

The Alaska Legionnaire

Alaska Department of the
American Legion

October, November,
December 2025



Department Officers 2025-2026

Commander - Joe Sullivan
First Vice Commander - Charlene Martin
Second Vice Commander - Chuck Russell
Sergeant-At-Arms - Justin Mills
Judge Advocate - Ken Jacobus
Chaplain - Clare Sullivan
Historian - Chris Bedel
Executive Committee
Robert Fullerton
Amanda Jones
Henry Pagan
Department Adjutant - Sharon Cherrette
Department Service Officer - Phil Templin
National Executive Committee
Jim Pisa
Alt. National Executive Committee
Mike Hayward

2025-2026 Department Officers



SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF ALASKA OFFICERS 2025 - 2026

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| Commander - Bill Bolling - Joe Craig Sqd 3 | National Executive Committee - Dale Toenis - CR Huber Sqd 57 |
| First Vice Commander - Vince Winter - Henry Burton Sr., Sqd 13 | Alt. National Executive Committee - John Whitlock - Muldoon Sqd 29 |
| Second Vice Commander - Ken Michener - George Plimley Sqd 20 | Executive Committee - |
| Finace Officer - Kevin Collier - Jack Henry Sqd 1 | Mike Estrada - Susitna Valley Sqd 35 |
| Chaplain - Aubrey Hendrix - CR Huber Sqd 57 | Nicholas Johnson - Robert Blair Sqd 17 |
| Historian - Leon Fleming - Susitna Valley Sqd 35 | Scott Walker - Susitna Valley Sqd 35 |
| Sergeant--At-Arms - Kevin Robinson - Peters Creek Sqd 33 | |

DEPARTMENT OF ALASKA LEGION RIDERS OFFICERS 2025 - 2026

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|---|--|
| Director - Larry Block - Matanuska Valley Chapter 15 | Run Coordinator - Cher'i Smith-Berg - Jack Henry Chapter 1 |
| Assistant Director - Jodi Gardner - Matanuska Valley Chapter 15 | Historian - Joe Sullivan - Joe Craig - Joe Craig Chapter 3 |
| Secretary - Deborah Davis - Joe Craig Chapter 3 | Chaplain - Carrie Hintz - Susitna Valley Chapter 35 |
| Treasurer - Diana Estrada - Susitna Valley Chapter 35 | Webmaster - Lisa Williamson - CR Huber Chapter 57 |

DEPARTMENT OF ALASKA AUXILIARY OFFICERS 2025 - 2026

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|---|--|
| President - Annette Gwalthney-Jones - Jack Henry Unit 1 | Sergeant-At-Arms - Sabrina Schmidt - Muldoon Unit 29 |
| First Vice President - Nina Ketelsen - Susitna Valley Unit 35 | Executive Committeewoman - |
| Second Vice President - Charlene Martin - Muldoon Unit 29 | Robyn Downs - Jack Henry Unit 1 |
| Secretary - Ann Robinson - Peters Creek Unit 33 | Brenda Fiddick - CR Huber Unit 57 |
| Treasurer - Pam Cawley - Jack Henry Unit 1 | National Executive Committee - Penny Mazonna |
| Historian - Chrysti Leigh - Spenard Unit 28 | Susitna Valley Unit 35 |
| Chaplain - Valerie Rose - Seward Unit 5 | Alt. National Executive Committee - April Sinclair |
| | CR Huber Unit 57 |

From the desk of Adjutant Sharon

CONGRATS to the new American Legion National Officers – National Commander Dan Wiley (KS), National President Pam Ray (IL), and SAL National Commander Bill (William) Clancy III (NY). **Hillary Ott, one of our own from C. Russell Huber Unit 57 was elected as the Auxiliary’s National Historian.** Way to go Hillary!

Department Fall Conference Fairbanks, Alaska, **17-19 October 2025.** Training Day is Saturday, 18 October and free to attend. The event is hosted by C Russell Huber Unit 57; hotel Sophie Station Suites, 907-456-3642 Group Code American Legion Family Fall Conference; training located at JP Jones Center.

“**Training Tuesdays**” (held the last Tuesday of each month 3 PM Alaska Time/7 PM ET; sessions are recorded and placed on the website under www.legion.org/training/training-tuesdays. There are many publications on the Legion’s website available for download to include the Officer’s Guide [Publications | The American Legion](#).

www.theLIT.com open to **ALL LEGION FAMILY MEMBERS – LEGION, AUXILIARY, AND SAL (SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION)!**
LEGIONCARE No Cost to You Accidental Death Insurance Protection guaranteed
As a member of the **Legion Family**, you’re eligible for up to \$5,000.00 in “NO COST To You” coverage. But your Confirmation is REQUIRED for activation. **Must keep your membership current to keep your insurance enrollment active (renew prior to February each year. Paid Up For Life (PUFL) members are good to go).**

PHOTOS AND FLYERS - Send Post events and photos to Kelly at kelly@alaska-legion.org. Photos are placed in the Post News Kelly sends out monthly and **Event Flyers** are sent weekly with the barometers. Make sure to **include your Post, Unit, Squadron, and/or Chapter along with the date and time of the event, and location.** Some of the flyers we receive do not show who is hosting the event or location.
Halloween events – children and/or adults, Veterans Day (Tuesday, 11 November), Thanksgiving, Pearl Harbor Day, Christmas events; other events.
SEND PHOTOS.

100th Year of American Legion Baseball. American Legion Baseball World Series was completed just before the start of the National Convention. The 2025 American Legion World Series champions hail from Chesapeake, Virginia., Post 280. They defeated League City, Texas, 5-0 in the title game Aug. 19 in Shelby NC, capping a 27-4 season.

Sons of the American Legion reached an all-time high with 400,000 members 10 August 2025.

Legionnaires - Tired of carrying your Membership card in your wallet/pocket? Download the Legion + app. Your Legion membership card is available once you click on the icon on the top left side of the phone screen. Must be registered through myLegion.org to get your card through the app.

BE CAREFUL OUT THERE. Winter has arrived (even though the calendar shows Autumn).

**Don't Forget to
"Fall Back"!
Daylight Savings
Time ends
Sunday at 2 am** 2 November 2025



The American Legion Family is honoring the nation’s 250th birthday with a commitment to embracing physical activity, supporting mental health and serving its communities. The USA 250 Challenge encourages American Legion Family members, other veterans and all Americans to participate, and even raise additional money to support our disabled veterans and families in need through The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.

The year-long initiative offers three categories — fitness, mental wellness and community service. Participants may engage in one, two or all three activities as an individual or as part of a team like an American Legion post, American Legion Auxiliary unit, Sons of The American Legion squadron and/or an American Legion Riders chapter.
For a **\$30 registration fee**, participants will receive a USA 250 Challenge tee shirt. The proceeds will go to the Veterans and Children Foundation (VCF).

The Challenge Categories:

- **Fitness Challenge** - Log 250 miles or hours by walking, running, cycling, swimming, etc. (Team example: 10 members walk 25 miles each.)
- **Wellness Challenge** - Achieve the number 250 related to mental and emotional well-being activities. Examples include performing 250 hours of meditation or yoga, conducting 250 Buddy Checks, signing up 250 participants for Be the One training, or Riders could cover 250 miles. (Team example: Five team members each conduct 50 Buddy Checks.)
- **Community Service Challenge** - Complete 250 hours of community service or achieve the number 250 related to such an activity. Some examples include collecting and sending 250 care packages to service members, cleaning up gravesites of 250 veterans at a cemetery, teaching flag advocacy to 250 students, and more. (Team example: Post, unit, and squadron members collect items for and distribute 250 care packages for deployed troops.)

Whether you’re a solo participant or part of a team, your impact counts!



The American Legion Family

From the desk of SAL Commander, Bill Bolling

Dear American Legion Family:

In August, I had the privilege of attending my first National American Legion Conference in Tampa, Florida, which included the Sons of the American Legion (SAL) national conference. The event proved to be both a fun and informative experience. Here’s a quick rundown of my time and there:

- **First-Time Experience in Tampa:** This was my first time visiting Tampa, and it did not disappoint. The city’s vibrant atmosphere and welcoming spirit made for a fantastic setting for the conference.
- **Sons of the American Legion Conference:** The SAL portion of the conference provided invaluable insight for me into the workings of the organization. It was inspiring to witness the event firsthand and I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the mission and vision of the National SAL.
- **New Detachment Commanders Class:** One of the highlights was attending a half-day class tailored for new detachment commanders. The session was a comprehensive walkthrough on the duties and responsibilities of a commander, including tips for effectively managing squadrons and working with internal officers. The knowledge shared in this class will certainly be invaluable as I move forward in my leadership role.
- **Networking Opportunities:** The conference also provided an excellent opportunity to meet fellow SAL members and engage with national SAL officers during the general meetings and assemblies. Networking with like-minded individuals was a key benefit, offering both professional and personal connections.
- **Tampa Bay Rays MLB Game:** Even though the Tampa Bay Rays game was delayed due to rain, it was a fun way to unwind and experience a bit of Tampa’s sports culture. It’s always a bonus to catch a game during a trip, rain delays and all.
- **Gratitude to the Alaska American Legion Family:** A special thank you to those members of the Alaska American Legion Family who attended the conference and who also helped organize such a well-planned event for the Department. Their hard work and dedication to making the conference a success is truly appreciated.

Overall, the conference was a rewarding experience, full of learning, networking, and even a little fun along the way. I’m grateful for the opportunity to be a part of such an impactful event and look forward to applying everything I’ve learned in my role as a detachment commander.

For God and Country,

From the desk of SAL 1st Vice Commander, Vince Winter

The Strength of the Sons of the American Legion: Our Membership, Our Future

I would like to reflect about something that lies at the very heart of our organization—the strength of the Sons of the American Legion, and how this strength is fundamentally rooted in our membership. As peers and stewards of this noble cause, it is imperative that we recognize and harness the power that comes from our collective commitment, dedication, and active participation.

The Sons of the American Legion was founded on the principles of patriotism, service, and leadership. Our programs—ranging from community service projects to youth mentorship, from supporting our veterans to advocating for our nation’s values—are the tangible expressions of our commitment. These programs not only serve our communities but also build character within ourselves. They create a legacy of service that is passed down through generations, strengthening the fabric of our nation and ensuring that the ideals fought for in our nation’s birth remain alive and vibrant.

However, the vitality of these programs depends heavily on the strength of our membership. Every new member brings fresh energy, new ideas, and a renewed sense of purpose. Our current members, through their dedication and example, inspire others to join and participate. The more we grow our membership, the more impactful our programs become. It is essential that we recognize the importance of inviting others to join our ranks, sharing our stories, and demonstrating the value of being part of this organization. Our strength is not merely in numbers but in the unity and shared purpose that our members embody.

So, what can we do as squadrons to foster growth? First and foremost, we must be proactive in outreach. Think about your communities—schools, churches, civic groups—and how we can be present and engaged. Organize open house events, participate in local events, and showcase the impactful work we do. Personal invitations and genuine conversations often lead to the most meaningful connections. Additionally, we should mentor our younger members as well as out new, making them feel welcomed and valued. When members see that their contributions matter, their commitment deepens, leading to sustained growth.

Beyond membership growth, we have a profound opportunity, and responsibility, to serve our communities. Our programs, such as youth activities, community service projects, and veteran support initiatives, are vital. By engaging directly with our communities, we demonstrate the tangible impact of our organization. These efforts not only enhance the lives of those we serve but also attract new members who wish to be part of something meaningful and impactful. Through active service, we build trust, foster relationships, and inspire others to join our cause.

Looking forward, a key aspect of our strength lies in cultivating future leaders. Leadership development is not merely a goal but a continuous process. We must identify, mentor, and empower our younger members, giving them opportunities to lead projects, organize events, and serve on committees. By doing so, we ensure the sustainability of our organization, maintaining its vitality for generations to come. Leadership training programs, mentorship initiatives, and encouraging members to take ownership of projects are essential strategies in this endeavor. When our younger members see that their voices matter and that they can make a difference, they are motivated to step into leadership roles and carry the torch forward.

The strength of the Sons of the American Legion truly comes from our membership, our collective dedication, our active participation, and our commitment to service. Through our programs, we serve our communities; through our efforts in outreach and mentorship, we grow our organization; and through the development of future leaders, we build a resilient, enduring legacy. Let us remember that each one of us has a vital role to play. Together, as peers, we can ensure that the Sons of the American Legion remains a powerful force for good, a beacon of patriotism, and a wellspring of leadership for years to come.

Thank you for your service, your dedication, and your unwavering commitment to our shared ideals. Let us move forward with renewed purpose and unity, confident in the strength that our membership provides.

God bless you, and God bless the Sons of the American Legion.



From the Department Chaplain, Clare Sullivan

As we are now beginning the cooler seasons, we are also getting to the holidays that bring all our posts together for food, fellowship and fun.

I am sure all our posts had remembrance and recognition ceremonies of the POW/MIA Day that ranged from simply having a POW/MIA Empty Chair on static display to a variety of ceremonies and hopefully proclamations from their communities. Whatever event you had, it brought a solemn reminder that there are still too many missing.

Along with the POW/MIA events there was the participation of many of our posts in suicide awareness activities in in our communities in September; and as this is a significant issue for the veteran population, as evidenced by the American Legion “BE the One” program, it is important that we give this issue due consideration and action.

I’ve received some feedback from posts who have provided information on their activities where the post chaplaincy is involved and who routinely provides comfort and support: such as Interior Alaska Post 99 in Salcha where they held a Patriot Day 9/11 Remembrance Day Ceremony with Salcha Elementary School along with the Eielson Honor Guard. Additionally, they hosted a POW/MIA table at the North Pole High School on 19 September; and on the same day they were guest speakers at a local luncheon event and conducted the POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony. These events are an amazing public awareness effort for this new post and a wonderful remembrance and recognition of those who have sacrificed so much.

Similarly, Seward Post 5 held a POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony on their Friday Steak Night (19 Sept) and from all reports you could hear a pin drop in their crowded dining room during the ceremony, this was a first time for some to witness this ceremony and it is a solemn reminder for so many that we need to be here for our fellow veterans and not forget those who are still missing. Also, the City of Seward presented the post with two proclamations for American Legion Day and Patriot Day, further reinforcing that we need to be here in kindness and compassion for those still with us, and remember those who have left this world in patriotic service to this great country.

As we head into the cooler months and both Thanksgiving and Christmas, it is a good time to reflect on all that we have and be thankful. We as an American Legion Family have the opportunity and obligation to serve our veterans, active military and their families. We recognize it is through great sacrifice that we are eligible to belong to this great organization and pray that we are given the strength to continue to serve others during the upcoming holidays and season.



POST EVERLASTING

POST 1

Gordon Bailey - WWII
Jesse Godinez - Korea
Carl McDonald - Korea
Earl Wineck - WWII

POST 3

Robert Luse - Vietnam
Jim Slick - Vietnam
Larry Tillotson - Vietnam

POST 5

Donald Holland - Vietnam

POST 7

Wayne Selmer - Vietnam

POST 13

William Fredrickson - Vietnam

POST 16

Jack Barr - WWII
Benjamin Mitchell - Vietnam
David Schroer - WWII

POST 17

Russell Fox - Vietnam

POST 18

Glenn Armutat - Vietnam
David Behm - Vietnam
David Meyer - Lebanon-Grenada
Darwin Vanofferen - Vietnam

POST 20

Brian Lawrence - Vietnam

POST 25

Chuck Caldwell - Vietnam
James Hand - Vietnam
James Reid - Vietnam

POST 27

Charles Popp - Korea

POST 35

Charles Kane - Vietnam
James Sellen - Vietnam

POST 77

Alvah Swain - Persian Gulf
Joe Wall - Vietnam