



Quarterly Dispatch

Greg Lemieux, Commander

Colin Royal, Adjutant

Q1/2010



Dear SAL Members

I hope everyone had a good and safe Christmas. The New Year is coming, time to look at having a tremendous year again. Take all those great new ideas and put them to work for us in the upcoming year.

If anyone has a question, ideas or wants me to come to your Squadron, get in touch with me. Send your ideas out to the other Squadrons also. Let's look at those memberships that are not yet paid and see if we can get to 100% membership. Don't forget about those new eligible members. Also, keep your ears open for new Squadrons wanting to form. The best places to check are the Posts who are struggling.

Look at your local veterans homes, hospitals and nursing homes to see if they need any assistance. Check with your own Post to see if there is anything you can do to help them.

Our Mid Winter Conference meeting is coming up, so get arrangements made to attend. It would be great to see all Squadrons represented in Oacoma in February.

Keep up the good work and thank you.

We as Squadrons deserve to brag about our projects and the detachment has a place for these bragging rights on our website at www.sdsal.org. Get your pictures and descriptions and information to Adjutant Royal and he'll get it place on the site. His email is adjutant@sdsal.org or you may mail it to him.

You may contact me at glemieux1963@yahoo.com, commander@sdsal.org, or 605-280-2448.

Keep up the good work everyone. Remember it is teamwork that makes things happen.

Sincerely, Greg Lemieux, Detachment Commander
South Dakota Sons of The American Legion



We are now past the January 13th membership target date and we are 13 members short of the target at the national level as of that date. We have made leaps and bounds in membership and thank you to all for the great work, however it is not over yet and we need to get the renewals in.

As a reminder, memberships that are not in by the end of January are delinquent and the benefits cease. So to avoid this issue get your memberships in ASAP.

We still have many Squadrons who have not sent in their officer certifications. Check your records and forward them ASAP so we can get the information to the right people.

Tickets are available now to sell or purchase for the TV raffle for the Mid Winter Conference. If you would like some, contact me at 605-354-0310 and let me know how many you would like. This will be the first of two raffles this year. Also there will be an additional jacket raffle at the Mid Winter for the three days only.

In an effort to enhance communications and to use the internet better, email will be the choice of correspondence in the future. All Squadron Commanders and Adjutants and Detachment Officers should forward their email address to me "adjutant@sdsal.org" or preferably sign up for the mailing list at the website "www.sdsal.org" and scroll down. Just fill in the blanks and send and you'll get a confirmation email and just follow the instructions.

The American Legion's birthday is coming soon, March 15-17, so make plans accordingly for your Post and community. Let's show our appreciation for The American Legion and its members.

In Your Service
Colin Royal, Adjutant



Mark E. Arneson (GA)
National Commander
Sons of The American Legion

Operation Proud Son Briefing
1st Quarter Results

December 1, 2009 Indianapolis, Indiana - The first quarter of the 2010 Membership Year has proven to be a success. The [latest membership report](#) demonstrates that the Sons continue to grow. We are ahead of last year's record setting pace by 3,602 members. The organization is on pace to achieve the 350,000 membership goal. In addition to the membership report, also enclosed is the first [membership retention report](#). We have revised this from previous reports in order to show another important statistic, new members. As of November 24th, we have signed up 19,452. If we were to renew every member from the 2009 membership year, we would finish the 2010 year easily above the 350,000 level.

While that is not realistic, one can see how important the renewals are. In each of the past three years, we have lost approximately 42,000 who have not renewed from the previous year. Over those same three years, the Sons have grown by 20,000. In other words, we have signed up 146,000 new members since 2007. Our sales department does a phenomenal job each year bringing in new members to our organization. We obviously have a product that America wants and needs. Regardless of how one feels about the war on terror, one thing is clear - Our fighting troops are supported. Representative Filner from New York summed it up best during the National Commander of The American Legion's testimony before a joint session of Committee on Veteran Affairs in September. He said that unlike during the Vietnam War, America has separated the warrior from the war. Americans support the troops and are looking for a way to put those words into action. We, the Sons and rest of The American Legion family, offer such a vehicle. This environment is conducive to our growth. We need to capitalize on this opportunity to grow.

Unfortunately, we have lost 126,000 members over that same time period who have decided that for whatever reason that we do not fulfill the reason they joined. Did we not make a connection? Did we sign them up and simply walk away? Did we not carry out the mission we were supposed to? We need to understand why they are not rejoining. Are we losing 1 or 2 year members that were never welcomed or are they 5 or 6 year members that became disgruntled? Recruiting is a place where we excel. Retaining is not. As the leadership of the Sons, this is where we need to focus our efforts.

We are at 40.824% per the quarter end membership report. Twenty-three Detachments have hit the 45% target date for membership which is still a week away. Outstanding effort! My thanks to the Detachment leadership teams for making this year a huge success so far!

"555" Award

Beginning this year, the Triple Nickel ("555") award has been established by the National Organization to reward those Detachments that achieve each of these three membership goals:

- 1) Charter 5 new Squadrons
- 2) Achieve 105% of prior year's membership

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3) 85% retention rate

At the 2010 National Convention in Milwaukee, WI, Detachments that achieve all three levels will receive an Emblem Sales certificate of \$555 in recognition of their hard work.

A warm welcome to the Squadrons who have joined our ranks since July 1st:

Outstanding work by the Detachment of Nebraska! They have chartered 3 squadrons and lead the race to be the 1st Detachment to get the 1st "5" in this category. The Detachment of Mississippi received the 1st "5" by achieving 105% membership!

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation

Attached is the latest CWF donation report as of quarter end. Included below is a message from the National CWF Committee Chairman Rob Brewer. Remember, that the end of the CWF donation year is May 31, 2010. For those Detachments planning on special fundraising events to meet their pledge, make sure that the money raised is postmarked and mailed to National Headquarters by May 31st.

"I want to thank all of you for your hard work so far this year. According to the latest report, we have currently collected over \$120,000.00 for CWF, and many of us have not reached full steam on our fund-raising efforts. A Great job by you, my fellow Blue Cap members! Special thanks to the Detachments of Alabama (481%), North Dakota (280%), and Kentucky (107%), THEY have already passed their pledge goal for their Detachments. Don't forget we have the shirts available, and I've been informed that after the first of the year, there will be more items for you to use in your fundraising efforts. We'll pass along that information as soon as it's available. Thanks again for the work that you are doing, to benefit the children of our great country. As always, if you need anything from myself, or any member of the committee, feel free to contact us. We're here to help. Have a safe and enjoyable holiday season!"

The National Update

Editor Mike Pipher did it again! The National Update is the top newsletter once again in its category. Outstanding Job Mike! For the next issue, we will focus solely on VA &R and VAVS. Each article will illustrate how the Sons prove we are Proud Possessors of a Priceless Heritage. Each Committee and Commission Chairman will write an article on how their respective Commission or Committee promotes or helps veterans and their families. We are asking for articles from the Detachment leadership as well as "action" pictures (no grips and grins pictures standing in front of the hospital) illustrating helping or assisting veterans in their community. Michigan could tell the world about their involvement with the Desert Angel. Illinois could brag about their "Gifts for Yanks" program. (The Editor has limited the National Commander to 300 to 500 words.) Take the space and tell the rest of the Sons how it is done.

Mark your calendar now for upcoming National events

Legislative Conference, Washington, D.C. Feb 28th to March 3rd, 2010
SAL National Commander's Homecoming, Atlanta, GA March 12-14, 2010
Spring NEC, Indianapolis, IN, May 1-3, 2010
National Convention, Milwaukee, WI, August 27-29, 2010

The American Legion has negotiated discounts with the following airlines to attend the Washington Conference, Spring NEC and the National Convention. Take advantage of the savings and attend these meetings.

Northwest Airlines (Delta) 1-800-328-1111 Reference world file # NM4MN
United Airlines 1-800-521-4041 Reference tour code #564HT
American Airlines 1-800-433-1790 Reference index # 20914
Midwest Airlines* 1-800-452-2022 Reference discount code CMZ7222

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* National Convention only

OFFICIAL CALL TO THE ANNUAL MID-WINTER CONFERENCE OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION OF SOUTH DAKOTA

The eleventh annual Mid-Winter Conference of the Sons of The American Legion of South Dakota is hereby called, and in conjunction with The American Legion, will be held in Oacoma, South Dakota on February 13, 2010 at 10:30AM in the Missouri Winds Room at the Cedar Shore Resort, Oacoma, South Dakota.

PURPOSE

The Conference is called to consider any proposed amendments to the Constitution and to transact other such business as may be brought before the Conference for the good of The Sons of The American Legion.

REPRESENTATION

Representation at the Conference will be by Squadron, and in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. Each Squadron shall be entitled to ten (10) delegates and one (1) for each ten (10) members, or major fraction thereof.

Mid-Winter Lodging Information

Cedar Shores Resort, Shoreline Drive, 605-734-6376
West River Inn & Suites, W Hwy 16 I90 Exit 260, 605-734-4222
Days Inn, I90 Exit 260, 605-734-4100
Super 8 Motel, I90 Exit 263 Chamberlain, 605-734-6548
Oasis Inn, I90 Exit 260, 605-734-6061
Holiday Inn Express, I90 Exit 260, 605-734-5593
AmericInn, I90 Exit 263 Chamberlain, 605-734-0985

Mid-Winter Banquet Tickets

Tickets for the Mid-Winter Banquet will only be sold in advance. There will be no tickets sold at the event. The menu includes Prime Rib Steak with dessert. The Banquet will be February 12, 2010 at 7:00PM preceded by a no host cocktail hour at 6:00PM.

Tickets are available from the Potter American Legion Post 3, PO Box 348, Chamberlain, SD 57325. Tickets are \$30.00 each.

Squadrons On The Move

Iroquois Squadron 280



Squadron 280 Sponsored Santa for the Iroquois School music concert and the Community Club Community Christmas Soup Supper on December 10 & 13 respectively. Santa hands out candy canes at the concert.

Herreid Squadron 170

The Herreid SAL just sponsored the Fallen Heroes Banner Display in Herreid. The display consists of 27 photographic and biographical banners

(6ft. tall by 3ft wide) which honor the 27 South Dakotans who gave their lives in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. We posted colors at the display and posted a guard during viewing hours.

NOTE: The new SAL Youth Handbook is available for download from the Nation website and also from the Publications page at the Detachment website www.sdsal.org.

Sons of The American Legion still growing

The American Legion - January 8, 2010

On the way to breaking another membership record, all five Sons of The American Legion regions exceeded their recruitment targets in 2009. The program, offered to descendants of wartime veterans eligible to join The American Legion, finished the year with 335,848 members, 102.5 percent of the annual goal.

Mississippi had the highest growth rate, hitting 120 percent of goal, and finishing the year with 601 members. The SAL detachment with the most members - Pennsylvania - exceeded its 100-percent membership target by over 6 percent and finished 2009 with 52,578 on the rolls.

SAL National Commander Mark E. Arneson said he is proud of the performance, which represents 25 consecutive years of all-time membership highs. "The quintessential thank you that a Son can bestow upon his parent for their service in the armed forces is a membership in Sons of The American Legion," Arneson said. "Congratulations to the 34 detachments that have achieved over 100 percent of their prior-year membership. Of those 34 detachments, 29 recorded all-time highs."

Operation Proud Son is a campaign the commander has launched to continue to grow the SAL membership using a business model that emphasizes dynamic marketing strategies built around the organization's connection to The American Legion, the nation's largest veterans service organization.

"Under Operation Proud Son, the Sons are on track in 2010 to achieve another all-time high in membership as we assist The American Legion in carrying on for God and country," Arneson said.

"Congratulations are indeed in order for the Sons of The American Legion," American Legion National Commander Clarence Hill said. "Membership is but one area in which they do an absolutely superb job."

Membership information and application materials for the SAL, American Legion or American Legion Auxiliary are available on the Web



Greetings for 2010.

I trust that everyone is well and working hard. Mid Year Conferences are upon us. I am attending conferences held in Wyoming, Texas and Colorado. It is important that your Squadron participates in their Detachment Conferences. Valuable information is exchanged and friendships renewed. It is a time to assess progress on projects and motivate everyone to do their part. Hopefully, everyone includes The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation among their projects. Given our economic times every dollar is harder to raise, but is even more significant to children's organizations.

Now is the time to step up our efforts in Membership. Yes, there is that Squadron which goes from zero to 100 percent at Mid Year, but most Squadrons require contacting, especially if the Squadron is not represented at Mid Year.

The Midwest region of the Sons of The American Legion is doing well, but we can do better. Here are some January 15th numbers to think on. Our eleven Detachments account for eight percent of national's membership. As a region, we are at 62 percent of goal. Unfortunately, six of our Detachments are below that figure. The positive news is that the Midwest has 2300 new members or 14 percent of January 15th membership total.

As a region, we chartered eight new squadrons. Nationally, there are only 38 new charters. Collectively, that is a great job with 21 percent of charters nationally. New charters are not easy to complete in smaller Detachments and rural areas. Keep working, it will pay off.

My biggest concern are renewals. We recruit members, but do not keep them. Yes, people move, quit, etc. But losing one in five members is unacceptable and we are not close to that figure yet. In the Midwest, the best is Nebraska at 62 percent or one out of three missing in action. Overall, the Midwest is at 54 percent renewed.

Members who are not renewed are receiving a post card from National during the last week of January. That is twelve thousand post cards in the Midwest region alone. This is a perfect time for Detachments and Squadrons to increase their efforts to renew every member.

If I can be of assistance, contact me.

Jim Gelwicks
National Vice Commander

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