SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Squadron Handbook

of the Sons of The American Legion (SAL)

Updated 2024

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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).***

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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 all wars, associate ourselves together as "Sons of The American Legion" for the following purposes:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a true spirit of Americanism; to preserve the memories of our former members and the association of our members and our forefathers in all wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and 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 the period of April 6, 1917, through November 11, 1918, or any time from December 7, 1941, to date, who served honorably, as 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.

The American Legion eligibility dates

Dec. 7, 1941	—	To date
April 6, 1917	—	Nov. 11, 1918

INTRODUCTION

The Sons of The American Legion (SAL) is a legally constituted organization, instituted and recognized by official action of The American Legion's National Executive Committee (NEC). Each squadron exists through sponsorship of the individual post of The American Legion (TAL) 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 NEC. Recognition of district and detachment organizations of Sons has been approved by the NEC.

SAL squadrons can be a source of pride for their members and the sponsoring TAL post. By volunteering to assist veterans and participating in patriotic holiday events, squadrons not only expand the post's representation but reflect the SAL's purpose "to foster and perpetuate a true spirit of Americanism."s

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: An SAL member's experience and talent should be utilized in leadership and instructional capacities within the squadron. SAL members who have had Boys State experience can provide a junior counselor service to the TAL in this annual program.

Americanism: One of the four pillars of the TAL. The SAL plays a vital role in the TAL 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 desecration. 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.

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.

The establishment of an 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.

Legionnaires on the supervisory committee should serve primarily as advisors for the squadron's leadership.

SQUADRON OFFICERS AND DUTIES

Commander: You are entrusted with teaching and protecting the cardinal principles of the SAL 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 program for the opening and closing of a squadron meeting are outlined on Page 22 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: Invite public officials, local civic leaders, American Legion dignitaries and members of the sponsoring post to attend a local event. Study emphasis during the month should be devoted to Citizenship as required for Point 2 of the Five Point Program.

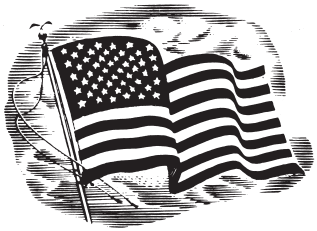
February: With the observance of the birthdays of Presidents Washington and Lincoln this month, it is an appropriate time for a study of patriotism and discipline in the Ten Ideals and Five Point Programs.

March: TAL'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 American 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 Flag & Emblem sales, (phone) 888-453-4466 or online at https://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 Flag & Emblem Sales, The American Legion, P.O. Box 1050, Indianapolis, IN 46206, or online at https://emblem.legion.org/.

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. While saluting the flag, is it correct to also sing the national anthem? Explain.

   Answer – No, it should not be done. There is no speaking while rendering honors to the flag.

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?

   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?

   Answer - Group activities are effective only when you have rules.

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

   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 people (Refer to Point 8 of the Ten Ideals).
8. Practice self-control in every respect.

   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?

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 TAL organized?

   Answer - TAL 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 TAL?

   Answer - The deep-rooted interest of TAL 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 TAL?

   Answer - Boys Nation, Boys State, American Legion Baseball, National High School Oratorical Contest and Junior Shooting Sports.

4. Assist in community service projects sponsored by the TAL post.
5. Assist in observance of patriotic holidays sponsored by the TAL 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 SAL.
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 SAL is the squadron blue cap. Dress attire is determined by the activity and by the SAL 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 American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales Division. Also available are jackets, shirts and other items for purchase. For a catalog contact Flag & Emblem at (phone) 888-453-4466 or visit emblem.legion.org.

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

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

A member of the SAL 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 SAL cap shall not be worn while attending partisan political rallies or events.

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 SAL.

The sun in the background represents the SAL 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 TAL son.

SAL AWARDS

The Arthur D. Houghton Sons of the American Legion Trophy

Awarded annually to that detachment of the SAL 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 Sons of the American Legion Trophy** 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**. A **History Book Contest Award** is presented each year to the squadron that submits the best **History Book** in the **National History Book Contest**.

The **SAL Snapshots of Service Award** recognizes first and second-place winners in each of four categories, representing the Four Pillars of TAL. The **SAL Videos of Service Award** recognizes first and second-place winners in three categories: membership and recruitment; program support; and community engagement.

The SAL Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R) 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).

The **Atwood-Beyea-York Awards** recognize the top Americanism programs at the detachment, district, and squadron levels.

(Note: All SAL physical trophies are retired to the Emil A. Blackmore Museum at TAL 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.
- **All Time High 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.
- **Triple Nickel Award** 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.
- **Detachment Recruitment Award** is presented in each of five categories to the Detachment having the highest membership recruitment. The categories are:
- 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
- The **Squadron Commander of the Year Award** is presented annually to a squadron commander who demonstrates leadership through action and ionvolvement in squadron activities that benefit his community and who obtains 100% squadron membership or better by March 15.
- The **Recruiter of the Year Award** is presented to each detachment's top recruiter of new members for the previous year.
- 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.

- Additional membership awards can be awarded for recruiting new members:
  1. **Individual Recruitment Award Pin**. An SAL membership pin can be awarded for the recruitment of five new members.
  2. **Blue Brigade Recruiter Award**. With the recruitment of 30 or more new members, you can become a member of the "Blue Brigade" and receive a special membership jacket.

Award nomination forms are available online at www.legion.org/sons.

Other awards:

- The **Marvin P. Nay Veterans Employment & Education Outstanding Contributor Award** is presented annually to a member engaged in the fundraising, distribution of funds and/or goods, and/or volunteering at an event deemed beneficial to veterans' employment and education, to include homelessness.
- The **George B. Evans Grassroots Veterans' Advocate of the Year Award** recognizes an SAL member who has performed outstanding service and made significant contributions in time and effort to grassroots veterans' advocacy work.
- The **Charles B. Rigsby Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Volunteer of the Year Award** 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 SAL has 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 the Chaplain's Prayer Book available at legion.org/publications.)

COMMANDER:

The memorial services are now completed.

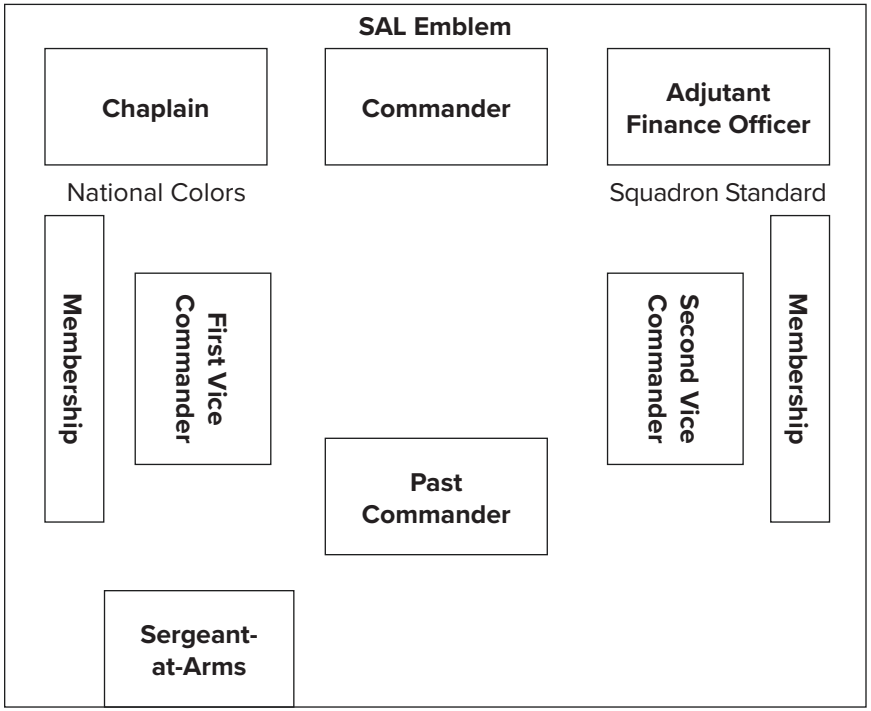
Patriotic holiday observances

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.
- Juneteenth, the third Monday in June.
- Independence Day, July 4.
- Labor Day, the first Monday in September.
- Patriot Day, Sept. 11.
- 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 rifle 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 (REGULAR FORM)

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 TAL, a member of the Detachment SAL Committee, a post officer of TAL 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 all 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: "You are entrusted with the recording of all current records of this squadron. The collection of records 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 escorts the chaplain to a position between the commander and the historian.

The acting chaplain then charges him.

ACTING CHAPLAIN: "You provide 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 escorts 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 escorts 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 escorts 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 escorts 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 escorts 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 membership, 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.

INSTALLATION OF SQUADRON OFFICERS

Short form

Where it is not practical to conduct the full ceremony for the installation of officers, the following short form may be conducted by an installing officer (a duly authorized representative of the detachment commander) who, after being introduced by the retiring squadron commander, proceeds as follows:

INSTALLING OFFICER: "The sergeant-at-arms will bring before me the newly elected officers of this squadron."

The sergeant-at-arms presents the newly elected officers, standing in one row in front of the installing officer, with the new squadron commander to the right of the installing officer and the retiring squadron commander to the left of the installing officer.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: "I present to you the newly elected officers of this squadron, whose eligibility records for membership in The Sons of The American Legion have been duly checked and authenticated."

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 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 you fathers' service in all 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, the state and the nation. You must exalt it in their eyes. You must make them know, as we know its purposes and its policy. Ever 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. Ever 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 hands 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."

Hands down."

The installing officer will move to the left to address the retiring post commander.

INSTALLING OFFICER: " **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 has observed your faithful and untiring efforts and extend to you their sincere appreciation of the services which you have rendered. Sergeant-at-Arms, you will conduct the Past Commander to his post, opposite this station."

The installing officer moves to the right to address the newly elected post commander.

INSTALLING OFFICER: " **New 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 membership, 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."

[Three raps of the mallet]

The retiring squadron chaplain may offer a prayer for the guidance and success of the newly installed squadron officers.

The installing officer moves to the original position and asks all newly instal

REGULAR MEETING

Opening ceremony

All officers should be in uniform, each wearing an official cap and the official badge of office. The commander shall announce the meeting is about to open. Officers shall take their stations. The commander shall seat those present with one rap of the gavel, and the sergeant-at-arms shall close the doors of the meeting hall. The commander shall then give three raps of the gavel, and all who are present shall stand at attention.

COMMANDER: "The color bearers will advance the colors." (Optional)

As the color bearers start to advance, the commander gives the command to salute.

COMMANDER: "Hand salute."

If a bugler is available, sound "To the Colors." At its conclusion, the commander gives the command, "Two."

If no bugler is present, the command "Two" is given immediately after the colors have been posted.

COMMANDER: "The chaplain will offer prayer."

COMMANDER: "All members/guests in attendance shall remain standing with their cap removed and placed over the heart from the opening prayer, through the POW/MIA ceremony, and concluding with the Pledge of Allegiance."

In place of the following prayer, the chaplain may deliver one appropriate for the setting.

CHAPLAIN: "Almighty God, Father of all 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 to 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 blessing they may be enabled to discharge their duties honestly and well. We pray 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. Finally, O God of Mercy, we ask Thy blessing and comfort for those who are suffering mental and physical disability. Cheer them and bring them the blessings of health and happiness. Amen."

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

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 all wars and conflicts. Resolution No. 288, adopted at the Legion's 67th National Convention, calls for designating an empty chair at all official American Legion meetings as a continual physical symbol of POW/MIAs and the cause for which we stand, namely their return or full accounting.

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!"

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 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.

The commander (or appropriate official) leads the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

"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."

Regular meeting opening resumes after the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMANDER: "Everyone will re-cover."

The commander and membership recite the preamble of the Constitution of SAL slowly and in unison, as follows:

"Proud possessors of a priceless heritage,

/we male descendants of veterans of all Wars,

/associate ourselves together as Sons of The American Legion for the following purposes:

/To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;

/to maintain law and order;

/to foster and perpetuate a true spirit of Americanism;

/to preserve the memories of our former members and the associations of our members and our forefathers in all Wars;

/to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;

/to combat the autocracy of both the classes and 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.

Blue Star Banner Ceremony

COMMANDER: "Serving as a constant reminder that service men and women, on a daily basis, are putting themselves at risk to ensure our freedoms, the Sons of The American Legion display a Corporate Blue Star Service Banner at all meetings, to serve as a symbol of our support of all the military personnel serving this great country.

Let us never forget that every day these individuals are protecting our liberty."

"The Blue Star Service Banner is in place."

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

Order of Business:

1. Roll call to determine if quorum is present.
2. Reading of minutes of previous meeting
3. Introduction of guests and prospective and new members

4. Committee reports
5. Sick call and relief
6. Balloting on applications
7. Unfinished business
8. Initiation of candidates
9. New business and correspondence
10. The good of Sons of The American Legion

(The membership shall be permitted to make suggestions of any kind, character, or description, save religion or partisan politics.)

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

3 Raps of the gavel ("Rise and Uncover")

"Recover"

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."

COMMANDER: "Till we meet again, let us remember 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 be ever watchful of the honor of our county, The American Legion, our organization and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of justice, freedom, loyalty and democracy."

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:

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.*

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 OF NEW MEMBERS (SHORT FORM)

Every new member should receive some form of initiation. Where it is not practical to conduct full initiation ceremonies, the following short form has been authorized so all new members may take the obligation and receive proper introduction to the SAL.

The squadron commander or an appointed member, assisted by the post chaplain, who shall be seated at the right of the commander, shall conduct this ceremony.

Small U.S. flags, SAL emblems, SAL publications and other appropriate items used in the regular initiation ceremony shall be presented by the officiating officers. Certificates of initiation are available from emblem.legion.org (item 533.112).

COMMANDER: "Applications of those whose names have been presented have been approved. If there are no objections, we will now proceed with the initiation. The sergeant-at-arms will escort the following new members into the meeting 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 chaplain will offer prayer."

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 have 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 all 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 escorts the candidates in single file to the commander's station and faces them toward and in front of him.

COMMANDER: "The members will stand at attention while the new members are being obligated."

The commander gives three raps of the gavel, steps to the right and immediately next to the U.S. flag, raises his or her right hand, and addresses the new members.

COMMANDER: "Raise your right hand and repeat after me: 'I, (here give your name)

/ do solemnly pledge

/ 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 all 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.

Hands down."

At the conclusion of the obligation, the commander resumes the designated station and seats members with one rap of the gavel.

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 Sons 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 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 forefathers who willingly gave their lives for their country.

The 10 points of the emblem represent the 10 ideals of every Legion son.

The commander steps from the designated station and advances to the newly obligated members.

COMMANDER: "I welcome you to Sons of The American Legion. It is my privilege to present to you the American flag which is the emblem of freedom and the emblem of the Sons of The American Legion, which you may wear as a badge of democracy and a symbol of your devotion to further service."

The commander returns to station, introduces each newly obligated member to the membership and requests the sergeant-at-arms seat them with their fellow members.

SPECIAL CEREMONIES (SUGGESTED FORMAT)

Dedication of colors

COMMANDER: "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."

COMMANDER:

Introduction of 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 our 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. Join me in saluting the flag, your flag. Hand salute. Two."

Presentation ceremony for badges, medals, etc.

COMMANDER: "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 SAL 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 SAL 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 SAL placed on the headstone grave marker of a deceased SAL 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 SAL on grave markers on a pre-need basis. Any use of the emblem must be requested at https://www.legion.org/emblem/request.

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 SAL 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 SAL 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.

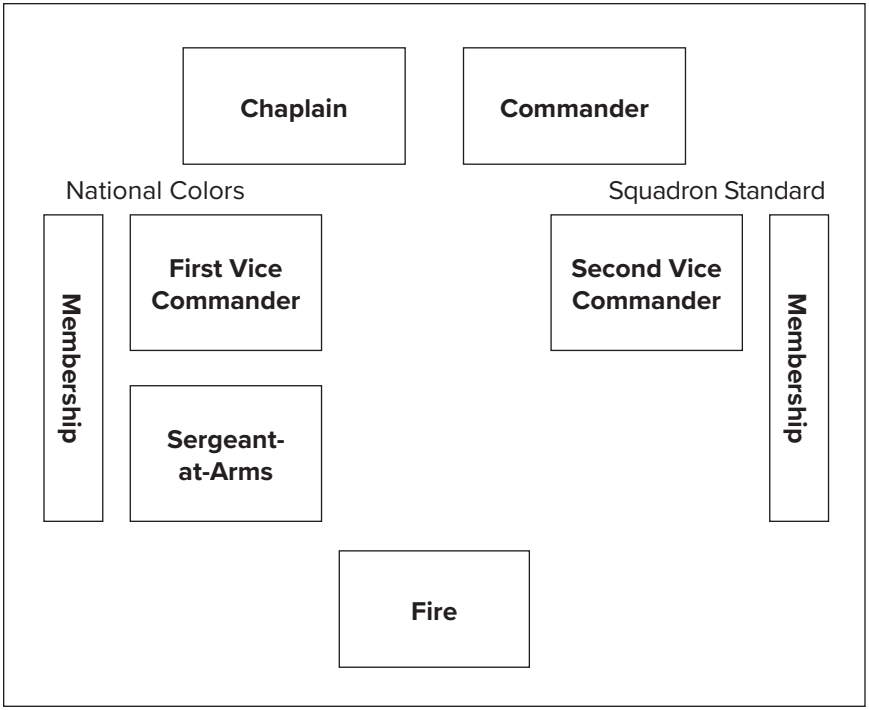
"We know how futile mere words are to express our deep and abiding sympathy to those who are left behind. May they now feel he is at least at rest and never ending peace."

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: "Commander, we wish to present a number of unserviceable flags of our country for inspection and disposal."

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

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

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

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

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

First vice commander: "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: "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 TAL 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 SAL committee.
- At the meeting, stress that the SAL 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 American Legion prayer and the singing of the national anthem.

Be sure to include short speeches by civic or American 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 TAL with the following material, all of which may be acquired upon request to the department adjutant:

- Official membership cards.
- Application for membership pads.
- Squadron handbook.

THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY

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

The American Legion (TAL)

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 1.6 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.

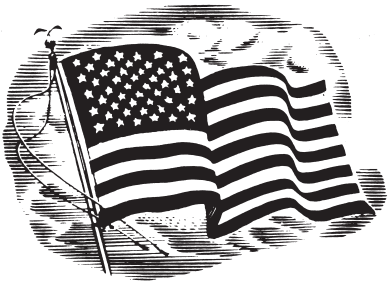
American Legion Auxiliary (ALA)

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 ALA, organized in 1921, embodies the spirit of America that has prevailed through war and peace. Along with TAL, it solidly stands behind America and her ideals.

American Legion Riders (ALR)

Additionally, members of TAL, ALA and SAL are eligible for membership in the American Legion Riders (ALR). Members of ALR 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, ALR nationwide have participated in the American 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 SAL is a legally constituted organization, instituted and recognized by official action of The American Legion in national convention assembled, empowering the NEC 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 NEC. Recognition of district and detachment organizations of SAL have been approved by the NEC to more effectively coordinate the activities of the SAL and the District and Department of The American Legion.

In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of the Treasury policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination write to the Director, Office of Civil Rights and Diversity, 1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20220. The Department of Treasury is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

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