
MEMORANDUM

December 10, 2019

MEMO TO: Sons of The American Legion National Leadership

FROM: Robert Newman, Chairman, Internal Affairs, The American Legion

SUBJECT: Changes to Sons of The American Legion Processes

I want to address a few items that each of you may not have been aware of over the past year. The Sons of The American Legion (SAL) continues to grow, and with that, growing pains are to be expected. Growth also drives change in the way we do business. While re-evaluating and determining if we, as an organization, are following the current policies and procedures, we must decide if we have to make modifications to suit the needs of the organization as a whole.

At the fall meetings conducted in October 2019, a memorandum from Ken George, SAL National Liaison, was enclosed in the welcome packets of all who checked in. The memo addressed the reimbursement policy as set forth by The American Legion. Ken brought the memo to everyone's attention in his opening remarks at the NEC meeting on Saturday morning, as reflected in the meeting minutes. The memo was written to correct some unauthorized practices as well as spell out what you will receive versus what one perceives they will receive upon submitting their reimbursement. I have enclosed that memo again for all to review and understand. Going forward, this will be the policy followed for all SAL call-ins and reimbursements.

Recently, the SAL membership goals were changed to address complaints being received by department adjutants. The complaints are not new; they were put aside until a solution could be created to address the complaints. Before the change, SAL membership goals were basically a moving target, changing from week to week. They were hard to track and created more unnecessary work. More importantly, the process did not follow The American Legion process as to how department membership goals were created. I asked the national SAL liaison to partner with the SAL Membership Chairman Joseph Navarrete to create membership goals that are workable, fair, attainable, and reflect growth, but moreover, in line with The American Legion membership process. On November 22, 2019, the SAL liaison sent out the membership report to the SAL membership chairman, SAL national adjutant, and all detachment adjutants. In the body of his email, he explained the goal changes and why. The directive and expectation was for the detachment adjutants to disperse the information to their NEC, detachment leadership, and squadron adjutants. It appears this may not have been distributed entirely. I have enclosed the membership report that was distributed on November 22, 2019, to your detachment adjutants, national SAL adjutant, NVC's, and SAL membership chairman.

This brings up the last part I would like to address. As the SAL has grown and liaisons changed, it has been my directive to your current SAL liaison Ken George to take a softer approach by encouraging and enabling the SAL leadership to take ownership of their program. This means that communications such as the SAL sub-committee report, memorandums, and general announcements would be forwarded to the SAL national adjutant or the appropriate commission/committee chairman to disperse utilizing the proper chain of command.

For example, SAL liaison communication goes to national adjutant; national adjutant forwards it to the national leadership, detachment adjutants, and so on. This enables the SAL leadership to work their own communication channels and pass along information directly impacting the SAL program. The SAL liaison is in place to facilitate the program by providing guidance, leadership, be the point person, and the direct conduit for the SAL program to the Internal Affairs Division and the Internal Affairs Commission. It is my opinion that the Liaison's job is not to run the SAL program but to be your advisor and advocate.

I have also enclosed the fall meeting Internal Affairs SAL Sub-Committee report that was submitted and accepted by The American Legion National Executive Committee. This is the report forwarded to the SAL National Adjutant for distribution to SAL national and detachment leadership. I would like to add a special note regarding the sub-committee report. Resolution 5 that was rejected by the SAL body, was discussed at length. Your Liaison laid out a very compelling argument to the Internal Affairs Commission based on your feedback and concerns. After further discussion and research with The American Legion leadership, it was determined that "step-sons" would be allowed to remain in the SAL and continue to join the SAL with no restrictions. In referencing, "Article IV. ELIGIBILITY" of the Sons of The American Legion Constitution, the only change that will be made to the article will be the eligibility changed by the Legion Act. Making this change will potentially increase the number of dual members and increase the overall membership of the SAL.

I hope I provided clarity on some issues and concerns, given a more precise expectation of the SAL program, and the role leadership must take. I am proud of the direction the SAL had taken, and I am happy with the advice and guidance your liaison has provided you. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your national SAL adjutant and National SAL Liaison. They are more than happy to assist you.

Robert E. Newman (IN), Chairman
Internal Affairs Commission

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert E. Newman".

Attachments:

October 10, 2019 Travel Reimbursement Memorandum
October 2019 Fall Meeting IA SAL Sub-committee report
November 22, 2019 Membership Report reflecting new membership goals