SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

2019 Squadron Handbook

of the Sons of The American Legion

Disclaimer of liability

The Sons of The American Legion *Squadron Handbook* ("handbook") provides the reader with very general information about planning and conducting various programs and events. This handbook is only intended as helpful assistance to volunteers and staff. With respect to information contained in this handbook, neither The American Legion, the Sons of The American Legion nor any of its officers, directors or employees make any warranty, express or implied, nor assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product or process implemented at the squadron, post or department level. This handbook only constitutes general advice and recommendations for operations based on best practices. Information within the handbook stating "shall or must" is based on federal law or federal/IRS regulations and mandates. All other items of information in this handbook are general suggestions except for the National Constitution and By-Laws. This handbook does not constitute any type of legal advice. If readers have any concerns about anything in this handbook, they are strongly advised to contact their respective department and an attorney licensed in their state.

Please see 36 U.S.C. Section 21704: ***The Corporation (The American Legion) may provide guidance and leadership to organizations (departments) and local chapters (posts) ... but may not control or otherwise influence the specific activities and conduct of such organizations (departments) and local chapters (posts).*** (emphasis added)

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SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

PREAMBLE TO THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

Proud possessors of a priceless heritage, we male descendants of veterans of the Great 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 association of our members and our forefathers in the Great Wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the Community, State and Nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the 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.

MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

All male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of members of The American Legion, and such male descendants of veterans who died in service during World I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf War and the War on Terrorism, during the delimiting periods set forth in Article IV, Section 1, of the National Constitution of The American Legion, or who died subsequent to their honorable discharge from such service, shall be eligible for membership in the Sons of The American Legion.

There shall be no forms or class of membership except an active membership.

The American Legion eligibility dates

Aug. 2, 1990	—	cessation of hostilities as determined by the U.S. government
Dec. 20, 1989	—	Jan. 31, 1990
Aug. 24, 1982	—	July 31, 1984
Feb. 28, 1961	—	May 7, 1975
June 25, 1950	—	Jan. 31, 1955
Dec. 7, 1941	—	Dec. 31, 1946
April 6, 1917	—	Nov. 11, 1918

Overview

HISTORY

Sept. 12-15, 1932: The Sons of The American Legion is established as a non-political, non-sectarian civilian organization by the 14th National Convention of The American Legion in Portland, Ore.

1939: Membership in SAL is about 7 percent of the parent organization. The Sons group seems destined to grow. However, many members joined the armed services during World War II and died in combat. For those who did return, their service had made them eligible to join the ranks of The American Legion itself.

1953: Membership in the Sons drops to 5,631 from a high of 72,633 in 1939. A major factor for the decline is due to the former Sons, now veterans of World War II, having no children in the immediate postwar years.

April 30-May 1, 1964: The National Executive Committee passes Resolution 22, urging that the SAL program "be encouraged and implemented by internal promotion and increased public recognition through the National Headquarters staff and the various Departments of The American Legion."

1964: The Sons conduct their first National SAL Workshop during the Legion's National Convention in Dallas.

May 8-9, 1969: The Legion's NEC gives its approval to Resolution 60, which creates a Sons of The American Legion Committee, consisting of four members and a chairman. Two of the members were from the ranks of the SAL, while the chairman and the other two members were Legionnaires.

May 3-4, 1972: The Legion's NEC approves Resolution 13, creating a national SAL organization under the full supervision and control of the Legion's NEC, thus opening the door for the Sons of The American Legion to hold its first National Convention in Chicago in August 1972. Resolution 13 also rescinded in its entirety the old SAL Constitution and Bylaws, as adopted in 1933.

May 2, 1973: The Legion's NEC approves Resolution 21, which establishes a procedure for handling matters originating from SAL National Conventions and SAL National Executive Committee meetings. All actions of the Sons of The American Legion National Convention and/or NEC are reviewed by the Legion's Internal Affairs Commission. The Internal Affairs Commission then affixes to its report to the Legion's NEC an addendum in digest form listing all such actions with a statement setting forth the Internal Affairs Commission's disposition of each action. Unless specific contrary action is taken by the Legion's NEC with respect to the addendum items, the disposition recommended by The American Legion's Internal Affairs Commission becomes the disposition of the NEC.

Oct. 17-18, 1973: The Legion approves Resolution 15, abolishing the National SAL Committee created by Resolution 60 in 1969. Responsibilities of the National SAL Committee are assigned to the Legion's Internal Affairs Commission.

INTRODUCTION

The Sons of The American Legion is a legally constituted organization, instituted and recognized by official action of The American Legion's National Executive Committee. Each squadron exists through sponsorship of the individual post of The American Legion and is subject to such rules, regulations and supervision as shall be created by the sponsoring post that are not in conflict with rules and regulations set up by the National Executive Committee. Recognition of district and detachment organizations of Sons has been approved by the NEC.

Sons of The American Legion squadrons can be a source of pride for their members and the sponsoring American Legion post. By volunteering to assist older veterans and participating in patriotic holiday events, squadrons not only expand the post's representation but reflect the Sons' purpose "to foster and perpetuate a true spirit of Americanism."Examples of how squadrons fulfill these missions:

Volunteers: SAL members find it rewarding to serve as a volunteer at a hospital or medical center in the VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) program.

Leadership: As the SAL member becomes older, his experience and talent should be utilized in leadership and instructional capacities within the squadron. Older SAL members who have had Boys State experience can provide a junior counselor service to The American Legion in this annual program.

Americanism: One of the four pillars of The American Legion. The SAL plays a vital role in The American Legion to promote an understanding and appreciation of American government; the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship; and activity in the American way of life through youth activities, community service, education and educational facilities, and proper U.S. flag etiquette as well as the protection of the U.S. flag from physical desceration. The SAL participates both as counselors and participants in Americanism programs such as Boys Nation, Boys State, Oratorical Contest, Scouting, and Junior Shooting sports in addition to providing scholarship money to various programs.

The sponsoring post must demonstrate that care be exercised in the selection of adult leadership for the squadron. Legionnaires selected for the post's SAL Supervisory Committee must have knowledge and understanding of this program, and the initiative and determination to see that it is carried through.

SAL activities must be stressed that will develop engaged Americans with the strength and courage to face the responsibilities and challenges of adult life in a complex world.

The establishment of a SAL squadron should not be accomplished with the intent of competing with or luring members from youth organizations already active in the community. Membership and active participation in the SAL should complement other existing programs and should serve as an enhancement of the SAL member in both his scholastic and extracurricular endeavors.

Care must be taken to permit members to develop and use their own initiative and ideas in working out details of activities. Legionnaires on the supervisory committee should serve primarily as advisors for the squadron's leadership.

SQUADRON OFFICERS AND DUTIES

Squadron commander: You are entrusted with teaching and protecting the cardinal principles of the Sons of The American Legion and supervising duties of all other squadron officers. You are guided by the squadron constitution and by the decision of the squadron as a body, yet you are primarily responsible for the success of this year's programs.

As presiding officer of your squadron meetings, you should ensure that meetings are conducted properly. A recommended order of business and the ceremonial ritual for the opening and closing of a squadron meeting are outlined on Page 20 of this handbook.

Some squadrons have two vice commanders while others have one. For those that have multiple vice commanders, their duties may be split up in the following way:

Vice commander: Focuses on membership enrollment activities.

Vice commander: Responsible for patriotic observances, the development of squadron activities, and planning entertainment and social activities that may be scheduled in conjunction with squadron meetings.

Adjutant: As secretary of the squadron, this officer maintains contact with squadron members, keeps the squadron records, and publishes necessary orders, announcements and instructions.

Finance officer: Responsible for receiving squadron funds and paying all squadron bills when authorizations have been given for payment.

Chaplain: Responsible for the spiritual leadership of the squadron, he should be ready to take part in the initiation of new members, dedication ceremonies and the funeral services of a comrade.

Historian: Maintains a record of the squadron activities.

Sergeant-at-arms: Serves as the sentinel or outer guard of the squadron. In addition to being the custodian of the flag and squadron standards, he should be ready at all times to assist the squadron commander.

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

July: Squadrons could cooperate with the sponsoring post in observance of Independence Day, July 4.

August: SAL members participating in the Ten Ideals Program may wish to show their proficiency in portions of the ideals of health and training. Installation of squadron officers often takes place during August.

September: As a new school year is under way, this is a good time to focus on careers. Guest speakers may be invited to visit the squadron meetings to discuss various careers in which SAL members may be interested.

October: Squadrons could participate in Halloween safety events. Posts and squadrons can conduct safety events and provide tips to children in the community.

November: Squadrons could observe Veterans Day with appropriate ceremonies and through participation in events planned by the sponsoring post. Squadrons may participate in the annual observance of American Education Week.

December: The squadron can assist its sponsoring post in the distribution of Christmas baskets to needy families, helping in seasonal charity fundraising drives and other goodwill activities.

January: A formal initiation event could be planned during January. Appropriate entertainment and short speeches should precede the ritual. Invite public officials, local civic leaders, American Legion dignitaries and members of the sponsoring post to attend. Study emphasis during the month should be devoted to Citizenship as required for Point 2 of the Five Point Program.

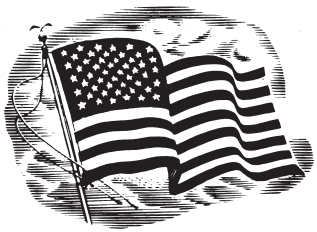
February: With the observance of the birthdays of Presidents Washington and Lincoln this month, it is an appropriate time for a study of patriotism and discipline in the Ten Ideals and Five Point Programs.

March: The American Legion's birthday is in March, making this an appropriate time to study the organization and its history, as well as the Preamble of the SAL Constitution.

April: This is a good time to emphasize leadership as required for Point 4 of the Five Point Program of Service. Also, those SAL members participating in the Ten Ideals Program should be using this time toward the successful completion of the ideals of courtesy and reverence.

May: The squadron could be an active participant in its sponsoring post's Memorial Day ceremonies. Study emphasis should be given to patriotism in the Ten Ideals and Five Point Programs, citizenship in the Ten Ideals Program, and citizenship and leadership in the Five Point Program of Service.

June: June 14 is Flag Day. The squadron could assist its sponsoring post in the promotion of flag display in the community. Plans should be made for a special Awards Night for presentation of the Ten Ideals and Five Star Awards that have been earned during the year.



THE TEN IDEALS

1. PATRIOTISM: Turn out for Memorial Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day parades and ceremonies. Learn the proper display of the flag. Learn the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. HEALTH: Write an essay on how to maintain sanitary conditions to promote health in your home, the post home and/or in camps and outdoors in general. Explain what you do daily to keep fit.

3. TRAINING: Become a squadron officer, or assist a squadron officer(s) during and between meetings and activities.

4. KNOWLEDGE: Maintain good grades in school. Know the instructions for the Ten Ideals and Five Points of service. Explain what each individual part means. Know what the SAL emblem stands for. Explain orally what each part of the emblem represents.

5. HONOR: Display honorable service in the squadron over a period of six months by being truthful and honest with your actions.

6. FAITH: Demonstrating good conduct and willingness to obey instructions over a period of six months will earn you the squadron's recognition of your faith in its leadership and ideals.

7. HELPFULNESS: Develop reasonably consistent attendance at meetings and other functions. Volunteer for tasks for the good of the squadron and be reliable in carrying out your part. Help promote your squadron by signing up at least one new member, and help collect dues from existing members.

8. COURTESY: Apply yourself diligently to show you are polite and respectful to your comrades, officers, Legionnaires and others.

9. REVERENCE: Show that you are a member of a religious organization. Aid in placing markers and flowers on veterans' graves.

10. COMRADESHIP: Show the tie that binds you to the squadron and to the Legion by helping in the annual Poppy Sale, thus aiding disabled veterans. Help cheer up a veteran in a hospital or in his home.

A national award of recognition may be presented to those who have completed the Ten Ideals Program. This medal is available through National Emblem Sales, The American Legion, P.O. Box 1050, Indianapolis, IN 46206. More information is available at *www.legion.org/sons* or *emblem.legion.org*.

FIVE POINT PROGRAM OF SERVICE

The five points are:

1. PATRIOTISM: Love of flag; love of country.

2. CITIZENSHIP: Individual obligation of citizenship.

3. DISCIPLINE: Respect for and obedience to rules.

4. LEADERSHIP: Participation in group activities.

5. LEGIONISM: Knowledge of The American Legion.

The Five Star Award

When SAL members demonstrate perfection in the Five Point Program of Service, they are eligible to receive the Five Star Award, a gold-plated medal bearing the SAL emblem and the symbolism of the five points.

Point No. 1. A star for patriotism to the member who shows knowledge of the history of the flag, the proper ways of displaying it and the proper respect due it.

Point No. 2. A star for citizenship to the member who by his usefulness in activities outside the program of the SAL displays a working knowledge of the qualities of a good citizen.

Point No. 3. A star for discipline to the member who shows respect for rules and obedience to them.

Point No. 4. A star for leadership to the member who develops the qualities of leadership in athletics, drill formations and church activities.

Point No. 5. A star for Legionism to the member who thoroughly understands the ritualistic work and the program of activities for the SAL.

After the member has received the five stars, he should then be awarded a Five Star Medal for perfection in SAL work.

Insignia for the Five Star Award is achieved by certification. All orders must first be approved by department or detachment headquarters, and sent together with the remittance to National Emblem Sales, The American Legion, P.O. Box 1050, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

EXAMINATION ON FIVE POINT PROGRAM OF SERVICE

Over the next several pages, there are questions and answers as well as projects necessary to attain each of the five stars, and ultimately the Five Point Program of Service. The projects can be completed by a group of squadron members, or an individual.

Patriotism

1. Is it correct to sing the national anthem while saluting the flag? Explain.

   Answer - No, it should not be done, since this would be awkward, unnatural and inappropriate.

2. When was your state first represented by a star on the national flag?

   Answer - Check the date of your state's admission.

3. Name the original states represented by the stripes of the flag.

   Answer - Connecticut, Georgia, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

4. What is our national anthem? By whom was it written? Under what conditions?

   Answer - "Star-Spangled Banner." Francis Scott Key. During bombardment of Fort McHenry.

5. What naval commander first flew the Stars and Stripes? When and over what ship?

   Answer - John Paul Jones in 1777 over the sloop "Ranger."

6. What is the proper salute to the flag by a man or boy in civilian clothes? By a woman or girl?

   Answer - Man or boy removes hat, places over heart; or if not wearing hat, places right hand over heart. Woman or girl places right hand over heart.

7. When should the flag be displayed?

   Answer – The flag should be displayed every day. But it is important that the flag be displayed on all historic and special occasions such as Memorial Day, Flag Day, July 4th and Veterans Day.

8. What date do we observe as the anniversary of the flag? When and by whom was this anniversary proclaimed?

   Answer - June 14, President Woodrow Wilson, 1915.

9. Quote the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. What does it mean to you?

   Answer - I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

10. Demonstrate the correct method of folding the flag of the United States.

    Answer -

    1. With one person holding each end of the flag, taking care to hold the flag taut, fold the lower striped section of the flag over the blue field.

    2. The folded edge is then folded over to meet the open edge.

    3. A triangular fold is then started by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to the open edge.

    4. The outer point is then turned inward parallel with the open edge to form a second triangle.

    5. The triangular folding is continued until the entire length of the flag is folded in this manner.

    6. When the flag is completely folded, only the blue field should be visible and it should be folded in the triangular shape of a cocked hat.

Citizenship

1. Recite or write the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America. Write an essay on what it means to you. (Optional essay)

   Answer - We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

2. What date is set aside to commemorate the signing of the Constitution of the United States? Name the five members of the committee chosen to write the Declaration of Independence.

   Answer - September 17. Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, Robert R. Livingston.

3. Recite or write the American's Creed. (Optional) Write an essay on what it means to you.

   Answer - I believe in the United States of America as a government of the people, by the people, for the people, whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic; a sovereign nation of many sovereign states; a perfect union, one and inseparable, established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes.

   I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it, to support its Constitution, to obey its laws, to respect its flag and to defend it against all enemies.

4. Name the mayor and members of your city council; the state governor; the congressional representative from your district; and the two U.S. senators from the state. Attend and report on a meeting of the city's governing body.

Answer - Information must be obtained locally.

5. What are the three divisions of government provided for in the Constitution of the United States?

   Answer - Executive (enforces the laws), Legislative (makes the laws), and Judicial (interprets the laws).

6. Assist the sponsoring post and other agencies in a non-partisan "Get Out the Vote" campaign. Examples: newspaper ads, fliers and such, urging the public to vote for the candidate of their choice.
7. Assist nonprofit campaigns such as United Way, Red Cross, etc.
8. Participate in oratorical and essay contests on citizenship subjects. These contests are sponsored by both The American Legion and Auxiliary. Students may enter either one for credit.
9. Participate in religious activities. Give a brief written report.
10. Encourage your associates of the benefits of being thrifty.

Discipline

1. What is discipline and how might it be developed?

   Suggested answer - Discipline is training to live within the rules determined by parents, schools, government and churches.

2. Why is discipline essential in the handling of all group activities?

   Suggested answer - Group activities are effective only when you have rules.

3. Briefly outline why discipline is essential to law and order.

   Suggested answer - The basic need for law and order is to enable people to live within a group and with each other. The rights and opinions of each person must be respected at the same time you are respecting fundamental rights of the group. Discipline is the cornerstone from which law and order develops.

4. Demonstrate good conduct in squadron meetings.
5. Demonstrate good grades in school.
6. Participate on drill teams, rifle teams, athletic teams, bands, drum corps, etc.
7. Show respect for older people (Refer to Point 8 of the Ten Ideals).
8. Practice self-control in every respect.

   Suggested answer - Demonstrate ability to start projects or establish goals and to work with others.

9. Obey orders given.
10. Support and help your squadron, post and Auxiliary in achieving good relationships.

Leadership

1. What are the principal requirements of true leadership?

   Suggested answer - Leadership requires that the leader has a workable plan which he communicates to others in the group to get their cooperation in putting the plan into action. It requires working with people in a way that gets them to assume responsibility and to work toward the goals outlined in the plan. Some of the prime requirements of leadership are: 1) Determining what to do; 2) Thinking about ways to do it; 3) Making firm decisions; 4) Assigning work and authority; 5) Persuading and directing others; and 6) Checking on progress.

2. Who was commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces in the United States during World War I and World War II?

   Answer - World War I, Woodrow Wilson; World War II, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman.

A. Name five Americans noted in leadership in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps.

B. Name five Americans noted for leadership in industry.

C. Name five outstanding statesman in American history.

   Answers - A, B and C can be answered by using the library or online research.

3. Does a good leader do all the work himself or see that it is done by others?

   Answer - A good leader assigns work so that others will work with him when given the proper authority.

4. Name the present national, state and local leaders of The American Legion.

   Answer - This information can be obtained from the local post officers.

5. How would you develop qualities of leadership? Explain these qualities.

6. Demonstration of leadership by holding office in the squadron, or by leadership in group activities of the squadron.

7. Demonstration of leadership in school.

8. Demonstration of leadership in a church.

9. Demonstration of leadership in sports and contests outside of squadron activities.

10. Write a short essay on leadership. (To be graded by the post committee)

    Answer - Those judging these essays should determine whether objectives have been set, some attention has been given to personal attitudes, proper thinking has been stressed, and if the essay allows for delegation of authority, motivation and follow-up.

Legionism

1. When and where was The American Legion organized?

   Answer - The American Legion was born at a caucus of the first American

Expeditionary Force, March 15-17, 1919, in Paris.

2. Why has an adequate national defense always been a primary objective of The American Legion?

   Answer - The deep-rooted interest of The American Legion in the security of the nation was born in the hearts and minds of its founders and those who piloted it through the treacherous waters of its early years.

3. What are some of the other national activities of The American Legion?

   Answer - Boys Nation, Boys State, American Legion Baseball, National High School Oratorical Contest.

4. Assist in community service projects sponsored by the Legion post.
5. Assist in observance of patriotic holidays sponsored by the Legion post.
6. Prepare a brief essay on the significance of Memorial Day. (Paper to be graded by post committee)
7. Memorize the Preamble to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion.
8. What is the proper way of wearing medals and awards on the SAL hat? Why are they all worn on one side?

   Answers:

   a. All must be attached to the right side of the cap.

   b. Uniformity.

9. Know and explain the SAL uniform.

   Answer – See next section.

SAL UNIFORM AND CAP

The basic uniform of the Sons of The American Legion is the squadron blue cap. Dress attire is determined by the activity and by the Sons of The American Legion leadership conducting the event or function. Optional attire such as casual, dress casual, or coat and tie is determined by the squadron, district and detachment.

Uniform caps are available through the National Emblem Sales Division of the American Legion. Also available are jackets, shirts and other items for purchase. For a catalog write to: National Emblem Sales, P.O. Box 1050, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or visit emblem.legion.org.

The SAL cap should be worn at all SAL and Legion occasions.

The SAL cap should be removed during moments of prayer, in church and at the graveside.

A member of the Sons of The American Legion wearing the cap should present himself the same as he would if he were wearing a military uniform. If he is not

wearing the SAL cap, the ordinary rules of etiquette for civilian dress should be observed. (The proper salute to the flag while wearing civilian clothes without an official cap is to place the right hand over the heart.)

The SAL cap is not to be worn during meals.

THE EMBLEM

The design of the SAL emblem was taken from the emblem of our parent organization, but is oval in shape so as to be easily distinguished. The star in the center represents our country, and the five points of the star represent the Five Point Program of the Sons of The American Legion.

The sun in the background represents the Sons of The American Legion and the rays represent the loyalty of its membership. The blue of the emblem, like the blue of our flag, stands for justice. The two stars in the blue border stand for freedom and democracy.

The wreath below the star is in memory of our comrades, and those of our fathers who willingly gave their lives for their country. The 10 points of the emblem represent the Ten Ideals of every Legion son.

SAL AWARDS

The Arthur D. Houghton Sons of the American Legion Trophy

Awarded annually to that detachment of the Sons of The American Legion that on Jan. 1 of each year has attained the greatest percentage of increase over the previous year's total membership.

There are five categories and five awards:

- Category I: Detachments with membership from 200 to 1,000
- Category II: Detachments with membership from 1,001-3,000
- Category III: Detachments with membership from 3,001-6,000
- Category IV: Detachments with membership from 6,001-12,000
- Category V: Detachments with membership at 12,001 or higher

A laminated plaque of the Arthur D. Houghton membership award is presented each year to the top SAL detachment.

A Community Service Award is presented each year to the squadron that submits the best Community Service Scrapbook in the National Community Scrapbook

Contest.

The SAL National Rehabilitation Commission annually gives out three awards annually for the best Rehabilitation Report. The awards are the Kirby E. Kepler Memorial Award (squadron), Allen I. O'Brian Memorial Award (district) and Earl A. Webster Memorial Award (detachment).

(Note: All SAL trophies are retired to the Emil A. Blackmore Museum at The American Legion National Headquarters, Indianapolis)

Membership awards

- 100 percent Squadron Honor ribbons are awarded to squadrons that equaled or surpassed their previous year's membership by July 1 of each year.
- 100 percent Detachment Honor ribbons go to all detachments that exceed their previous year's membership by the start of the national convention.
- The All Time High (red) ribbon recognizes detachments for a record high membership number.
- Detachment membership awards are given each year for the first detachment to achieve 100 percent in its region and greatest percentage by region.
- Detachment Membership Award – Triple Nickel – goes to any detachment that meets three specific measurements in membership. A gift certificate from National Emblem Sales for $555 will be awarded to any detachment that achieves by July 1 of each year 105 percent in membership; five new (not re-activated) squadron charters with membership transmitted; and 85 percent renewal rate as of July 1.
- An Emblem Sales gift certificate will be awarded to each detachment commander who achieves 100 percent in membership on or before the May membership target date. These certificates are redeemable at Emblem Sales for merchandise only. Information and details on detachment awards are contained in the SAL National Administrative manual available at the detachment level.
- Additional membership awards can be awarded for recruiting new members:
  1. Membership Pin. An SAL membership pin can be awarded for the recruitment of five new members.
  2. Blue Brigade Member. With the recruitment of 30 or more new members, you can become a member of the "Blue Brigade" and receive a special membership jacket.

For additional information on awards visit www.legion.org/sons.

Other awards:

- A VA&R award titled "Volunteer of the Year" is given each year at the national convention for the best VAVS volunteer. For further information

contact your detachment adjutant for application forms and details.

- Since 1999, the Sons of The American Legion have contributed $1,000 annually to the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship. Qualified VAVS volunteers should contact any VA medical center for details and qualifications concerning this scholarship.

Services and ceremonies

SAL MEMORIAL SERVICES

COMMANDER:

We will now enter into our memorial services to honor all SAL members who have departed from our midst and joined the SAL Squadron Everlasting.

CHAPLAIN:

Almighty God we beseech Thee to bless and grant everlasting peace to our departed members. They have joined their Squadron Everlasting. Grant to their bereaved family comfort, love and abiding care. May the sands of time help to heal their wounds and ease their sorrowing souls. Amen.

RITUAL:

(See Manual of Prayer, Sons of The American Legion.)

COMMANDER:

The memorial services are now completed.

The SAL Chaplain's Manual of Ceremonies and Prayer is available from National Headquarters as a download at https://www.legion.org/sons/filelib/BroPrayerMn12.pdf.

Patriotic holiday observances

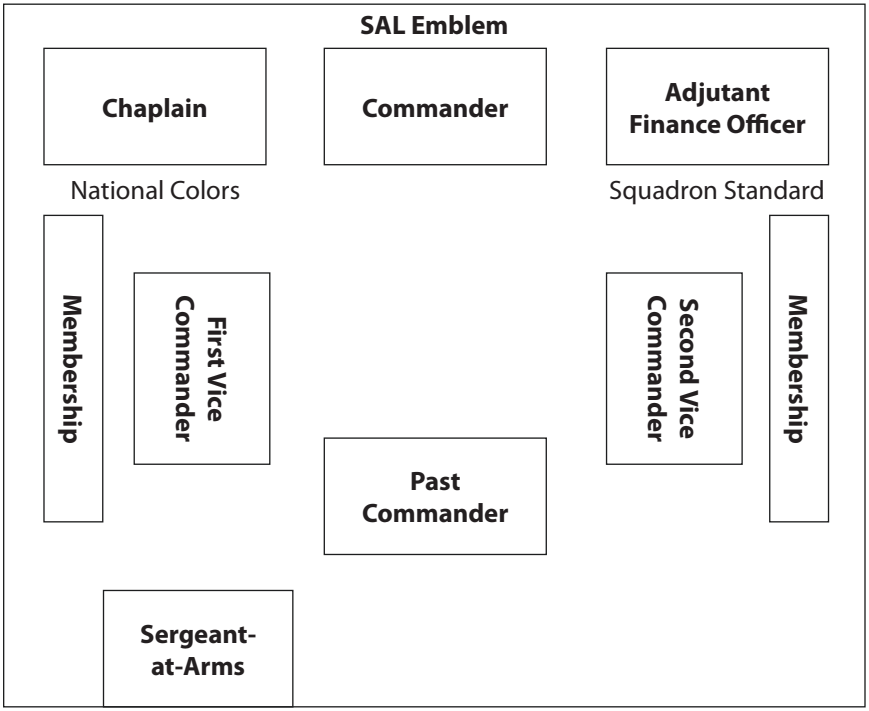
The observance of major holidays and other appropriate patriotic occasions should be considered a major activity of any squadron. The following are public holidays:

- New Year's Day, Jan. 1.
- Martin Luther King Day, the third Monday in January.
- Presidents Day, the third Monday in February.
- Memorial Day, the last Monday in May.
- Independence Day, July 4.
- Labor Day, the first Monday in September.
- Columbus Day, the second Monday in October.
- Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

- Thanksgiving Day, the fourth Thursday in November.
- Christmas Day, Dec. 25.

MANUAL OF CEREMONIES

Plan of squadron meeting room



On the occasion of regular meetings, or for the ceremonies of initiation or installation of squadron officers, it is suggested that the squadron meeting room be arranged as shown in the accompanying sketch.

Other officers or members than those designated may be assigned parts in the initiation ceremony. It is recommended that each squadron have a drill team, trained and uniformed.

The initiation of candidates is an important function for every squadron officer. All new members should participate in the initiation ceremony.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS (SUGGESTED FORMAT)

All squadron officers, at the earliest opportunity following their election, may be

installed in the following manner:

The installing officer, who is either a department officer of The American Legion, a member of the Detachment Sons of The American Legion Committee, a post officer of The American Legion or a duly-appointed representative, may preside following the opening ceremony. He calls upon the sergeant-at-arms to bring before him the officers he is to install.

INSTALLING OFFICER: "The sergeant-at-arms will bring before me the newly elected officers of_____ Squadron, No.____."

All the outgoing officers are to be in their respective places and each officer shall have memorized his "charge" to the newly elected officer.

The sergeant-at-arms brings each newly elected officer to the front, facing the station of the commander (or installing officer), in order of rank, with the new commander to the right of the installing officer. After all are standing in place, the sergeant-at-arms salutes and addresses the presiding officer.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: "I present to you the newly elected officers of_____ Squadron, No._____, Detachment of_____, whose eligibility records for membership in the Sons of The American Legion have been duly checked and approved."

INSTALLING OFFICER: "You have been chosen to fill the various offices of this squadron. You will, I know, vindicate the trust that has been reposed in you, and fulfill in every way the obligations that trust entails. You will at once familiarize yourselves with the duties of your particular offices and you will proceed upon those duties in the same spirit of devotion and endeavor that characterized your fathers' service in any of the Great Wars, out of which came their basis for membership in The American Legion and your own in the Sons of The American Legion.

"You must know that the welfare and success of this squadron depends largely on you; and you must know also that upon your shoulders equally rests the burden of preserving the integrity of the Sons of The American Legion. You must protect and advance its good name before the people of this community, state and the nation. You must exalt it in their eyes. You must make them know, as we know, its purposes and its policy. Forever remember the tolerant spirit that animates its members. There is no rank among us, for each serves as the equal of his comrade; and all strive toward the same goal, which is the realization in the life of the republic of the ideals of Justice, Freedom, Democracy and Loyalty. Forever remember that the cardinal purposes of the Sons of The American Legion are the care of the dependents of those who have answered the final call and of those who are now suffering from disease and want; rightful education of the children of our country; and devoted service to the community, state and nation."

"You will raise your right hand and repeat after me, giving your names: "I,

_____ do solemnly pledge myself to perform faithfully and impartially the duties of the office in the Sons of The American Legion I am about to

assume, and I further pledge I am not a member of, and do not subscribe to the principles of, any groups opposed to our form of government."

After the obligation of the new officers, the installing officer will address the sergeant-at-arms.

INSTALLING OFFICER: "Sergeant-at-arms, you will conduct the new officers to their respective stations."

The acting or retiring sergeant-at-arms escorts each officer-elect to his respective station, starting with the elected sergeant-at-arms and ending with the commander. The sergeant-at-arms will conduct the sergeant-at-arms-elect to the station of the sergeant-at-arms, and when arrived at that station will address the elected sergeant-at-arms as follows:

"You are the sentinel or outer guard of this squadron. Be strict in demanding any stranger's passport or membership card. Be ready at all times to assist your commander.

You are the custodian of the flag of our country and of the squadron's standards."

The acting or retiring sergeant-at-arms escorts the historian to the right of the commander.

The acting historian then charges him.

ACTING HISTORIAN: "Historian, to you is entrusted the recording of all current records of this squadron. The collection of records of your veteran parent's post of The American Legion is of historical value, and the keeping of a record of squadron activities will, through you, become of priceless heritage to future generations."

Sergeant-at-arms next conducts the chaplain to a position between the commander and the historian.

The acting chaplain then charges him.

ACTING CHAPLAIN: "Chaplain, to you is given the spiritual leadership of this squadron. You will, I know, lend dignity and respect to your office. You should be in close confidence with the commander and the other officers of this squadron, and should attend all meetings of the squadron. You should be ready upon occasion to take your part in the initiation of new members, the dedication of halls, monuments or colors, and the funeral services for a comrade."

Sergeant-at-arms next conducts the finance officer to the adjutant's desk, where acting finance officer gives the following charge:

ACTING FINANCE OFFICER: "Finance officer, you are the keeper of the moneys and in you is reposed the financial policy of the squadron. To you is given charge of the year's budget, and to you is given the duty of the payment of all obligations when proper authorization has been given for such payment. Your position is an important one, demanding integrity and honesty, and your election to this office signifies that your comrades have implicit trust in you. Guard well

that trust."

Sergeant-at-arms next conducts the adjutant to his desk and the acting adjutant charges him as follows:

ACTING ADJUTANT: "Adjutant, you have been chosen to assist your commander in the wise and effective administration of his office. You will find your duties many and varied; the successful accomplishment of a well-rounded program depends to a great extent upon you. Keep an intimate contact with the members of your squadron and maintain the principle of democracy."

Sergeant-at-arms next conducts the second vice commander to his station at the left center of the meeting hall, where the acting second vice commander charges him as follows:

ACTING SECOND VICE COMMANDER: "Vice commander, into your helpful hands are placed the important responsibilities of assisting the commander in all of his duties. Particularly should you be interested in patriotic observances of all kinds, in developing squadron activities and in the entertainment features that mark all meetings. Help to observe strict tolerance among your members on all political, religious and industrial matters. You are the teacher of freedom."

Sergeant-at-arms next conducts the first vice commander to his position, where he will be charged by the acting first vice commander as follows:

ACTING FIRST VICE COMMANDER: "Vice commander, to you is given the responsibility of an active cooperation between yourself and the commander. Particularly should you interest yourself in the membership of the squadron. You should be assisted by the most active and devoted members. No single factor has so important an influence on the squadron's success as membership. You are the teacher of justice."

INSTALLING OFFICER (to retiring commander): "Your duties as commander of this squadron have been completed; yours has been a year marked with earnest endeavor and success to a satisfying degree; yours has been a great privilege and a rich experience. The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion have observed your faithful and untiring efforts and extend to you their sincere appreciation of the services that you have rendered. Sergeant-at-arms, you will conduct the junior past commander to his post, opposite this station."

Sergeant-at-arms conducts the new commander to the installing officer, who in turn, brings the entire squadron to its feet by three raps of the gavel, then charges the new commander as follows:

INSTALLING OFFICER: "Commander, to you is entrusted a very sacred duty - that of teaching and protecting the cardinal principles of the Sons of The American Legion throughout your entire squadron. To you is entrusted supervision of the duties of all other officers of the squadron. To you will come the indigent and the distressed and it is your duty to see that no worthy comrade is turned away without justice. It is your duty to see that freedom is ever the watchword of those with whom you may come in contact. Loyalty to your squadron, to its member-

ship, to The American Legion, are requirements which you now assume. You are more than the presiding officer for meetings. You are guided by the constitution and by the decision of the squadron as a body, yet the responsibility for failure or success of the year's program is largely on your shoulders. You must initiate and carry programs through to completion. You must thoroughly familiarize yourself with the policies and traditions of your squadron and of the Sons of The American Legion. To you I extend the congratulations of The American Legion, and I wish you well as you assume the responsibilities of your office."

Installing officer then addresses the entire membership as follows:

INSTALLING OFFICER: "I present to you the officers of your choice. I congratulate you on the selections you have made. Now that you have chosen them to guide the destinies of this squadron, it is your duty to aid them in every way. Help them keep the Sons of The American Legion a free organization of free men, faithful to its principles and ideals."

He hands the gavel to the new commander and the installing officer takes a seat.

Commander-elect then seats the members by one rap of the gavel.

CEREMONY FOR REGULAR MEETINGS (SUGGESTED FORMAT)

Opening and closing

The squadron commander announces that the meeting is about to open. Officers take their stations. American Legion post members acting as supervisors will take their places among the membership. The squadron commander will seat the membership with one rap of the gavel and doors of the meeting place closed by the sergeant-at-arms.

The adjutant proceeds through those present, and after the membership cards have been examined, returns to the station of the squadron commander, where he shall report, giving the names of all visitors and their post and squadron name and number as they are being introduced. The commander then gives three raps of the gavel and all present shall stand at attention.

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "The Color Bearers will advance the flag of our country."

If a trumpeter is available he will sound "To the Colors." A Color Guard may also be used.

The membership continues to stand at attention and render salute while the flags are being advanced and placed in position.

Commander gives the command "Two" to end the salute.

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "The chaplain will invoke the blessing of God."

(Caps are removed.)

SQUADRON CHAPLAIN: "Almighty God, Father of mankind and Judge over nations, we pray Thee to guide our work in this meeting and in all our days. Send Thy peace to our nation and all nations. Hasten the fulfillment of Thy promise of peace that shall have no end.

"We pray for those who serve the people and guard the public welfare, that by Thy blessings they may be enabled to discharge their duties honestly and well. We pray for our comrades, that by Thy help they may observe the strictest justice, keep alight the fires of freedom, strive earnestly for the spirit of democracy and preserve untarnished our loyalty to our country and to Thee. Especially do we ask Thy blessing and comfort to those defenders of our nation on sick beds in hospitals and elsewhere who are suffering mental and physical disabilities. Cheer them and bring back to them the blessings of health and happiness. Finally, O God of Mercy, we remember lovingly before Thee our departed comrades and those of our fathers who receive with Thee the reward of life everlasting. May their splendid example of patriotism and sacrifice guide us in our duty to our God and country now and forevermore, Amen."

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "In memory of our departed comrades and the comrades of our fathers, let us stand in silence."

Squadron remains standing and stands in silence for 30 seconds.

The sounding of Taps on muffled trumpet will add solemnity to the ritual.

Following the silence the commander is encouraged to proceed with the POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony.

POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony

This ceremony is a suggested outline that can be followed when an American Legion organization wants to call attention to Americans still unaccounted for from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and other conflicts. Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th National Convention, encourages all American Legion organizations to implement the Empty Chair Ceremony at all meetings, as a continual physical symbol of the POW/MIAs and the cause for which we stand, namely their return or full accounting.

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th National Convention of The American Legion, and Resolution NC 2-94, adopted at the 23rd National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion, calls for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of the Sons 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 to this vital endeavor!"

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "Place the POW/MIA flag on the empty chair."

The sergeant-at-arms, or other designated individual, approaches the empty chair carrying a folded POW/MIA flag. Upon reaching the empty chair, he reverently unfolds and drapes the flag over the empty chair with the crest facing the membership.

After the meeting is concluded the POW/MIA flag should be refolded and stored for future use.

Following the POW/MIA ceremony, the commander and the membership will together recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "The commander (or appropriate official) will lead the Pledge of Allegiance (SAL members and Legionnaires will remove their caps) and may direct the singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the squadron commander will lead the Preamble to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion.

"Proud possessors of a priceless heritage, we male descendants of veterans of the Great 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 the Great Wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the 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."

One rap of the gavel by the commander will seat the members.

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "I now declare Squadron, No. _____, Detachment of regularly convened."

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

1. Reading of minutes of previous meeting.
2. Committee reports.
3. Sick call and relief.

4. Unfinished business.
5. Balloting on applications.
6. Initiation of candidates.
7. New business (and correspondence).
8. The good of the Sons of The American Legion. (The membership shall be permitted to make any suggestions of any kind, character or description, save for religion or partisan politics.)

CLOSING CEREMONY: The Sons of The American Legion meetings may be closed in the following manner:

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "Is there any further business to come before the meeting? If not, the squadron chaplain will lead us in the closing prayer."

The commander gives three raps of the gavel, and membership rises, uncovers and stands in silence.

SQUADRON CHAPLAIN: "Our dear Heavenly Father, may we become better Sons of The American Legion, as we learn and teach by words and deeds, the principles of justice, freedom, democracy and loyalty. Be with us until we meet again. Amen."

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "Till we meet again let us remember that our obligation to our country can be fulfilled only by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state and nation be ever a main objective of the Sons of The American Legion. Let us ever be watchful of the honor of our country, The American Legion, our organization and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of justice, freedom, loyalty and democracy."

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "The Color Bearers will retire the flag of our country and the membership will stand to salute."

As the Color Bearers retrieve the colors the commander gives the command:

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "Hand salute" (Colors are retired), as the Color Bearers reach the rear of the meeting hall, the command "Two" is given by the commander.

SQUADRON COMMANDER: "I now declare this meeting of _____ Squadron No. _____, the Sons of The American Legion, adjourned."

The commander gives one rap of the gavel.

INITIATION CEREMONY (SUGGESTED FORMAT)

An important duty for each squadron is the initiation of new members. The initiation should be conducted with the strictest decorum. A trained and uniformed ritual team should preside over all ceremonies and initiations. All members

should memorize their parts for the presentation.

Each ritual team member should wear the regulation squadron cap and their badge of office. Beyond the cap, the dress code should be determined by the host of the event.

The squadron commander is in the center and at the end of the hall. (Gavel on commander's desk.)

At the commander's right and slightly in front is the American flag; at his left and on line with the flag are the squadron colors.

An effective display of the SAL emblem can be obtained through a cut-out portion at the front of the commander's desk, with the emblem painted on glass and with an electric light behind it, to be illuminated during a later part of the initiatory ceremony. A large emblem of The American Legion should also be prominently displayed.

Adjutant is seated on the commander's left. (All necessary record books of the squadron, together with complete list of candidates, on adjutant's desk.)

Finance officer is seated at same desk as adjutant, at the adjutant's left.

Chaplain is seated at the right of the commander.

First vice commander is seated in the center of the side of the hall to the commander's right.

Second vice commander is seated directly opposite the first vice commander, to the left of the commander, in the center of the side of the hall.

Past commander is seated in the center at the end of the hall opposite the commander.

The sergeant-at-arms is entrusted with the duty of preparing the hall for initiation. He is in charge of paraphernalia, having it properly placed, seeing that the desks of the officers are properly equipped, and that the emblems of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion are properly prepared.

Once the business of the meeting has been cleared for initiation, the commander calls the meeting to order with one rap of the gavel.

COMMANDER: "We will now proceed to the initiation of new members into _____ Squadron, No. _____, the Sons of The American Legion, Detachment of_____. You are requested to remain silent until the conclusion of the ceremony. The sergeant-at-arms will ascertain if there are any candidates seeking admission to our squadron of the Sons of The American Legion."

Sergeant-at-arms salutes the flag and turning, proceeds to the ante-room.

Returning, he stands just within the door and addresses the commander as follows:

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: "Sir, (gives names of candidates), await initiation into _____ Squadron, No. _____, the Sons of The American Legion, De-

tachment of_____."

COMMANDER: "Applications of those whose names have been presented have been approved. If there are no objections, we will proceed with the initiation. Sergeant-at-arms, escort the candidates into the hall and place them properly before the flag.

Sergeant-at-arms retires, and returns with candidates, in line before, and facing the commander.

COMMANDER: "The squadron chaplain will offer prayer."

Chaplain steps forward, removing his cap, and says:

CHAPLAIN: "Let us pray. All powerful and all merciful God, ruler of the destiny of all men and nations, grant Thou that we may approach this ceremony with clean hearts and with minds alive to the ideals it represents. God of hosts and giver of victory, we humbly beseech Thee to hasten the peace that shall have no ending. Thou hast blessed our nation with free institutions, with wondrous gifts of nature, with stalwart and devoted sons and daughters. Thou has blessed us with the privilege and opportunity to serve our nation as good citizens, advancing the sacred cause of justice, freedom and democracy. Thou hast blessed us with the honor and the duty of upholding the principles set forth by our parent organization, The American Legion. Bless The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion and those who are about to join it, that together we may serve in undivided loyalty, our country and our God. Amen."

Chaplain returns to his position, membership is seated by one rap of the gavel and the commander then addresses the candidates.

COMMANDER: "The Sons of the American Legion was formed, and is maintained, solely for the purpose of inculcating the male descendants of veterans of the Great Wars, with the ideals and principles for which The American Legion was founded; therefore, our sole aim, ideal and purpose is to teach and put into practice the principles which The American Legion cherishes, namely justice, freedom, democracy and loyalty. Sergeant-at-arms, conduct the candidates to the first vice commander for instruction."

Sergeant-at-arms conducts the candidates in single file to the first vice commander's station and faces them toward and in front of him.

FIRST VICE COMMANDER: "Justice - The American Legion teaches that justice is one of the noblest concepts of the human heart. True justice makes no distinction of persons. It recognizes neither high nor low, rich nor poor, the classes nor the masses. It knows neither race nor creed. Justice lights the way of friends and comrades. To the sick and the disabled, to the widows and orphans of those who gave their lives that we might live, The American Legion has solemnly pledged that justice shall prevail. Justice is stern, yet kind; Justice is not weak, but merciful. Justice views all opinions impartially, without anger, without malice. Foster with all of your energy a spirit of justice in the affairs of this organization, and in your everyday life. Let no one be unjust to his fellow member within this

organization, or upon the broad highways of life.

"I present to you a copy of the Constitution of the United States of America."

A copy is handed to each candidate.

"Sergeant-at-arms, conduct the candidates to the past commander for further instruction."

Candidates are brought to designated position, in front of and facing the past commander.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: "Sir, I present these candidates for instruction in freedom."

PAST COMMANDER: "Freedom is, among the rights of mankind, the one held most dear. Freedom is an ideal of surpassing strength, for which men throughout the ages have willingly fought and died.

"In the War of the Revolution, freedom was won for the people of the United States. In all wars, freedom was the torch that led the defenders of the world through the wilderness of the conflicts.

"You must guard well the freedom of this organization. You must keep the Sons of The American Legion a free organization of free men, ever faithful to the ideals that made it possible. Above all, you must prevent anything being done to prejudice the freedom of the people of the United States, whose very foundation is the rock of liberty.

"By your appreciation of freedom through citizenship, you will cause to be re-echoed the clarion sound of our Liberty Bell throughout our nation forever.

"I give you the emblem of freedom, an American flag."

Past commander hands each candidate a small American flag.

PAST COMMANDER: "Sergeant-at-arms, conduct the candidates to the second vice commander, who will instruct them in democracy."

The sergeant-at-arms conducts candidates to the second vice commander for further instruction. They are brought to designated position, in front of and facing second vice commander.

SECOND VICE COMMANDER: "Democracy as exemplified in the United States of America is the highest form of government of which the mind of man is capable. It must be maintained and preserved at all hazards by the Sons of The American Legion. Democracy is government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Democracy is distinctly American in principle. It extends a voice in the government to every citizen, and all partake of its benefits.

"To The American Legion, democracy is concrete and actual. It is expressed in meeting halls, where no distinction of rank is recognized, but where all are equal by virtue of a common service and a common ideal. I charge you ever to maintain that spirit of equality, in the meeting halls of the Sons of The American

Legion and in your daily lives, which is a manifestation of democracy. Permit every member a free voice, but no voice so free as to transcend the limits of liberty. Seek to prove in all things that all are born equal with certain inalienable rights, and that a nation dedicated to this proposition shall endure forever. We, as the Sons of The American Legion, adhere to this great principle with unswerving loyalty.

"I give you the emblem of the Sons of The American Legion, which is also the emblem of democracy."

Second vice commander hands each candidate an emblem of the Sons of The American Legion.

SECOND VICE COMMANDER: "Sergeant-at-arms, conduct the candidates to the commander who will instruct them in loyalty."

The sergeant-at-arms conducts candidates to the commander for further instruction. They are brought to designated position, in front of and facing the commander.

COMMANDER: "Loyalty is the cornerstone of our organization. It is as dear as justice is desirable, as freedom is glorious, as democracy is practical. The most despised of all men is the traitor. He who gives aid or comfort to the enemy behind the lines, or he who gives information to the enemy, endangers the lives of his comrades and his country's cause.

"Loyalty is one of the first requisites of a citizen. The Sons of The American Legion, it will cause us to defend our organization in all that is right, and to use our every power to keep it in the right. You must ever see that the officers of this organization are loyal to their duties; that the members are loyal to the Sons of The American Legion; that the Sons of The American Legion is loyal to its principles and that our United States is ever loyal to itself.

"You must understand, by this time, that the Sons of The American Legion is in no sense a military or a political organization. Composed, as it is, of members of every race and creed, it is obligated to strict neutrality of every question concerning a religion and politics.

"You have heard its four great principles - justice, freedom, democracy and loyalty. Are you now ready and willing to obligate yourselves to its pledge of membership?"

CANDIDATES: "I am."

Chaplain comes forward and addresses the candidates:

CHAPLAIN: "You will repeat after me, I (state your names), do solemnly pledge myself to carry out the aims, purposes and ideals of the Sons of the American Legion to the best of my ability, and I do further solemnly pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

At the conclusion of the obligation, all lights except that in the emblem of the Sons of the American Legion are extinguished by someone stationed by the sergeant-at-arms for that purpose. Gavel is rapped three times by the commander, bringing all members to their feet. For 10 seconds silence is observed and without any cue the chaplain speaks.

CHAPLAIN: "There shines the emblem of the Sons of The American Legion. It is your badge of distinction, honor and duty. Just as the badge of The American Legion, it stands for God and Country, and the highest rights of man. It consists of several parts and each part has a meaning. The general design is that of our parent organization, but is oval in shape so as to be easily distinguished.

"The rays of the sun, that form the background, stand for the principles of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion, for loyalty, and for the light of justice, freedom and democracy, dispelling the darkness of violence, strife and evil.

"The two gold rings around the field of blue, bearing the name of the Sons of The American Legion, typify our membership eligibility - male descendants of members of The American Legion. The rings around the wreath typify our major objectives. The wreath itself stands for remembrance. Within it is set a star reflecting the glory of those who died that liberty might live. The five points of the star represent the Five Point program of our organization. The Ten Ideals of the organization are represented by the 10 points surrounding the emblem.

"Wearing of the emblem should ever remind us of the sanctity of the home, our country and its free institutions."

The commander then addresses the membership.

COMMANDER: "The emblems of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion are emblems of Americanism. Americanism is unity of love, singleness of allegiance, practicality of purpose, all directed to a common good. It is that spirit of patriotism that shall ever preserve our land from the stagnation that is the death of peoples.

"As members of the Sons of The American Legion we must preach and teach the religion of patriotism throughout our daily lives. We must not forget our obligations as citizens, and we must continually strive to strengthen and retain those obligations. In the emblems of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion are great prophecies. They bespeak the fullest good for each in the betterment of all. They bespeak the promise of the defenders of the republic. They exemplify the ideals for which they fought. We, as loyal members of the Sons of The American Legion, must assist in the carrying out of those ideals."

The lights of the meeting hall are again lighted.

At the sound of the gavel the membership is seated.

COMMANDER: "I now welcome you into the Sons of The American Legion as a member in good standing. May you, by your every act and deed, carry on the

purposes set forth in the Preamble to the Constitution of this organization with credit to yourselves, your organization and The American Legion. Always, in all ways, be a man; always, in all ways, be an American!

Sergeant-at-arms, conduct the newly initiated members of _____ Squadron No. _____, to the adjutant, where they will sign their names to the membership roll and take their places among their comrades."

The sergeant-at-arms executes the above command and after the last member is seated returns to his station.

If the ceremony has been performed in a meeting other than in its own squadron meeting place, the commander may introduce the members of the team - following the introduction, the command is given: "Assemble Team," and sergeant-at-arms will escort team from the room. This procedure may vary according to conditions and is not a mandatory part of the procedure.

SPECIAL CEREMONIES (SUGGESTED FORMAT)

Dedication of colors

POST CHAIRMAN OR COMMANDER OF SQUADRON: "The assemblage will please stand at attention."

The sergeant-at-arms will call the Color Guard to display the colors.

Colors will be advanced from the rear of the hall to a position on the stage or platform and placed in their proper position. The trumpeter will sound "To the Colors," or "The Star-Spangled Banner" will be played.

POST CHAIRMAN OR COMMANDER OF SQUADRON:

Introduction of Legionnaire or individual making the presentation.

SPEAKER: "In the name of _____ Squadron, No. _____, Detachment of _____, the Sons of The American Legion, I now dedicate these colors. May they fly perpetually as the emblem of the cause for which the members of The American Legion fought and for which you are associated together in the Sons of The American Legion. Here is the flag of our country; safe within its fold is the freedom and the loyalty of our nation. Beside it is the flag of the Sons of The American Legion; on its expanse the emblem of that organization - that star of hope, the laurel wreath of victory, about it all the sun's rays, significant of the light of an ever brighter day.

I dedicate these colors to the purposes of your squadron, community, state and nation, and with them I dedicate this squadron to the faithful service to our nation, the ideals and purposes of The American Legion, our people and our flag. Legion Sons, you will join me in saluting the flag, your flag."

Presentation ceremony for badges, medals, etc.

COMMANDER OF SQUADRON: "In the name of Squadron No. ____, Detachment of ____, the Sons of The American Legion, it is my pleasure to present you this token, indicating that you have completed your work in (Patriotism), (Citizenship), (Discipline), (Leadership) or (Legionism), showing your interest in the work of the Sons of The American Legion and which has won for you this mark of distinction. We know that you will cherish it and by your continued service to your organization be an example to its entire membership. I, therefore, as commander of the squadron, take great pleasure in presenting this (button), (medal) (or other trophy)."

Funeral service

The Sons of The American Legion is non-sectarian. Therefore, the service may be varied in accordance with the religious belief of the deceased member, the wishes of the family of the deceased and of the officiating clergy.

SAL emblem on headstone marker

The proper procedure for having the emblem of the Sons of The American Legion placed on the headstone grave marker of a deceased Sons of The American Legion member begins with the post adjutant. It is the responsibility of the post adjutant to obtain the proper information from the relatives of the deceased. That information consists of:

1. Full name and membership verification.
2. Name and address of manufacturer of grave marker.

This information should then be transmitted to your department adjutant, who will verify the information and request approval of the national adjutant for the use of the emblem. The national adjutant then authorizes the manufacturer one-time use of the name and emblem of the Sons of The American Legion on the specific grave maker.

Permission may also be obtained to use the emblem of the Sons of The American Legion on grave markers on a pre-need basis. All requests are handled individually, but only through the department adjutant's office and to Sons of The American Legion members with at least 20 years' consecutive membership, only on a pre-need basis.

At the gravesite

Here the body will be lowered into the grave.

CHAPLAIN: "Man, who is born of woman, is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower and is cut down. He fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not.

"For as much as God hath taken out of the world the soul of our departed comrade, we, therefore, commit his body to the ground to sleep and his soul to endless peace to rest. The dust returneth to earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it."

Benediction, if desired.

BUGLER: Taps. (With two bugle echoes from different positions of the cemetery if possible).

If uniformed musical organizations of the Sons of The American Legion are used in conjunction with the funeral ceremonies, white gloves should be worn, and the American flag and the squadron banner should be displayed at the head of the marching column. Mourning is indicated by attaching two streamers of black crepe to the spearhead of the Sons of The American Legion standard.

In the funeral home

COMMANDER: "Death has entered our ranks, we members of _____ will now pay final respects to _____, who has been called to the final command."

CHAPLAIN: "Let us pray. Almighty Father please accept into Thy divine care the soul of _____. We are strangers with Thee and sojourners as our fathers were. Grant us O Father that the sorrow we feel today may bring us closer to you. Help us to understand that death is not the end but only the beginning of the glories of a new life.

"Let us be reminded that our loved ones are enjoying Thy grace and love more than we are here on earth.

"Until for us also the day breaks and the shadows flee away, grant us to live that our lives may honor the members who have gone before us. Thus together may come to that city which Thou has prepared for them that love Thee and keep Thy commandments. For Thine own name's sake we pray. Amen."

COMMANDER: "This moment is sacred with the almost visible presence of the one who has gone before. Let us not enshroud his memory with mournful tears, but let us remember him with solemn pride for his services to God and Country.

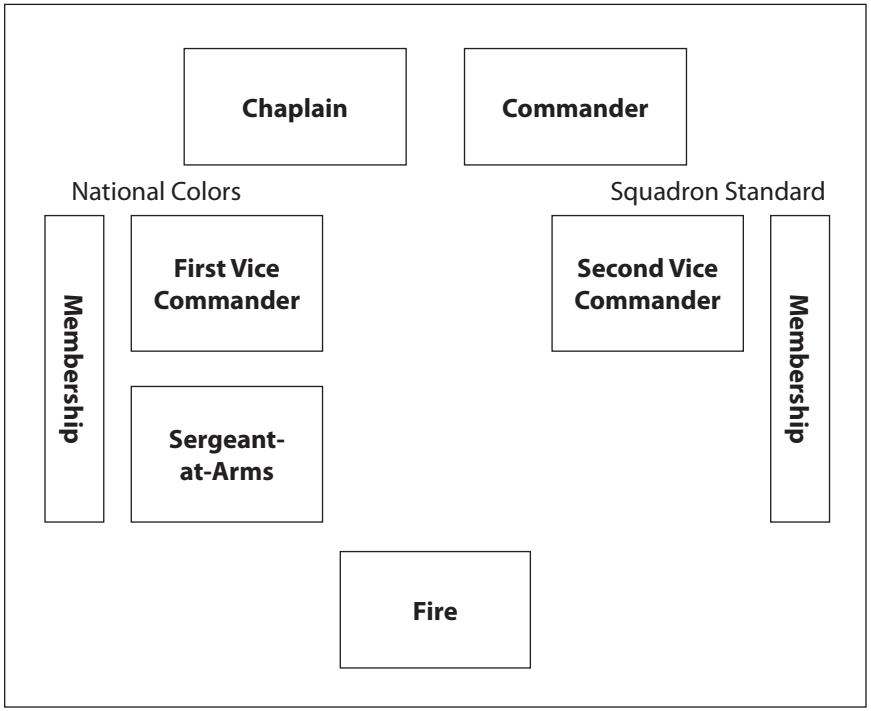
"We know how futile mere words are to express our deep and abiding sympathy to those who are left behind. May they now feel he is at least at rest and never ending peace."

Note: SAL Honor Guard, if available, should line aisle before ceremony. Colors should be placed at head and foot of casket. At end of ceremony, commander and chaplain salute (Farewell my Friend) turn and leave. Members may file forward to pay last respects, salute and leave. After last member passes, Taps is played and Honor Guard salutes, turns and leaves.

DISPOSAL OF UNSERVICEABLE FLAGS (SUGGESTED FORMAT)

This ceremony is meant to be part of a Flag Day observance.

The squadron assembles in meeting, out-of-doors, at night. Members are aligned in two parallel rows about 20 feet apart, facing each other. Officers at their stations as shown. A small fire is burning opposite the commander and beyond the rows of members. Diagram of arrangements appears below.



Sergeant-at-arms: "Comrade commander, we wish to present a number of unserviceable flags of our country for inspection and disposal."

Commander: "Comrade sergeant-at-arms, advance with your detail and present the flags for disposal and inspection."

Sergeant-at-arms calls his detail to attention. They form at the post of the sergeant-at-arms, take the flags which are to be inspected, march abreast down center until opposite the second vice commander, turn right and halt two paces in front of the second vice commander. The sergeant-at-arms steps one pace forward and salutes.

Sergeant-at-Arms: "Comrade vice commander, we present these unserviceable flags for your inspection."

The sergeant-at-arms salutes, about faces, commands the detail "About Face," crosses behind the detail and takes his post at its left, commands "Forward March." The detail marches to within two paces of the first vice commander, halts and proceeds as before.

Sergeant-at-arms: "Comrade vice commander, we present these flags which have

been inspected by the second vice commander, for your further inspection."

First vice commander: "Have any of these flags served any other purpose?"

Sergeant-at-arms: "Some of these flags have been displayed in various public places."

First vice commander: "Present them to the commander for final inspection and fitting disposal."

The sergeant-at-arms salutes, about faces, commands the detail "About Face," crosses behind the detail and takes position on its left, commands "Forward March." The detail marches to center, turns left, halts within two paces of the commander, sergeant-at-arms steps one pace forward and salutes.

Sergeant-at-arms: "Comrade commander, we have the honor to present for final inspection and proper disposal these flags of our country."

Commander: "Have these flags been inspected by the first and second vice commanders?"

Sergeant-at-arms: "They have."

Commander: "Comrade second vice commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?"

Second vice commander: "Comrade commander, since these flags have become unserviceable in a worthy cause, I recommend that they be honorably retired from further service."

Commander: "Comrade first vice commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?"

First vice commander: "Comrade commander, since these flags have become unserviceable in a worthy cause, I recommend that they be honorably retired from further service."

Commander: "Comrade first vice commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?"

First vice commander: "Comrade commander, since these flags have become faded and worn in a tribute of service and love, I also recommend that they be fittingly destroyed."

Commander: "Comrades, we have presented here these flags of our country which have been inspected and condemned as unserviceable. They have reached their present state in a proper service of tribute, memory and love.

"A flag may be a flimsy bit of printed gauze, or a beautiful banner of finest silk. Its intrinsic value may be trifling or great; but its real value is beyond price, for it is a precious symbol of all that we and our comrades have worked for and lived for, and died for - a free nation of free men, true to the faith of the past, devoted to the ideals and practice of justice, freedom and democracy.

"Let these faded flags of our country be retired and destroyed with respectful and honorable rites and their places be taken by bright new flags of the same size and

kind, and let no grave of our soldier or sailor dead be unhonored and unmarked. Sergeant-at-arms, assemble the Color Guard, escort the detail bearing the flags and destroy these flags by burning. The members shall stand at attention."

Color Guard forms. The detail about faces. Preceded by the Color Guard, the detail marches down center to the fire. National colors cross over and take position on the right of the fire, facing the commander. Post standard takes position on left of fire. The detail lines up behind the fire, which is burning low.

Commander: "The chaplain will offer prayer."

Chaplain: "Almighty God, captain of all hosts and commander over all, bless and consecrate this present hour.

"We thank Thee for our country and its flag, and the liberty for which it stands.

"To clean and purging flame we commit these flags, worn out in worthy service. As they yield their substance to the fire, may Thy Holy Light spread over and bring to our hearts renewed devotion to God and country. Amen."

Commander: "Hand salute."

Color Guards present arms. Post standard is dipped. All officers and members, except those on the flag detail, salute. Member of the flag detail dip the condemned flags in kerosene and place them on a rack over the fire. Bugler sounds "To the Colors."

Commander, at conclusion of "To the Colors": "Two."

The Color Guard shall resume its station and detail is dismissed.

Color Guard advances down center and places Colors. Members of the detail resume their places among the members.

Before conducting any ceremonies, consult with your local municipal laws and ordinances for compliance. Insure the burn area is well-ventilated and safe distances are maintained at all times.

Organization and rules

SUGGESTIONS FOR SQUADRON ORGANIZATION

Department headquarters will provide applications for charter upon request from any American Legion post. There is only one form of charter, and there is no fee charged for it. A post cannot sponsor more than one squadron.

Part One: Preparation

The committee that undertakes the organization of a squadron must first carefully study the aims and purposes of the organization as indicated in the Preamble and Constitution. The committee has authority over the organization; the post should pledge its active support to the committee. First, the committee should conduct a study of plans for the squadron's organization, followed by the compilation of a list of eligible members.

When the list of eligibles has been completed, each applicant will be given an individual application for membership form in duplicate. The eligibility of each applicant will be certified by the adjutant of The American Legion post sponsoring the squadron. One copy of the application should remain with the post adjutant for record, and one copy will accompany the application for squadron charter to department headquarters.

Part Two: Organization

In planning the squadron's first meeting, organizers should emphasize the responsibility of membership, opportunity for service and pride in being eligible to promote the ideals and programs of The American Legion. Consider holding a father-and-son banquet in connection with the organization meeting. Here are some tips for a successful first meeting:

- Invite each eligible son by mailing a letter signed by both the post commander and the chairman of the post's Sons of The American Legion committee.
- At the meeting, stress that the Sons is a part of The American Legion, but full responsibility for the success or failure of the squadron rests with its membership.
- Tell squadron members that they are eligible for the award programs.
- Arrange for a short entertainment program focused on Americanism.
- After the organization meeting, plans should be made for the initiation.
- Alert all post members, urging them to attend the initiation meeting.

Part Three: Initiation

The meeting should be called to order by the post commander, followed by the advance of Colors while the audience stands at attention, then the Legion prayer and the singing of the national anthem.

Be sure to include short speeches by civic or Legion officials, as well as remarks by at least one of the initiates.

The squadron officers and post supervisory committee should plan the formal initiation of candidates. The squadron should organize an initiation team, with each officer memorizing his respective part. Care should be taken in the arrangement of members of the initiation team and the candidates.

Presentation of the charter may not be possible at this meeting. It is suggested, however, that caps and emblems be presented to all members who have been initiated into the squadron.

SAL organizational material

National Headquarters provides each department of The American Legion with the following material, all of which may be acquired upon request to the department adjutant:

- Official membership cards.
- Application for charter forms.
- Application for membership pads.
- Statement of dues forms.
- Squadron handbook.
- Application blanks for Five-Star Award supplies.
- SAL promotional brochures.

SUGGESTED FORM FOR SQUADRON CONSTITUTION

Constitution of _____ Squadron, attached to_____
Post No. _____ Department of _____.

PREAMBLE

Proud possessors of a priceless heritage, we male descendants of veterans of the Great 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 the Great Wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the 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.

ARTICLE I
NAME

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the Sons of The American Legion Squadron, attached to _____ Post No. _____, Department of_____.

ARTICLE II
NATURE

Section 1. The Sons of The American Legion Squadron, attached to_____ Post No. _____ Department of _____, is a civilian organization. Membership therein does not affect nor increase liability for military or police service.

Section 2. The Squadron shall be absolutely non-political and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment.

Section 3. The Squadron shall be absolutely non-sectarian.

Section 4. Each member shall perform his full duty as a citizen according to his own conscience and understanding, in accord with the law.

ARTICLE III
ORGANIZATION

Section 1. This Squadron is organized as a subordinate body of the Sons of The American Legion, Detachment of _____, and under the sponsorship and jurisdiction of _____ Post No. _____, Department of _____, The American Legion.

Section 2. This Squadron shall be governed by such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, by such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the Detachment Headquarters, approved by the Department Executive Committee of The American Legion, and by such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by its sponsoring post of The American Legion, not inconsistent with those prescribed by the national organization.

ARTICLE IV
ELIGIBILITY

Section 1. All male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of members of The American Legion, and such male descendants of veterans who died in service during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf War, and the War on Terrorism, during the delimiting periods set forth in Article IV, Section 1, of the National Constitution of The American Legion, or who died subsequent to their honorable discharge from such service, shall be eligible for membership in the Sons of The American Legion.

Section 2. There shall be no form or class of membership except an active membership.

ARTICLE V
OFFICERS

Section 1. The Squadron officers shall be a Commander, First Vice Commander, Second Vice Commander, Adjutant, Finance Officer, Sergeant-at-Arms, Chaplain and Historian, all of whom shall be elected at the Squadron's annual meeting.

ARTICLE VI
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. Between Squadron meetings, the administrative power of the Squadron shall be vested in the Squadron Executive Committee, which shall consist of all elective officers for the current year, and in addition the three immediate Past Commanders.

Section 2. All other Past Squadron Commanders shall be members of the Squadron Executive Committee without vote.

ARTICLE VII
DUES

Section 1. The annual membership dues of this Squadron shall be $_____, payable on Oct. 20 of each year, for the following year.

A member whose dues for the current year have not been paid by Jan. 1 shall be deemed delinquent. If his dues are paid on or before Feb. 1, he shall be automatically reinstated. If he is still delinquent after Feb. 1, he shall be suspended from all privileges. If he is still under such suspension on June 30 of such year, his membership in the Sons of The American Legion shall be forfeited. A member so suspended or whose membership has been so forfeited may be reinstated to active membership in good standing by vote of the Squadron and payment of current dues for the year in which reinstatement occurs. Provided, however, that the Squadrons, Detachments, and the national organization may waive the provisions hereof, upon payment of dues for the year in which reinstatement occurs, with reference to former members who have been prevented from the payment of dues by reason of active military service.

ARTICLE VIII
AMENDMENTS

Section 1. This Constitution is adopted, subject to the provision of the National Constitution and the Detachment Constitution of which this Squadron is a subordinate member. Any amendment to the National or Detachment Constitutions which is in conflict with any provision hereof shall be regarded as automatically repealing or modifying the provisions of this Constitution, to the extent of such conflict.

Section 2. This Constitution may be amended at any regular Squadron meeting by vote of two-thirds of the members in attendance; provided, that the proposed amendment shall have been submitted in writing, and read at the immediate preceding Squadron meeting, and provided further, that written notice shall

have been given to all members at least five days in advance of the date which such amendment is to be voted upon, notifying said members at such meeting a proposal to amend the Constitution is to be voted upon.

NOTE: Only members in good standing will be privileged to participate in the business of a meeting, vote or hold office.

SUGGESTED FORM FOR SQUADRON BYLAWS

Bylaws of _____ Squadron, attached to _____ Post No. _____, Department of _____.

ARTICLE I
MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Applications for membership shall be made in writing on blanks prescribed therefore by the national organization.

Section 2. All applications for membership shall be acted upon at the next meeting of the Executive Committee following the making of such application. The Executive Committee shall present such application to the Squadron at its next regular meeting with its recommendation for acceptance or rejection. If _____ or more Squadron members cast their vote against the acceptance of such applicant, then such applicant shall be recorded as rejected.

ARTICLE II
NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 1. At the first regular meeting in _____ the Commander shall appoint a nominating committee of three members who will, acting together with and under the advice of the Supervisory Committee of the Post, present to the second regular meeting in _____ a list of one or more candidates for each office required to be elected under the Constitution of this Squadron.

Section 2. At the conclusion of the report of the nominating committee, any Squadron member may present the name of any other Squadron member for nomination to any office for which such Squadron member is not nominated by the nominating committee, and upon said nomination being seconded, the same shall be considered as though contained in the report of the nominating committee after said report has been accepted and adopted by the Squadron.

Section 3. Those officers shall be declared elected who have by secret ballot received a majority of the votes of the Squadron members in good standing present at the annual meeting.

Section 4. The newly elected officers and members of the Executive Committee shall take office at the next regular meeting, at which time they shall be installed by proper authority.

ARTICLE III
DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. Commander: The Commander, who corresponds to the President of an organization, shall be the executive head of this Squadron of the Sons of the American Legion, with full power to enforce the provisions of the local Constitution and Bylaws and the policies and mandates of the National and of the Department Committees of the Sons of The American Legion and of the Executive Committee of the Squadron.

Section 2. First Vice Commander: The First Vice Commander, who corresponds to the First Vice President of an organization, shall act as representative of the Commander on all matters referred to him and shall specifically be in charge of membership. He shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 3. Second Vice Commander. The Second Vice Commander, who corresponds to a Second Vice President, shall likewise act as representative of the Commander, and he shall specifically be in charge of Squadron activities. He shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 4. Adjutant: The Adjutant, who corresponds to the Secretary of an organization, shall be charged with the administrative duties required in carrying out the policies and mandates of the National and Department Committees of the Sons of The American Legion and of the Executive Committee of this Squadron.

Section 5. Finance Officer: The Finance Officer shall be the custodian of the funds of the Squadron. He shall be charged with receiving and disbursing the funds of the Squadron and shall make reports upon the condition of the Squadron treasury when called for by the Commander or Executive Committee; provided, however, that all disbursement shall first be approved by the Post committee heretofore referred to in Section 4, Article I, of the National Bylaws. He shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 6. Sergeant-at-Arms: The Sergeant-at-Arms shall be charged with the responsibility of preserving order at all Squadron meetings and he shall be given the custody of the Squadron colors. He shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 7. Chaplain: The Chaplain shall perform such divine and non-sectarian service as may be necessary, adhering to such ceremonial rituals as may be prescribed by the National Membership and Post Activities Committee of The American Legion.

Section 8. Historian: The Historian shall collect from year to year all records and data of value and interest to the Sons of The American Legion and The American Legion, and shall compile during his term of office a complete history of the year's activities.

ARTICLE IV

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. The Squadron Executive Committee shall fill any vacancy in the membership of the committee occurring between annual Squadron meetings for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Section 2. Any officer or executive committeeman may be removed for inefficiency by the Executive Committee, a two-thirds vote of said committee being necessary to effect such removal. An officer or executive committeeman who absents himself for three or more consecutive Squadron or Executive Committee meetings can, on due investigation, by the Executive Committee, be held to be sufficient proof of inefficiency, warranting such removal.

ARTICLE V

POST SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

Section 1. The jurisdiction of_____ Post No. _____, Department of _____, The American Legion, over this Squadron shall be exercised through a committee of three or more members of said Post appointed annually by the Post Executive Committee on nomination of the Post Commander.

ARTICLE VI

STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. Upon nomination of the Squadron Commander, the Executive Committee shall annually appoint such standing committees as it shall deem advisable for the benefit of the membership of the Squadron as a whole.

ARTICLE VII
MEETINGS

Section 1. The annual meeting of this Squadron shall be held on the first regular meeting day of _____ in each calendar year of said date.

Section 2. The regular stated meeting of this Squadron shall be held on the _____ and _____ of each and every month.

Section 3. Special meetings shall be called upon a majority vote of the Executive Committee or upon the written request of 10 Squadron members.

Section 4. Every member shall furnish to the Adjutant his address, to which all notices and documents may be sent, and the same shall be held to have been duly sent to or served upon a member if mailed to such address so furnished. In default of an address having been furnished by a Squadron member, any notice or documents will be held to have been duly served upon such member five days after the same shall have been deposited in the local post office addressed to such member at such post office address.

Section 5. Notice of all special meetings of the Squadron shall be mailed to each

Squadron member _____ hours previous to the holding of such meeting and at least _____ in advance of the holding of the annual meeting.

Section 6. The notice of special meetings shall state the object and purpose thereof, and no business shall be transacted at such special meeting except for such business as is contained in the notice thereof.

Section 7. The Executive Committee shall meet for organization and such business as may come before it within 10 days after the annual election on the call of the Commander. Thereafter the Executive Committee shall meet at the call of the Commander at least every three months and as often as said Commander may deem necessary. The Commander shall call a meeting of the Executive Committee upon the written request of five members of the committee.

ARTICLE VIII
QUORUM

Section 1. _____ members, besides a qualified presiding officer, shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Squadron.

Section 2. Five members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for the legal transaction of business.

ARTICLE IX
FINANCES

Section 1. All funds of this Squadron shall be deposited in a bank by the Finance Officer. Withdrawals shall only be made upon draft or check signed by the Finance Officer and the Chairman of the Post Supervisory Committee.

Section 2. All Squadron and Post officials handling Squadron moneys shall be properly bonded with a good and solvent bonding and surety company, as surety, to cover double the average amount of moneys handled in a single year.

ARTICLE X
RULES OF ORDER

Section 1. The procedure at all squadron meetings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE XI
AMENDMENTS

Section 1. These bylaws are adopted, subject to the provisions of the National Bylaws and the Detachment Bylaws, of which this Squadron is a subordinate member. Any amendment to the National or Detachment Bylaws which is in conflict with any provision hereof shall be regarded as automatically repealing or modifying the provisions of these Bylaws to the extent of such conflict.

Section 2. These Bylaws may be amended at any regular Squadron meeting by vote of two-thirds of the members attending such regular meeting, pro-

vided that the proposed amendment shall have been submitted in writing and read at the immediate preceding Squadron meeting, and provided further, that written notice shall have been given to all members at least five days in advance of the date when such amendment is to be voted upon, notifying said members that at such meeting a proposal to amend the By-laws is to be voted upon.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

Proud possessors of a priceless heritage, we male descendants of veterans of the Great 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 the Great 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.

ARTICLE I
NAME

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the "Sons of The American Legion."

Section 2. The National Headquarters of the Sons of The American Legion shall be located at the site of the National Headquarters of The American Legion in the city of Indianapolis, Indiana.

ARTICLE II
NATURE

Section 1. The Sons of The American Legion is a civilian organization. Membership therein does not affect nor increase liability for military or police service.

Section 2. The Sons of The American Legion shall be absolutely non-political and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person or group seeking public office or preferment.

Section 3. The Sons of The American Legion shall be absolutely non-sectarian.

Section 4. Each member shall perform his full duty as a citizen according to his own conscience and understanding in accord with the law.

ARTICLE III
ORGANIZATION

Section 1. The local unit of the Sons of The American Legion is the Squadron and one (1) Post of The American Legion may sponsor not more than one (1) Squadron. With the approval of the Department of The American Legion having jurisdiction, Squadrons sponsored by the Posts of that Department may be organized in Detachments.

Section 2. The organization of Detachments and Squadrons shall conform with regulations of the Department of The American Legion having jurisdiction, with regulations of the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, and with the National Constitution and By-Laws of the Sons of The American Legion.

Section 3. The National Executive Committee of The American Legion may establish Detachments in territorial possessions of the United States and in foreign countries provided such territories and foreign countries presently are organized as American Legion Departments and provided further that the appropriate American Legion Department recommends their formation.

Section 4. The Sons of The American Legion Squadron shall be organized under the jurisdiction and sponsorship of a local Post of The American Legion and shall bear the name of such sponsoring Post as follows: "Sons of The American Legion Squadron of _____ Post No. _____, Department of _____."

Section 5. Detachments, when organized shall have jurisdiction over the Squadrons within the Detachment's geographic area, subject to such limitations as may be prescribed by the Department of The American Legion having jurisdiction over the Detachment.

Section 6. The Sons of The American Legion shall be governed by such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion.

ARTICLE IV
ELIGIBILITY

Section 1. All male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of members of The American Legion, and such male descendants of veterans who died in service during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf War, and the War on Terrorism, during the delimiting periods set forth in Article IV, Section 1, of the National Constitution of The American Legion, or who died subsequent to their honorable discharge from such service, shall be eligible for membership in the Sons of The American Legion.

Section 2. There shall be no form or class of membership except an active membership.

ARTICLE V
LEGISLATIVE BODY

Section 1. The legislative body of the Sons of The American Legion shall be the National Convention, to be held annually in conjunction with the National Convention of The American Legion. All acts of the National Convention are subject to ratification by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion.

Section 2. The National Headquarters of The American Legion shall issue a Call to the National Convention to each Detachment Headquarters not less than 60 days prior to the opening day of the National Convention.

Section 3. In the National Convention, each Detachment shall be entitled to three delegates and one additional delegate for each 500 Members, or major fraction thereof, whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer of The American Legion, 30 days prior to the meeting of said National Convention, and whose registration fees, as fixed by the National Executive Committee, for its total authorized delegate strength, have been paid, and to one alternate for each delegate.

Section 4. Each duly registered delegate shall be entitled to one vote. The vote of any registered delegate absent and not represented by an alternate shall be cast by the majority of the registered delegates present from his Detachment. Alternates for registered delegates shall have all the privileges of registered delegates except that of voting. A registered delegate is one who has received his credentials and has paid such registration fee as may be required.

Section 5. Delegates from five Detachments shall constitute a quorum.

Section 6. The National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion shall provide a Uniform Code of Procedure for the orderly organization and operation of National Conventions with continuing power of revision, and said Code shall be applicable at all National Conventions unless it is amended, suspended, or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the registered delegates at a National Convention. The National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion may establish in the Uniform Code a registration fee to be paid by delegates to a National Convention and may determine the amount of said fee.

Section 7. All Past National Commanders of the Sons of The American Legion shall be delegates to the National Convention with vote to be exercised with their respective Detachments. The National Commander and National Vice Commanders of the Sons of The American Legion shall be delegates to the National Convention with vote to be exercised with their respective Detachments.

ARTICLE VI
NATIONAL OFFICERS

Section 1. The National Convention shall elect a National Commander, five National Vice Commanders, who shall serve without seniority. No person shall be eligible for re-election to the office of National Commander and National Vice Commander. There shall be one Vice Commander from each of the these areas:

A. EAST: Connecticut, District of Columbia, Delaware, France, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and West Virginia.

B. SOUTH: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

C. CENTRAL: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin.

D. MIDWEST: Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming.

E. WEST: Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Philippines, Utah and Washington.

Section 2. Such officers shall serve until the adjournment of the succeeding National Convention following their election and thereafter until their successors are chosen. Vacancies in these offices, occurring between National Conventions, shall be filled by election by the National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion, and for this purpose a mail ballot may be taken. Any member of the Sons of The American Legion, in good standing, shall be eligible for election to such vacancy.

Section 3. The National Commander by and with the approval of the National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion shall appoint a National Adjutant, Assistant National Adjutants, National Judge Advocate, National Historian, National Chaplain, National Sergeant-at-Arms, and such Assistant National Sergeant-at-Arms as are deemed necessary and/or desirable. No person shall be eligible for re-appointment to the office of National Chaplain. Such officers shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing power.

Section 4. The Sons of The American Legion shall recognize an individual or individuals designated by the National Commander of The American Legion as National Adviser or Advisers to the Sons of The American Legion, and he or they shall be ex-officio members of all committees or commissions of the National Organization of the Sons of The American Legion.

Section 5. The National Commander and the National Adjutant of The American Legion, and the staff members of The American Legion at the National Headquarters responsible for the routine administrative work for the Sons of The American Legion, shall be recognized as ex-officio Advisers to the National Organization of the Sons of The American Legion.

Section 6. In fulfilling their duties and responsibilities the National Officers of the Sons of The American Legion shall be responsible to the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, or to a subordinate body by it designated.

ARTICLE VII
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. The National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion shall meet at least twice each year. It shall meet immediately preceding the National Convention to establish the agenda for that National Convention, and immediately following the National Convention to approve the National Commander's appointments. Between National Conventions the administrative power shall be vested in the National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion, the membership of which shall be composed of the National Commander, National Vice Commanders, the immediate Past National Commander, and one National Executive Committeeman and one Alternate National Executive Committeeman from each Detachment, to be selected as such Detachments shall determine. The Alternate National Executive Committeeman may act only in the absence of the National Executive Committeeman from his Detachment. All Past National Commanders shall be non-voting members, with voice, of the National Executive Committee. Actions of the Sons of The American Legion shall be subject to ratification by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion.

Section 2. The National Executive Committee, without meeting together, may transact business by mail, email, fax or telephone on a matter of urgency not involving new policy and on which action cannot be delayed to the next regular meeting. Thirty days shall be allowed for the return, by mail, email, fax or telephone, of the votes thereon by the National Adjutant. The National Adjutant shall notify the National Commander of the results of the vote taken. The National Executive Committee may also meet on the call of the National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion or on written request of at least five Detachments, at any time during the year for sufficient reason to it appearing.

ARTICLE VIII
DETACHMENT ORGANIZATION

Section 1. Detachments shall be comprised of the Squadrons within their respective geographic areas, which shall coincide with the boundaries of the appropriate Department of The American Legion.

Section 2. Each Detachment shall have a Detachment Commander, one or more Detachment Vice Commanders, a Detachment Adjutant, and a Detachment Executive Committee, and may have a Chaplain and such other officers as the Detachment shall determine.

Section 3. Detachments shall have authority to create intermediate bodies between the Squadrons and Detachment to act as a liaison between such or-

ganizations and for the purpose of promoting the program of the Sons of The American Legion. Such intermediate bodies shall conform to the framework within The American Legion Department in which the Detachment is geographically located.

Section 4. The Detachment Executive Committee shall define the powers of such intermediate groups, but in no event shall such powers invade the prerogatives now vested in Squadron or Detachment or National Organization.

ARTICLE IX
SQUADRON ORGANIZATION

Section 1. Those who desire to form a Squadron of the Sons of The American Legion shall make application for a charter to the Post Commander of the local Post of The American Legion in the area in which they reside. Upon approval by the Post Commander the application shall be forwarded to the Department Commander of The American Legion, and upon his approval it shall be forwarded to the National Headquarters of The American Legion, where the charter may be issued by the National Commander and the National Adjutant of The American Legion in the same manner as prescribed for the issuance of charters for Posts of The American Legion.

Section 2. The minimum membership for the formation of a Squadron of the Sons of The American Legion shall be 10.

Section 3. There shall be no more than one Squadron of the Sons of The American Legion for each Post of The American Legion. Squadrons may be organized into sections based upon age.

Section 4. The Squadron officers of the Sons of The American Legion shall consist of a Squadron Commander, Squadron Vice Commander or Vice Commanders, Adjutant, Finance Officer, Chaplain, Sergeant-At-Arms, Historian, and such other officers as may be required.

Section 5. Officers of the Squadron shall be elected annually, and the date of such election should conform if possible with the annual election of Post officers of The American Legion. Squadron officers elected shall be subject to the approval of the sponsoring American Legion Post. This authority may be delegated by the Post to a Post Supervisory Committee or other designated body.

Section 6. Squadron meetings shall be held not less than once per month in accordance with the ritual of the organization.

ARTICLE X
FINANCES

Section 1. The revenue of the Sons of The American Legion shall be derived from annual membership dues and from such other sources as may be approved by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion.

Section 2. The amount of such annual National dues shall be $2 per member and

shall be payable Oct. 20 of each year and for the succeeding year.

Section 3. The amount of annual Detachment dues shall be determined by the Detachment organization of the Sons of The American Legion under such procedures as The American Legion Department having jurisdiction over the Detachment provides; such funds shall be transmitted to the officer charged with the custody of Department funds and shall be held and accounted for separately from other funds of such Department.

Section 4. The amount of such annual Squadron dues shall be determined by the Squadron.

Section 5. The annual National dues shall be collected by each Squadron and transmitted through the Department Headquarters of The American Legion in which the Squadron is geographically located and then to the National Treasurer of The American Legion.

ARTICLE XI
DISCIPLINE

Section 1. A Detachment Headquarters may suspend, cancel or revoke the charter of any Squadron of the Sons of The American Legion over which it has jurisdiction in the event it violates the provisions of this Constitution, subject, however, to the approval of the Department Executive Committee of The American Legion Department in which the Squadron and Detachment are geographically situated.

Section 2. Upon the cancellation or revocation of the charter of any Squadron of the Sons of The American Legion, the property and assets belonging to such Squadron shall thereupon become the property of the Post of The American Legion to which such Squadron is attached.

ARTICLE XII
AMENDMENTS

Section 1. This Constitution may be amended at any National Convention by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the registered delegates there at, subject to ratification by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion.

NATIONAL BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. Commander: The Sons of The American Legion Commander is the executive head of the organization at his level with full power to carry out the mandates and policies of the Sons of The American Legion as approved by The American Legion. He shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 2. Vice Commander: The Vice Commander or Vice Commanders shall act as representative of the Commander on all matters referred to them by him, and shall, on his request, preside over meetings and perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 3. Adjutant: The Adjutant, who corresponds to the secretary of an organization, shall be charged with the usual duties of an adjutant or secretary. He is the administrative officer of the policies and mandates of the organization.

Section 4. Finance Officer: The Finance Officer shall be the custodian of the funds of the organization, he shall be charged with the receiving and disbursing of the funds of the Squadron, intermediate level, or Detachment and shall make reports on the condition of the treasury at each regular meeting, and when called for by the Commander or Executive Committee; provided, however, that all disbursements shall first be approved at the appropriate level of The American Legion. He shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 5. Sergeant-at-Arms: The Sergeant-at-Arms shall be charged with the responsibility of preserving order at all meetings and shall be given the custody and responsibility of the colors of the organization. He shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 6. Chaplain: The Chaplain shall perform such divine and non-sectarian service as shall be necessary adhering to the ceremonial rituals as may be prescribed.

Section 7. Historian: The Historian shall collect from year to year all records and data of value and interest to the Sons of The American Legion and The American Legion, and shall compile during his term of office a complete history of the year's activities.

Section 8. All officers of the Sons of The American Legion in the performance of their duties shall be governed by The American Legion at the appropriate level. All actions of the Sons of The American Legion at the Squadron level, intermediate level, and at the Detachment level shall be subject to review and ratification at the appropriate level of The American Legion.

ARTICLE II
SQUADRON AND DETACHMENT CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Section 1. Each Squadron, intermediate group and Detachment may adopt a Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 2. In the formation of the Constitution and By-Laws referred to in Section I hereof there shall be no conflict with the National Constitution and By-Laws governing the Sons of The American Legion.

ARTICLE III
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. The Constitution of a Squadron or Detachment may create an Executive Committee and define the powers and composition thereof.

ARTICLE IV
MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership in the Sons of The American Legion is membership in the National Organization of the Sons of The American Legion by affiliate with a Squadron.

Section 2. Each Squadron shall be the judge of its own membership, subject to the restrictions of this Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 3. Members may be suspended or expelled under the same procedures provided for the suspension or expulsion of a member of The American Legion.

ARTICLE V
MEMBERSHIP AND ARREARS IN DUES

Section 1. Applications for Squadron membership shall be verified by the designated officials of the sponsoring Post of The American Legion having jurisdiction over the Squadron.

Section 2. A member whose dues for the current year have not been paid by Jan. 1 shall be classed as delinquent. If his dues are paid on or before Feb. 1, he shall be automatically reinstated. If he is still delinquent after Feb. 1, he shall be suspended from all privileges. If he is still under such suspension on June 30 of such year, his membership in the Sons of The American Legion shall be forfeited. A member so suspended or whose membership has been so forfeited may be reinstated to active membership in good standing by vote of the Squadron and payment of current dues for the year in which reinstatement occurs. Provided, however, that the Squadrons, Detachments, and the National Organization may waive the provisions hereof, upon payment of dues for the year in which reinstatement occurs, with reference to former members who have been prevented from the payment of dues by reason of active military service.

ARTICLE VI
AMENDMENTS

Section 1. These By-Laws may be amended by any National Convention by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the registered delegates thereat, subject to ratification by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion.

This Constitution and By-Laws have been amended and brought up to date as of October 2010.

THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY

The Sons of the American Legion is one of the three groups that make up The American Legion Family. The other two are:

The American Legion

The organization was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic wartime veterans service organization. The American Legion is a community-service organization which now has about 1.9 million members, men and women, in nearly 13,000 American Legion posts worldwide.

The four pillars of the Legion are Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth.

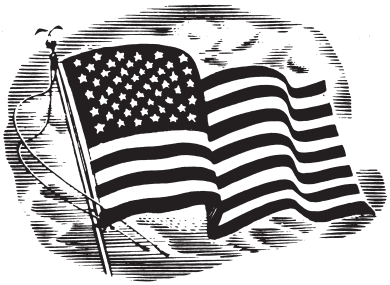
The American Legion was founded in Paris on March 15-17, 1919, and chartered by an act of Congress on Sept. 16, 1919.

American Legion Auxiliary

The nation's largest patriotic service organization has about 750,000 members who participate in hundreds of volunteer programs, give tens of thousands of hours to its communities and to veterans, and raise millions of dollars to support its own programs. The Auxiliary, organized in 1921, embodies the spirit of America that has prevailed through war and peace. Along with The American Legion, it solidly stands behind America and her ideals.

Additionally, members of the Legion, Auxiliary and the Sons are eligible for membership in the Legion Riders. Members of the Legion Riders must be legally registered motorcycle owners. The group is well known for its charitable work, and has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for local children's hospitals, schools, veterans homes, severely wounded servicemembers and scholarships. Since 2006, Riders nationwide have participated in the Legion Legacy Run, to annually raise money for the Legacy Scholarship Fund, which provides scholarships to children of U.S. military personnel killed since Sept. 11, 2001. Children of post-9/11 veterans having been assigned a combined disability rating of 50 percent or greater by the Department of Veterans Affairs also qualify.

The American's Creed



I believe in the United States of America as a government of the people, by the people, for the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic; a sovereign nation of many sovereign states; a perfect union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes.

I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it; to support its constitution; to obey its laws; to respect its flag; and to defend it against all enemies. — (Authorized version.)

STATEMENT OF POLICY
ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE THE AMERICAN LEGION, MAY 5-6, 1938

"Resolved, That the same policies now in effect for use and control of The American Legion emblem shall apply to the use and control of the emblem of the Sons of The American Legion.

"Resolved, That there can be no fundamental difference or conflict between the Constitution, By-Laws, offices, resolutions and policies of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion, but that The American Legion provisions, wherever applicable, shall cover any instance of such difference and conflict, and the conflicting provisions of the Sons of The American Legion shall be deemed void."

STATEMENT OF STATUS

The Sons of The American Legion is a legally constituted organization, instituted and recognized by official action of The American Legion in national convention assembled, empowering the National Executive Committee to assume complete authority over the organization. This authority was assumed, fully accepted and approved May 4-5, 1993.

It must be constantly borne in mind that each squadron exists through sponsorship of the individual post of The American Legion and is subject to such rules, regulations and supervision as shall be created by the sponsoring post not in conflict with rules and regulations set up by the National Executive Committee. Recognition of district and detachment organizations of Sons have been approved by the National Executive Committee to more effectively coordinate the activities of the Sons of The American Legion and the District and Department of The American Legion.

Disclaimer of liability

The Sons of The American Legion *Squadron Handbook* ("handbook") provides the reader with very general information about planning and conducting various programs and events. This handbook is only intended as helpful assistance to volunteers and staff. With respect to information contained in this handbook, neither The American Legion, the Sons of The American Legion nor any of its officers, directors or employees make any warranty, express or implied, nor assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product or process implemented at the squadron, post or department level. This handbook only constitutes general advice and recommendations for operations based on best practices. Information within the handbook stating "shall or must" is based on federal law or federal/IRS regulations and mandates. All other items of information in this handbook are general suggestions except for the National Constitution and By-Laws. This handbook does not constitute any type of legal advice. If readers have any concerns about anything in this handbook, they are strongly advised to contact their respective department and an attorney licensed in their state.

Please see 36 U.S.C. Section 21704: ***The Corporation (The American Legion) may provide guidance and leadership to organizations (departments) and local chapters (posts) ... but may not control or otherwise influence the specific activities and conduct of such organizations (departments) and local chapters (posts).*** (emphasis added)

Sons of The American Legion

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