

Because of those different backgrounds, we need to be mindful of how we communicate with one another. Whether it's in person, by letter, or through email, every member deserves to be treated with fairness and respect. Communications that are negative, accusatory, or unnecessarily harsh often have the opposite effect of what was intended. Instead of solving a problem, they may drive members away. *Remember, we're all volunteers trying to keep this organization running in our spare time.*

One of the easiest ways to improve your communications is to proofread them before you send them. Read them from the recipient's point of view. Some people are naturally good writers, while others struggle to put their thoughts into words. Likewise, those who have spent years in a corporate environment may write in a style that seems perfectly normal to them but comes across as harsh or intimidating to others.

I've found Artificial Intelligence (AI) to be a useful tool for refining my writing. (I can already hear the groans!) I'm not suggesting you use AI to write everything for you, but it can be an excellent editor. In fact, I used ChatGPT to help polish this article. Simply write your message, paste it into ChatGPT, and begin your prompt with **"Refine:"**. It can improve the grammar, flow, and tone while keeping your original message intact.

No matter what tools you use, always remember that professionalism and courtesy go a long way. You can be firm and authoritative while still being respectful. **Our Words Matter. We're Stronger Together.** The way we communicate reflects on all of us and on the Sons of The American Legion.

COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR MEMBERS

This may be the very first time you've received 'The Source' in your inbox. (More on that later in this edition.) You are receiving it because you are in our Google email group. Google Groups are **FREE** and can be an excellent tool for communicating with your members - especially our seasonal or out-of-state members. I not only have a Google Group for my Squadron, but for my Squadron officers as well. I send out important squadron information as well as my squadron minutes through both outlets. I use the officers group to directly communicate with the officers if needed.

Now that we are collecting email addresses when a member signs up, you can take that email address and add it to your mailing list. If you don't have this information on file, ask the member next time you see them and tell them why you need the info. Make sure to assure the member you will not be giving out or selling their information.

If you would like help setting up a Google Group, please reach out to me - I'll be glad to assist. Please note that in order to setup and manage a Google Group you **must** have a valid Gmail address.

That's it for now. I hope you all have a great year that's even better than last year! Please let me or the rest of the Adjutant Team know if you need help with anything.

For God and Country,
Christian M Rapp



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DETACHMENT ASST ADJUTANT
JOHN JENNINGS

fl.johnjennings@gmail.com

GREETINGS EVERYONE!

Our 54th Annual Detachment Convention is now in the history book, and it was another great Convention. The work is already in progress for our upcoming Fall Conference in November and our 55th Detachment Convention in June of 2027. If you have done so, make your reservation now for both. The dates for our Fall Conference and Convention can be found on our website at www.floridasons.org.

Congratulations to Commander Nigbor for his reelection as our Detachment Commander for the year 2026-2027. I'm excited to see what I Commander has up his sleeve for us this year.

Let's all start this year off strong and let's promise to finish strong. Commander Nigbor's membership goal is 32,000 members; our target dates and percentage number have changed. We most stay on top of our membership this year and let no TEAM slip behind. When installations are complete by mid-August we should have **NO ZERO** Squadrons. The communication network between the membership Committee, the District Staff, and the Squadrons **MUST** be at an all-time high. **WE MUST COMMUNICATE AT ALL LEVELS!!!!**

We need to get our training out to our Squadron members and this needs to start with our District and Area Vice Commander organizing classes and talking it up. The Member Training & Development Committee is ready and excited to put boots on the ground to help educate our members.

We are all stronger as a team if we work as team. Each of us has something to bring to the table and each of can do something better than others. So in 2026-2027 let's come together and work together some that the Detachment of Florida can be the best it can be.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER ON THE 3-R'S OF MEMBERSHIP:

R-EINSTATING OUR LOST!
R-ENEWING OUR CURRENT!
R-ECRUIT OUR NEW!

Let's get this done. Let's Play Ball and have lot's of fun! Let's make a commitment together today that we will reach Commander Nigbor goal of 32,000 members by delegate cut-off in June of 2027. **Let's do this!!!**

For God and Country,
John Jennings



BE A POWER HITTER!

4 RENEWALS + 4 NEW MEMBERS

Encourage 4 members to renew and recruit
4 new members during the service year
to earn the Power Hitter Award!

Let's build a stronger Team SAL Florida!





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NAT'L EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN
GERARD SAMBETS

sambetsg@gmail.com

**GREETINGS FROM YOUR
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN!**

As we start this year's program, let us remember why we are here and who we are honoring.

I am thankful for being elected as your NEC for the next two years. Our ANEC Steve, and I want you to know that we work for you, the detachment of Florida, and our Commander Michael Nigbor. We plan on keeping you informed on the issues that are presented at the national level and deciding what is best for Florida and our membership. We will not make decisions without consulting the leadership and ensuring that this is what is best for all.

A great way for you to be involved is by joining Voters Voice and letting your thoughts and opinions be heard. It is simple to do, just register with them, and when a call to action appears, you just fill out the form and urge your congressional leaders to vote. The site will automatically direct you to your senator and congressman. Most issues involve Veterans' benefits and doing what is best for our veterans. Please search for and sign up for this program and let your voice be heard. We have approximately 30,000 members, so let's make a difference.

We are heading to Louisville, Kentucky, at the end of August to represent Florida, pick up some well-deserved awards, and also gather any information from the national organization that may affect our group. We look forward to representing you through the upcoming year and doing what is best for Florida.

For God and Country,

Gerard Sambets

National Executive Committeeman
Detachment of Florida



**ALT NAT'L EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEEMAN**
STEVE GORDON

sgordon1967@comcast.net

**GREETINGS FROM YOUR
ALT NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN!**

My fellow Sons: Thank you for electing me to represent you as your Alternate National Executive Committeeman. It's both an honor and a privilege to be representing our Detachment at the National level. I'm looking forward to working with NEC Sambets and Detachment Commander Nigbor. I will be attending the National Convention in Louisville, and hopefully will be bringing back new information to pass along to our membership.

Until next month....

For God and Country,
Steve Gordon

Alt National Executive Committeeman
Detachment of Florida



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DETACHMENT CHAPLAIN
RAY LEVENTHAL
chaplain@floridasons.org

UNITY IN STRENGTH, GUIDED BY HOPE

There are moments in every life—and in every community—when the road ahead seems difficult to see. Challenges may come through personal loss, illness, financial strain, division, uncertainty, or the burdens we carry quietly within ourselves. At such times, it can feel as though the light has grown dim and we must face the darkness alone.

But we are not alone.

As members of the Sons of The American Legion, we are joined by more than membership cards, meeting rooms, and shared traditions. We are united by a commitment to service, patriotism, community, and one another. We are part of a family that understands sacrifice, honors those who have served, and recognizes that strength is not measured only by what a person can carry alone. True strength is also found in knowing when to stand beside someone else—and when to allow someone else to stand beside us.

Our veterans and their families understand this truth deeply. Service has always depended on teamwork. No one succeeds alone. Every mission, every watch, every difficult season requires people who are willing to trust each other, encourage each other, and work toward a purpose greater than themselves. That same spirit continues in our posts, squadrons, units, and communities today.

When times are good, fellowship is easy. We gather, laugh, share stories, volunteer, and celebrate the accomplishments of our members and our organization. Yet it is during the hard times that fellowship becomes especially meaningful. It is in those moments that a phone call, a handshake, a meal delivered to a neighbor, a ride to an appointment, or a simple message saying, “I’m here for you,” can make a lasting difference.

We may not always have the perfect words. We cannot always solve every problem. But we can be present. We can listen. We can show compassion. We can remind someone who feels forgotten that they are valued, respected, and still part of a larger family.

Faith, in its many forms, can also be a source of courage and renewal. For some, faith is expressed through prayer and worship. For others, it is found in reflection, service, gratitude, family, nature, or a deeply held belief that hope remains even when circumstances are difficult. Whatever path gives us spiritual strength, it can help us remember that darkness does not have the final word.

Faith does not mean that we will never experience hardship. It does not mean we will always understand why difficult things happen. Rather, faith can give us the resolve to continue when answers are unclear. It can help us choose kindness instead of anger, unity instead of division, and hope instead of despair. It can remind us that even a small light can shine brightly in a dark place.

As a Detachment, we have the opportunity to be that light for one another. We can strengthen our squadrons by encouraging participation, welcoming new members, and honoring the experience and wisdom of those who have served our organization for many years. We can support our American Legion Family by working alongside the Legion, Auxiliary, and other partners in service. We can reach beyond our meeting halls to assist veterans, military families, young people, first responders, and neighbors in need.

Unity does not require that we all think alike, worship alike, or come from the same background. In fact, the strength of our organization comes from the many different life experiences, talents, perspectives, and traditions represented among us. Unity means recognizing that, despite our differences, we share a common commitment: to serve with honor, to care for others, and to leave our communities stronger than we found them.



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(Detachment Chaplain Continued)

There will be days when the work feels heavy. There will be times when membership efforts are challenging, resources seem limited, or the needs in our communities appear greater than our ability to meet them. In those moments, we should remember that progress is often made one act of service at a time. One member inviting another to a meeting. One squadron supporting a family. One volunteer project completed. One veteran reminded that their service will never be forgotten.

Small acts, when joined together, become a powerful force.

Let us also remember to care for ourselves. Those who serve others sometimes forget that they, too, need encouragement, rest, and support. If you are struggling, please do not carry your burden in silence. Reach out to a trusted friend, family member, fellow member, chaplain, counselor, or community resource. Asking for help is not weakness. It is an act of courage—and it gives others the privilege of serving beside you.

In the days ahead, may we continue to build a Detachment marked by compassion, respect, and determination. May we be quick to offer a hand, slow to judge, and always ready to serve. May we find strength in our unity, comfort in our faith, and purpose in our shared mission.

When the path appears dark, let us stand together. When a brother or neighbor is weary, let us help carry the load. And when hope seems distant, let us remember that through service, fellowship, and faith, we can continue to bring light to one another and to the communities we proudly serve.

For those who were able to attend the most recent Detachment Convention, thank you for your support. I look forward to serving as your elected Chaplain again this service year.

My God bless us all, and may God continue to bless our great nation for the next 250 years and beyond.

As always, I'm available to anyone who seeks fellowship, a conversation, a joke or just company.

For God and Country,
Ray Leventhal





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DETACHMENT HISTORIAN
**MICHAEL 'TANK'
SHERMAN**

historian@floridasons.org

CAPTURING OUR HISTORY, HONORING OUR LEGACY

Happy "New Year" to you all!

First and foremost, thank you all for your support. I am truly honored and humbled to have been elected as your 2026–2027 Detachment Historian. I sincerely appreciate the confidence you have placed in me, and I will do my very best to serve this Detachment with dedication throughout the coming year.

I had the opportunity to speak at several of the Area Caucuses during our Detachment Convention, where I shared my belief that the Historian position is one of the most overlooked...and yet, in my opinion, one of the most important roles within the American Legion Family. As the Preamble to our Constitution reminds us, we are the "proud possessors of a priceless heritage." That heritage, however, can only be passed on if we take the time to preserve it. That is exactly what Historians are called to do.

Each Squadron Historian records the story of their Squadron. My responsibility is to preserve the story of our Detachment as a whole.

When I first announced my intention to run for Detachment Historian, Past Detachment Commander John Jennings shared a story with me that has stayed on my mind ever since. While preparing for our Detachment's 50th Anniversary, he went to Headquarters to look through our historical records. What he found was heartbreaking...only **TWO** history books documenting our first fifty years. That meant decades of service, memories, accomplishments, and countless volunteers had gone largely undocumented. I remember telling him then that it was sad, unacceptable, and that we could do better.

This year, with your help, I believe we can.

We have 194 Squadrons spread across 16 Districts. Every Squadron has its own projects, ceremonies, fundraisers, community events, and moments worth remembering. By the time Convention arrives next year, there is no reason we shouldn't have a history book overflowing with the incredible work being done across this Detachment.

To help make that happen, I am currently working with our Detachment Adjutant to build a directory of Squadron Historians. When our Detachment Commander is attending an event and I'm unable to be there personally, I'll be able to connect with a local Historian to help ensure those moments are captured and preserved.

Our Detachment history isn't just about the Detachment Commander and what events he attends... It's about every Squadron, every member, and every act of service that makes this organization what it is. Commander Nigbor does not have to be present for your event to become part of our history.

If your Squadron hosts an event, all I need are a few photos and a brief summary of who was involved, what took place, who benefited, funds raised, and the highlights. Those moments deserve to be remembered, and together we can ensure they are.

On the next page, you'll find a QR code that allows you to upload your photos directly to the Detachment photo gallery. After uploading your pictures, simply send me an email at **historian@floridasons.org** with a short description of the event, and I'll make sure it's included in our official history and shared in our public gallery.



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(Detachment Historian Continued)

To our Squadron and District Commanders, I ask that you please encourage your Historians to reach out to me so we can begin building this team. The more connected we are, the easier it will be to preserve the incredible work happening across Florida.

At the end of this year, I don't want us to look back and wonder what stories were lost. I want us to look back knowing we preserved the memories, accomplishments, and dedication of the men who made this year possible.

I have been entrusted with compiling the history of this Detachment, but more importantly, I have been entrusted with preserving your history. I can't accomplish that without your help, and I truly appreciate each of you being part of this effort.

If you have any questions, ideas, or suggestions, please don't hesitate to reach out. I look forward to working alongside all of you as we document this year's story and preserve it for the future members of this Detachment.

For God and Country,

Michael 'Tank' Sherman

Detachment Photo Gallery: <https://detachmenthistorian.smugmug.com>

SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS!



<https://www.smugmug.com/upload/D7NN4f/UserSubmission>

At this time, you can only submit one photo at a time.

After submitting your photos, please send a short email to historian@floridasons.org describing your photos (who's in it, what the event was, etc).

SNAPSHOTS OF SERVICE | VIDEOS OF SERVICE

Each year, every SAL squadron has the ability to enter two contests: Snapshots of Service and Videos of Service. SAL squadrons have until June 30 to submit entries in the annual Snapshots of Service and Videos of Service contests.

Snapshots of Service entries must be submitted by a squadron and reflect one of the Four Pillars of The American Legion: Americanism, Children & Youth, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, or National Security. Photos must be in a digital JPG or TIFF format and have no right of restriction. Photos must contain members of the Sons with their covers or identifiable clothing on during the activity or event and a brief history of the event. Squadrons may submit a maximum of three entries per category.

The Videos of Service contest is open to all SAL members. Videos must contain members of the SAL with their covers or identifiable clothing on during the activity or event. Videos shall fall under one of these categories: Program Support, Community Engagement, or Membership and Recruitment. Videos should be under five minutes and should be published to Facebook, YouTube or Instagram. A link to the published video's location must be included on the award entry form.

Entry forms for each contest are available under "Public Media & Communications" at <https://www.legion.org/about/american-legion-family/sons-of-the-american-legion/publications-and-forms>.

PAST WINNER



In 2018, Jim Steele of Squadron 137 in Jacksonville won 3 Snapshots of Service awards. The awards were:

**1st Place VA&R
2nd Place Americanism
2nd Place VA&R**

This was the first time the Detachment of Florida won this award.

Read more about this and view the winning photos on our website at <https://floridasons.org/squadron-137-wins-three-snapshots-of-service-awards>



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VICE COMMANDER EAST
ANDY CAMPBELL

vceast@floridasons.org

GREETINGS FROM THE EASTERN AREA!

Hello!

For those of you who don't know me, I'd like to introduce myself. I have been a member of The American Legion Family for 13 years and proudly belong to Squadron 117. Before moving to Florida, I was active with the Sons of AMVETS in Wisconsin. Since joining the Sons of The American Legion, I have served as Squadron Commander, District Vice Commander, and District Commander. Each role has helped me grow as a leader and strengthened my commitment to our organization.

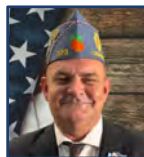
The Eastern Area is fortunate to have two outstanding District Commanders this year: Gary Raymond in the 12th District and Sonny Perchitti in the 6th District. Please invite them to your meetings and events, and don't hesitate to reach out if you would like me to attend as well. I look forward to meeting many of you throughout the year.

Membership will be one of our biggest challenges this year. At the time of writing this article, our membership cards have not yet arrived, which presents an obstacle as we begin our renewal efforts. Even so, I encourage every squadron to keep the momentum going by collecting renewals and preparing memberships so we can reach our first target goal of 25% by the August target date.

I am excited to work alongside the Detachment leadership, our District Commanders, and each of the squadrons in the Eastern Area. Together, by communicating, supporting one another, and staying focused on our shared G.O.A.L.S. of Growth, Opportunity, Action, Leadership, and Support, I know we can have a successful and rewarding year.

I look forward to meeting and working with all of you throughout the coming year.

For God and Country,
Andy Campbell



13TH DISTRICT COMMANDER
MITCHELL PACE

car_tech@rocketmail.com

HELLO FROM THE MIGHTY 13TH DISTRICT!

Thank you for electing me for a second term. Squadron installations are almost finished and I am happy to see so many familiar faces. And amazing people we have in our District working towards our goals. I cannot wait to come back to the posts and attend your events. My goal this year Hasn't changed Communication and Mentorship. Children are our future and Communication is key. Please, if you have any events let me know I will post it on our district pages and get the word out. While I can't be in multiple places at once I will do my best to attend. Lets have another amazing year. The district staff is here to help you in any way please feel free to reach out to us.

For God and Country,
Mitchell Pace



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12TH DISTRICT COMMANDER
GARY RAYMOND

garyraymond4466@gmail.com

HELLO FROM THE 12TH DISTRICT!

My name is Gary Raymond, and I am honored to serve as your District 12 Commander for 2026–2027. I have served as Squadron Commander at Post 394 for the past 4 years. Everything the SAL does is rooted in our commitment to supporting veterans. I am actively involved in attending and participating in numerous Post events, District 12 events, Conferences and Conventions. I look forward to seeing our Squadron Commanders at our upcoming events such as the Children & Youth Picnic, the District 12 Picnic, and the Special Olympics event. As a leader, I believe in leading by example, and I encourage each of you to do the same. My motto is, **“Do it for the cause, not the applause.”**

This year our focus will be on setting G.O.A.L.S. (Growth, Opportunity, Action, Leadership & Support). Through G.O.A.L.S. we strive to strengthen our organization while making a meaningful difference for our Veterans, their families and our communities (more details forthcoming). As the American Legion family continues to evolve, so will we. I urge you to branch outside your Post, attend other Posts benefits, share ideas and ask them about their successful endeavors.

I will be happy to help you any way I can. Do not hesitate to reach out to me. I am at your service to support, train and mentor you. Let me help you succeed as the Squadron Commander at your Post. You can reach me by email at graymond4466@gmail.com or call my cell phone at **845-464-3653**.

I look forward to getting to know all of you. I believe this will be an exciting and rewarding year for us all!

For God and Country,
Gary Raymond



7TH DISTRICT COMMANDER
DAN HEIER

keierh@aol.com

7TH DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

(times and days subject to change)

DATE	TIME	FAMILY	HOST POST	POST ADDRESS
Aug 8, 2026	10:00a	DISTRICT	POST 4	1375 ARIANA ST LAKELAND, FL 33803
	11:30a	RIDERS		
Sept 30, 2026	7:00p	SONS	POST 34	107 N 11th ST HAINES CITY, FL 33844
Nov 14, 2026	10:00a	DISTRICT	POST 34	107 N 11th ST HAINES CITY, FL 33844
	11:30a	RIDERS		
Nov 10, 2026	7:00p	SONS	POST 4	1375 ARIANA ST LAKELAND, FL 33803
Feb 13, 2027	10:00a	JOINT MTG & 7TH DISTRICT PICNIC	POST 72	1500 N CHURCH AVE MULBERRY, FL 33860
TBD - MAY '27	1:00p	DCC	POST 8	
	2:30p	RIDERS		
	11:00a	SONS		



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9TH DISTRICT ADJUTANT
SAM ALOI
kj4srf@gmail.com

GREETINGS FROM 9TH DISTRICT!

Welcome to our New District Commander **Martin Kraemer**. He's hit the ground running, visiting our posts and embracing the Detachment Commanders projects. I would be amiss to not mention our past District Commander Jesse Bogle. His guidance and attention to details brought us high praise.

We have a new 1st Vice Commander Paul Stawicki. The Commander asked me to take the adjutant position as well as continuing summing articles for the Source. As before I'm going to continue to post both events as well as reminders on how to run a successful meeting. I'm posting some pictures from some of our installations.

For God and Country,
Sam Aloï





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INTERNAL AFFAIRS CHAIRMAN
ROCKY CIRIGLIANO

sprintcar-rc@att.net

A NEW YEAR OF SERVICE, LEADERSHIP, AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

TOGETHER, WE MOVE FORWARD WITH PURPOSE, PRIDE, AND COMMITMENT TO SERVICE.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2026–2027 LEADERSHIP

Congratulations to our re-elected Commander, Michael Nigbor, and to all Officers, Commission and Committee Chairs, and members for 2026–2027. Your continued dedication, leadership, and service help strengthen our organization and carry forward the values that unite us.

As we begin this new year together, we encourage every Commission and Committee Chair to keep members actively engaged in the work of their respective areas. Through communication, teamwork, and shared commitment, we can build on our accomplishments and make 2026–2027 a year of meaningful progress and proud service.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Denton “Shay” Woods | Squadron 155

Rob McCarten | Squadron 142

John Jennings | Squadron 3

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Please remember your 2026–2027 Detachment of Florida Membership Committee members. These dedicated committee members are available to support District Leadership and assist with Squadrons that may not reach their goals or may be struggling with membership.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman Paul Stawicki | Squadron 142

Central Eric Rikansrud | Squadron 138

Southwest Robert “Buzzard” Medley | Squadron 312

West Troy Touchton | Squadron 382

North Denton “Shay” Woods | Squadron 77

East Andy Campbell | Squadron 117

South Michael Mathias | Squadron 164

These committee members will be contacting District Leadership with questions regarding Squadrons that do not reach their goals or are experiencing membership challenges.

Membership Update

Chairman Paul Stawicki, thank you for your untiring efforts in reporting membership. We have a great deal taken place with membership as our numbers continue to grow, and it is becoming increasingly important that everyone participates in membership efforts.

The growth of our Squadrons and Detachment deserves the attention and support of everyone. We now begin our quest for our 32nd consecutive all-time high. Play Ball



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(internal Affairs Continued)

OTHER COMMITTEES OF THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION

The following committees also serve within the Internal Affairs Commission and provide important support throughout the year:

COMMITTEES AND CHAIRS

Member Training & Development
Finance Committee
Convention Committee
Constitution & Bylaws Committee
Resolutions Committee
Credentials Committee

Peter Puzo | Squadron 189
Ed Sheubrooks | Squadron 40
Ed Sheubrooks | Squadron 40
Jim Roberts | Squadron 4
Ed Sheubrooks | Squadron 40
Rob McCarten | Squadron 142

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE

Resolution FLDC-26-001, Delegates to District Constitutional Conference, passed at Convention and was forwarded to the Detachment Constitution and By-Laws Committee for the development of a constitutional amendment and to make certain there is no conflict with said amendment and the Department of Florida's Constitution and By-Laws.

MEMBER TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Member Training & Development continues to work on the training needs of our Detachment. Please contact the Detachment Member Training & Development Chairman, Peter Puzzo, if you are interested in holding training classes for your Squadron, District, or Area. His contact information can be found on our website.

We need to make every effort to educate our members in order to support our continued growth and development. Please also contact him if you have suggestions regarding specific training needs.

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS COMMITTEE UPDATE

During the Detachment Convention, the Sons of The American Legion, Detachment of Florida approved all amendments to the Detachment Constitution and By-Laws. As required, the amendments were ratified by the Detachment Executive Committee and provided to The American Legion, Department of Florida Executive Committee for approval. The Department Executive Committee unanimously approved the amendments.

Together, let us turn our commitment into action, strengthen every Squadron, and make 2026–2027 another record-setting year of growth, service, and success. **#G.O.A.L.S.**

For God and Country,
Rocky Cirigliano



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(internal Affairs Continued)

As a standing tradition, we include the **Preamble to the Sons of The American Legion National Constitution** in every Internal Affairs article. Members are encouraged to read and reflect on its powerful words. This is more than a statement, the foundation of why we serve.

Consider taking a minute at your next Squadron meeting to read the preamble together. Use it as a training tool and a reminder of the duty and sacrifice of the veterans who made our freedom possible.

PREAMBLE TO THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

**PROUD POSSESSORS OF A PRICELESS HERITAGE, WE MALE DESCENDANTS OF VETERANS OF ALL WARS,
ASSOCIATE OURSELVES TOGETHER AS "SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION" FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:**

- To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America,
- to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a true spirit of Americanism,
- to preserve the memories of our former members and the associations of our members and our forefathers in all wars,
- to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation,
- to combat the autocracy of both the classes and masses,
- to make right the master of might,
- to promote peace and good will on earth,
- to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy,
- to consecrate and sanctify our friendship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness,
- to adopt in letter and spirit all of the great principles for which The American Legion stands,
- and to assist in carrying on for God and Country.



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MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN
PAUL STAWICKI
promolont7@gmail.com

WELCOME TO A NEW FISCAL YEAR!

Welcome to August 2026 and the start of our 2026–2027 fiscal year. As we begin this new year, let us remember the lessons we learned last year and prepare for the changes ahead. Each of us will be accountable for the responsibilities we have accepted within the detachment.

SUPPORTING OUR SQUADRONS, COMMUNITIES, AND VETERANS

Squadrons and squadron commanders, it is your responsibility to support your Legion Family in all that you do. Always remember that we are here to serve our communities and, especially, our veterans.

You have been charged with helping make this year's program a success. However, you are not alone. District officers are responsible for assisting you in every way possible so that you can succeed. They must help explain what the detachment is looking for this year and serve as our eyes and ears in the field.

ROLES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The membership committee, including all area vice commanders, will also be available to assist when needed. They serve as another voice of the detachment and must help ensure that each area, along with the districts under its oversight, has the support needed to be successful.

Area vice commanders, you are not alone either. The detachment will be here to assist you as needed. While much of this may already be familiar, what must be clear this year is that everyone will be held accountable for the office to which they were elected. It will no longer be acceptable for area commanders or district commanders to simply watch from the sidelines.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VISITATIONS

Your visitations will be among the most important responsibilities you carry out this year. They will give you firsthand knowledge of what each squadron is doing and where support may be needed.

#SALGOALS AND THE "PLAY BALL!" THEME

#SALGOALS represents Commander Nigbor's principles for this year:

Growth • Opportunity • Action • Leadership • Support

We will also work with this year's theme: PLAY BALL! This theme will give squadrons, districts, and areas the opportunity to earn points by reaching their goals and continuing to grow beyond them rather than stopping once a goal is attained.

Those who follow the rules and continue gaining membership will win the tournament, along with trophies and prizes at next year's convention. The membership committee and district officers will explain the details to each squadron. Let's make this effort both competitive and fun.

GOAL DATES

Aug 27, 2026	25%
Sept 30, 2026	35%
Oct 29, 2026	45%
Nov 25, 2026	55%
Dec 30, 2026	65%
Jan 28, 2027	85%
Feb 25, 2027 *	90%
April 1, 2027	95%
Apr 29, 2027	100%
May 25, 2027 **	105%

* LEGION BIRTHDAY ** DELEGATE CUT-

MEMBERSHIP TIP

The **POWER HITTER AWARD** is an individual membership award you can give to multiple people in your post family, not just squadron members. Use this award for members, such as your bartenders, that encourage members to renew their dues or encourage people to become members.

Remember, a simple THANK YOU can mean so much.

You can find the award in the administration manual on our website at <https://floridasons.Org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/salf-admin-manual-2627.Pdf>



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(Membership Chairman Continued)

MEMBERSHIP GOAL AND COMMUNICATION

Commander Nigbor's goal this year is to reach 32,000 members. Let's get to work by communicating with one another about the good things happening in our squadrons. At the same time, do not hesitate to raise issues or concerns before they get out of hand.

I look forward to a successful year for everyone.

Paul J. Stawicki

RULES OF THE GAME

- Each Squadron with the largest percentage at each base (target) will be awarded the point in the District.
- The same rule will apply to the Districts.
- Once a Squadron reaches 100%, they can't continue to score runs without growth in membership.

LET'S PLAY BALL!

SCORING

SPRING TRAINING

1ST BASE: 35% MEMBERSHIP – 1 RUN

REGULAR SEASON

2ND BASE: 65% TARGET – 1 RUN

3RD BASE - 90% TARGET – 1 RUN

HOMEPLATE - 100% TARGET – 1 RUN

GRAND SLAM 105% - BONUS – 2 POINTS FOR LARGEST OVER THE 105%.

More explanation will be given at Convention on the scoring process.

LEAGUE ORGANIZATION

Commander – Commissioner

Membership Chairman – Director of Baseball

Vice Commanders– Managers

(MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE)

District Commanders – Coaches

Squadrons - Players

Districts are encouraged to come up with a team name to use during the 2026-2027 membership year. *It's a challenge, let's have fun!*



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MT&D CHAIRMAN
PETE PUZZO
pooz1830@gmail.com

EQUIPPING MEMBERS WITH THE SKILLS TO LEAD

Hello Brother Sons...its Peter Puzzo, the Chairman of Membership Training and Development for the Detachment of Florida. I am taking this opportunity to tell you about a new venture by your MT&D Committee.

I have begun laying out a Video Channel that will post to our Facebook Page and to a YouTube Channel.

This channel is being established to provide our members with a new way to learn about who we are, what we are about, and how we do what we do.

I invite you to watch as a Squadron and use the video in addition to our Info-Grams. I will send out an email to our District Commanders as videos are posted.

WHY DO WE NEED TRAINING?

Training is a hands on experience. Development is the learning process and the putting that learning into practice.

When we combine the 2, the student not only learns about the subject but then shows he is able to use it in a way to benefit the Squadron.

All Squadron Commanders should have our Catalog of Training Sessions. That Catalog contains all of the Sessions we are equipped to offer on a moments notice. The way to use it is as follows...

Consider the needs of the Squadron, both it's Membership and Officers. What, in your opinion, would benefit everyone. Look through the Catalog and complete the Request for Training and follow it through.

If you're not sure about a topic, discuss it at a meeting. If everyone has a say in the training program, you may find a larger attendance than you thought possible.

WATCH OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

Sons of The American Legion Training Page, and please click on Follow so that you get notices of any information posted on the Page.

If needed, contact me via mtd@floridasons.org or text me at **(772) 532-6511**.

For God and Country,
Pete Puzzo



HURRICANE SEASON
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ALL FLORIDA SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION ARE ELIGIBLE



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CHILDREN & YOUTH CHAIRMAN

DANNY ROE

childrenyouth@floridasons.org

INVESTING IN YOUTH TODAY, BUILDING TOMORROW'S LEADERS.

Hello! My name is Danny Roe, and it is my honor to once again serve as the Detachment of Florida Children & Youth Chairman. I look forward to another great year of accomplishments and events.

Please keep me informed of your Children & Youth activities and submit them to The Source. I would also love the opportunity to attend some of your events, so please send me an invitation. I'll do my best to come out and support your squadron.

We had a fantastic year, and I'd like to share a few highlights. At Convention, we recognized the top three Children & Youth reports:

Second Runner-Up: Squadron 173, Holiday

First Runner-Up: Squadron 347, Lady Lake

First Place: Squadron 323, Lehigh Acres

Congratulations to all three squadrons! I would also like to recognize Squadron 186, Spring Hill; Squadron 238, Safety Harbor; and Squadron 318, Port St. Lucie for submitting outstanding reports.

One of the biggest factors in these reports is documenting volunteer hours. This past year, squadrons reported **49,890** volunteer hours, valued at **\$1,670,816**, along with **\$389,167** in cash donations. Those are impressive numbers!

However, we received only 100 reports out of a possible 195, and **31 OF THOSE REPORTS CONTAINED ALL ZEROS**. While I appreciate every report that was submitted, I encourage you to look beyond cash donations. Did your squadron hold a children's Christmas party, help with an Easter egg hunt, hand out Halloween candy, or volunteer at another youth event?

Volunteer hours count. Last year they were valued at **\$33.49 per hour**, and many activities qualify for more than one Pillar. For example, Scouts placing flags on veterans' graves for Memorial Day can count toward Americanism, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, and Children & Youth.

Not every squadron can make large financial donations, but every squadron can tell the story of its service through volunteer hours.

My goal this year is simple: more reports and fewer zeros. If you have questions about reporting or whether an activity qualifies, please don't hesitate to ask. I'm always happy to help.

I look forward to seeing many of you on the road this year!

For God, Country and Our Children,
Danny Roe



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VA&R AND PVR CHAIRMAN
BOB O'NEAL
var@floridasons.org

HONORING THE PAST, SUPPORTING THE PRESENT, INVESTING IN THE FUTURE.

Less than 20% of 195 Squadrons submitted VA&R reports which were reviewed at the Convention in June. It is impossible for a squadron to have 0 hours spent during the year.

Volunteer hours are crucial and warrant recognition. Encourage your members to diligently track and submit their volunteer hours monthly to your adjutant. This will ensure that your squadron receives the appropriate credit at the end of the year, potentially culminating in recognition at the convention in June.

VA&R hours encompass a range of activities, including:

- 1) Squadron meetings, including preparation and reporting
- 2) Assisting at the Post, such as the kitchen, food drives, and charity events.
- 3) Providing meals, transportation to appointments, and constructing access ramps for Veterans.
- 4) Conducting "buddy calls" with Veterans, fostering one-on-one interactions and demonstrating effective listening skills.
- 5) Volunteering at local VA facilities.

It is likely that members of your squadron, district, or area are actively engaged in volunteering. However, squadrons are not receiving the full credit they deserve due to a lack of reporting. It is important to remember that each volunteer hour is equivalent to **more than \$36 this year.**

By diligently reporting our volunteer hours, we can significantly enhance the report submitted to Congress regarding our support of Veterans. If you require assistance in completing the VA&R form or the Volunteer of the Year form (yes, it is possible that an outstanding volunteer may be recognized at the detachment level), please contact me via email at **var@floridasons.org**.



At the June Convention, the PVR (Project:VetRelief) board met to review the status of the organization in its 2 missions to

- (1) provide emergency financial assistance to Veterans and their families who are often struggling in transition to civilian life,
- (2) SPI (suicide prevention Initiative), which includes 12 strategic partners who specialize in working with Veterans who are struggling with suicide issues.

The board members' commitment is to interact with Veterans and their families to assure them that they are not alone and help them by connecting them with resources and support.

PVR SUPPORT

	Cases	Funding	Average Amount
2026	2,900	\$308,448.06	\$1,685.51
Since 2014	15,439	\$2,422,589.75	\$1,125.74

Project Vet Relief is a Department of Florida program, which means all the money raised stays in the state. PVR relies on donations from organizations and individuals and grants from organizations. All Squadrons are encouraged to include PVR in their budgets to help the Veterans who have put their lives on the line and find themselves in need. In addition, members are encouraged to interact with Veterans they know, to **"Be the One"** and let them know that they are not alone.



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A WEEK IN REVIEW OF FLORIDA AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE 82ND SESSION JUNE 2026

Written by Steve Vilgats, 12th District American Legion Boys State Chairman, Florida American Legion Boys State Staff Member, Past S.A.L. District 12 Commander

The week started on Friday, June 19th with the checking in of the Boys State Staff Counselors, who are comprised of The American Legion, The Sons of American Legion, Active Duty Military, Florida High Patrol, lawyers, engineers, and others from different walks of life. Saturday morning begins with training for the counselors who were selected to program and have completed a full background check and a child safety training class. Saturday afternoon is when the delegates from across the state begin to board American Legion District sponsored buses/transportation at approximately 6 PM to arrive in Tallahassee by 7 AM the next morning on Sunday. After a daylong of training and preparing for the new cities and counties to be formed by the incoming delegates, the counselors gather for a celebration dinner on Saturday night at American Legion Post 13. This is in part for the volunteering for the rigorous week the staff counselors endure for the Florida American Legion Boys State premier leadership program.

The program throughout the week has guest speakers in person and virtually partaking in the program to name a few that gave time to the program in the past and present are Florida Supreme Court Justice Canady and Justic Tannenbaum, Tallahassee Mayor John Dailey, Florida Highway Patrol Colonel Gary Howze, and Florida American Department Commander Bob Matheson all spoke with and answered questions for the delegates.



Florida Supreme Court Justice Canady from the 78th Session. (Photo Left Credit: S. Vilgats)



FHP Colonel Howze speaks with Commander Matheson, 1st Vice Commander Bruce Carl, and 2nd Vice Commander Rick Orzechowski after speaking to the Delegates at the 82nd Session of Florida American Legion Boys State. (Photo Right Credit: Seven B.)

Continuing with the delegates experience: from Sunday through Tuesday, they take part in academics of Florida History, Legislature Procedures, and Law for the Bar Exam (no, not the real Florida Bar). Running concurrent to the academics, the cities and the counties are faced with the mock scenarios from environmental Disasters to the need to re-distribute budgets to take care of their cities from failing industries. The academics and the scenarios help to determine the winning city for the Commanders Award at the end of the week, which was presented by the newly installed The American Legion Florida Detachment Commander Matheson.

This occurs while the delegates are holding elections for the city level the county level and eventually the state-level offices. Some of the most wanted positions at the beginning of the program are the mayor of the city who's going to take charge of the delegates and run the city for the counselors as the counselors are just becoming advisors for the delegates. The other two positions that are important are Laundryman and Postmaster as these two positions must make sure the delegates have clean polo shirts are they are provided by The American Legion and their letters go out to the Posts when they are completed.

(Spotlight Continued)

The short yet long weekends with the delegates going to the Capitol in Tallahassee and sitting and working in the House chambers and the Senate chambers and the different committee rooms to hold mock legislative sessions. The delegates take their bills they argue for their bills if the bill passes the House the bill goes to the Senate; if the bill passes the Senate, then it goes to the Boys State governor to be signed or not to be signed in the boys state law. In history, a Boys State bill that became law in the state of Florida is the rumble strips on the side of the roadways and the call boxes on the turnpike. Further, some of the delegations have the honor and privilege to hold a mock Boys State Supreme Court in the court room and tour the Florida Supreme Court library and learn the history firsthand.



Supreme Court Photo Credit: S. Vilgats

The week is wrapped up on Friday evening with the presentation of Scholarships, Boys Nation Delegates, and City awards. The Boys State delegates are awarded the scholarships from the Samsung Scholarship to Lance Corporal Aviles tuition scholarship for four years for the Florida State University. These are just two of the scholarships that are available to the delegates during their time at Boys State. Also, two boys are selected as Boys Nation delegates and 2 alternates are selected to represent Florida in Washington DC during the past month of July.



Florida State Capitol House of Representatives Photo Credit: Seven B.

This week does not occur without the American Legion family efforts to support the premier leadership program for the rising high school seniors. The American Legion Family supports Florida American Legion Boys State by providing meals, Bus Transportation, and boarding for the week. What can your Squadron do to support the program, assist in District level fundraising for Transportation, talk with your Post Boys State committee to assist in sponsoring a delegate or over quota delegate or hold a fundraiser to help your Post sponsor a delegate.

Staff with Facebook: Florida American Legion Boys State #FALBS, Twitter, Seven Beebe (Legion Historian), and professional photographed by Ryan and Kylene Gay of Capitolphoto.net. This wraps up the review for the week of Florida American Legion Boys State 82nd Session.

Currently, I am seeking Squadrons from across to State assist me in submitting photographs of events supporting Boys State program me showcase at next year's Florida American Legion Boys State. These submissions of pictures that are received would be used to showcase the Florida Sons of American Legion Detachment to the entire 2026 Boys State delegation of Florida.

Please email me directly at stevevilgats@gmail.com again either from this past year's events or after your Squadrons host events throughout this coming year. Thank you all for your assistance with this project.

Support Boys State *Florida's Premier Youth Leadership Program*

Donate with **PayPal™**



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EDITOR OF 'THE SOURCE'
CHRISTIAN M RAPP

thesource@floridasons.org

**HELPING YOUR STORIES BECOME THE SOURCE,
ONE ISSUE AT A TIME.**

NOTICE SOMETHING DIFFERENT??

'The Source' has a brand-new look!

With Microsoft Publisher reaching end-of-life on October 13, 2026 and being completely removed from Microsoft 365, we have officially made the leap to Affinity Publisher. If you rely on MS Publisher for personal, Squadron, or Post publications, consider this your heads-up!

WELCOME FIRST-TIME READERS!

If this is your first time receiving The Source in your inbox - **welcome!** Working alongside your SIRs and squadron officers, we've expanded our mailing list to reach as many people as possible.

Action Item: Some email addresses required a manual invite. Please encourage your members to check their inboxes and accept the invitation!

WHY THE EXPANSION?

Our membership is growing fast - our 2025-2026 100% membership target stands at 28,313 members. The Source is our main line of communication to keep our entire Detachment connected and ensure no one ever has to say, "I never heard about that." We rely on this list to send out vital updates and membership reports. And it's not just Sons members tuning in - we're proud to keep American Legion and Auxiliary members nationwide in the loop too!



EMAIL GROUP SUBSCRIPTION PROGRESS MEETER 7/24/26

HOW YOU CAN HELP SPREAD THE WORD

I am asking everyone reading this - including our **Legion** and **Auxiliary** family - to print out the QR Code at the end of this newsletter and display it proudly at your Post. Help **YOUR** Sons of the American Legion extend our reach!

My goal again this year is to have every Area Commander, District Commander, and Committee/Commission Chairman submitting content every month. Ideally, I want to see regular submissions directly from our Squadrons, too!

Monthly Deadline: 15th of each month (aligning us with the Department of Florida's publication of 'The Legion Link').

Partnering with Department: We are actively working with the Department to aid distribution to their members who receive The Legion Link. The more people we reach, the stronger we become!

Event Flyers: Submit your event flyers early! We will run them every single month until your event is complete.

Please keep those articles and flyers coming so we can continue bringing you the information that matters most.

I HOPE YOU ENJOY THE NEW LOOK!



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J. RICHARD "JR" STILLWELL

02/06/35 - 07/31/26

J. Richard "JR" Stillwell, born February 6, 1935 was transferred to Post/Squadron Everlasting on Friday, July 31, 2026. A member of The American Legion for 52 years. A member of The Sons of The American Legion for 72 years. This is not an official obituary, just my own feelings on JR. The official obituary will come soon.

**SONS
OF THE
AMERICAN
LEGION**

**DETACHMENT OF
ILLINOIS**



**For God
And Country**

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Web: www.SALIllinois.org

A Past National Commander for the SAL. JR was the SAL. He helped organize it to what it is today and has been involved with it since those early days. On the Detachment level, he has held pretty much every position imaginable. He was very involved with TAL, especially in the 4th Division and 19th District.

JR was the epitome of The American Legion Family. He devoted his life to it. He often said, "the SAL is the best kept secret in the American Legion."

I, along with PDC Wayne Madson, visited JR last week in his "new" home located in Breese, Illinois. He didn't like the mattress of his bed; however, he mostly slept in his chair even before arriving at that place. He couldn't see out the windows very well, having to look "up" from his chair, with trees and shrubs blocking his view across the highway. He gave me a list of tasks to make sure were to be completed. He said, "I am telling you because I know you will make sure it gets done." On this day, JR was JR. The person we all adored. The one who rambled on and on about a story, not losing track of the timeline, details, etc. He looked good, probably better than he had in the past couple of years. He was the same old JR.

I have been the Detachment Adjutant for over 15 years. The role has changed dramatically with technology, the importance of Legion Family, etc. I know at times it frustrated him, but he also knew that the direction we were on was justified and needed. He never really questioned me on things. He was always there if I needed advice or direction. When he did bring something up, you knew "it needed to be done this way" and you didn't question it.

JR knew he was slowly going downhill. In Milwaukee, he asked Jeff Trout and me if he could talk to us. He realized it was time to "turn the reigns" of our Detachment Judge Advocate over and he wanted Jeff to become that person. When JR wanted something, he had his reasons and we made sure they went that way. Jeff told me recently that JR said one of the reasons why he wanted him to be the JA was to "keep an eye" on me. JR alluded to me over the past few years but never came out and directly said it. I am not speaking for Trout, but I truly feel that he was honored that JR held him so highly in his thoughts.

So, I ask each of you to not feel sadness but instead remember the 91 years of the life JR Stillwell led. His "devotion to mutual helpfulness" has not only inspired but influenced many people.

I will miss JR Stillwell. I will always be grateful for his legacy and leadership.

JR will be laid to rest on Wednesday, August 5th, at noon. He final resting place will be Roselawn Cemetery, 400 West Pennsylvania Avenue, Champaign. There will be a Celebration of Life following the services at American Legion Post 24, 705 Bloomington Road, Champaign.



INDOOR CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT



Saturday, August 22nd, 2026

Start Time: 4PM



American Legion Post 173, Holiday, FL

**BLIND DRAW
DOUBLE ELIMINATION**

Standard Cornhole Rules Apply



\$10 ENTRY FEE PER PERSON

All Proceeds Benefiting Steps to Recovery, Inc.



**CASH PRIZE
FOR TOP TEAM!**

**50/50
RAFFLE**



AMERICAN



LEGION

238

Boys of Summer

& FAMILY DINNER

TEAM. FAMILY. COMMUNITY.

That's what it's all about.

You're Invited!

★ JOIN US FOR A ★
ZITI DINNER

GOOD FOOD.
GREAT COMPANY.
LEGION FAMILY.

All are Welcome!



★ SATURDAY NIGHT ★
AUGUST 15TH

★ AT AMERICAN LEGION POST 238 ★

★ 5:30 PM ★

LET'S CELEBRATE OUR SEASON,
OUR TEAM, AND THE FAMILIES
WHO SUPPORT US!





AMERICAN LEGION, POST 3, BARTOW, FL

SAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

REGISTRATION



Limited to 25 teams. Team deadline is October 1, 2026

DATE & TIMES:

Saturday,
October 10, 2026
Check-in: 7:00 AM
Shotgun Start: 8:30 AM

LOCATION:

Bartow Golf Course
190 Idlewood Ave. S
Bartow, FL 33830
(863) 533-9183

FOR MORE INFO:

Danny Blackford
3010 Mission Oaks Trails
Bartow, FL 33830
(863) 581-3147



Use QR code above to register
and pay by credit card.

SPONSORSHIPS:

Deadline, September 25
☐ Platinum Plus \$1,000
☐ Platinum \$500
☐ Tournament \$250
☐ Hole \$100

CONTESTS WITH PRIZES:

- Par 3's, closest to the pin (men, women, Seniors)
- Longest drive (men, women Seniors)
- Hole-in-one

WE APPRECIATE OUR SPONSORS – YOU MAKE THIS CHARITABLE EVENT POSSIBLE!

Please complete the entry form below. Write clearly and legibly. Detach and submit the lower portion of the form along with payment to an SAL member. Thank you!

SPONSORSHIP ENCLOSED:

- ☐ Platinum Plus \$1,000 (tent on tee box, 4 dinner tickets) \$_____
- ☐ Platinum, \$500, (includes Banner & 4 dinner tickets) \$_____
- ☐ Tournament, \$250 (includes large sign) \$_____
- ☐ Hole Sponsor, \$100 (includes sign) \$_____
- ☐ Event Donation \$_____

Sponsors have the option of providing their logo for sign. Attach logo as a jpeg image to Post3sal@gmail.com.

Total enclosed \$_____

FEES ENCLOSED

- ☐ Individual, \$100 \$_____
- ☐ Team, \$400 \$_____ (foursome)
- Total enclosed \$_____

Make checks payable to SAL.

Drop off or mail this form and checks to: SAL, 1575 US-17, Bartow, FL 33830

Completed form and payment due by September 25, 2026

Name: _____

Company Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

Street address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Register your foursome team (include email addresses)

Player 1 _____

Email: _____

Player 2 _____

Email: _____

Player 3 _____

Email: _____

Player 4 _____

Email: _____

BREAST CANCER TIKI CARNIVAL

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 252

Presents



DATE: OCTOBER 4th • TIME: 1 to 4 PM

**LOCATION: 11433 Park Boulevard,
Seminole, Florida**

Live Music!

EVERYTHING PINK

Raffles • 50/50 • Games!

Benefits Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute



FLORIDA CANCER SPECIALISTS
& Research Institute

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