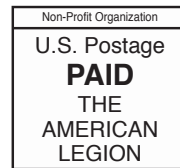


## The Sons of The American Legion

P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206



# NATIONAL UPDATE

Official Publication of the Sons of The American Legion

Winter 2014



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## Big goals from Page 1

High school seniors or graduates must apply annually. Amounts vary based upon the income available from the fund and number of applicants. Scholarships may be used for undergraduate study at an accredited institution of higher education within the United States.

Further scholarship information is contained in The American Legion's "Need a Lift?" publication, which lists scholarships, grants and loans available for veterans and their children. The information is also available on The American Legion's Web site, and booklets are available for distribution to public and private high schools.

The trust fund remains untouched and grows with each donation. Scholarships are funded

by the interest, which has awarded \$291,895 in aid since 2004.

A second area of focus for this year is our increased involvement in The American Legion Boys State program. Since 1935 American Legion Boys State has been giving High School juniors the opportunity to learn about city, county and state government through "hands on" experience. Participants are exposed to the obligations and responsibilities of government officials. Practical and objective training is received over the course of several days with legislative sessions, court proceedings, law enforcement presentations, assemblies and other activities. Participants are selected by local American Legion Posts, following recommendations by High School officials. Thousands of young men have learned the function and powers of gov-

ernment through American Legion Boys State.

The Sons of The American Legion has been a proud advocate of Boys State with numerous Squadrons sponsoring participants over the years. Our members are also encouraged to take an active role and assist with the program in their own state. Contact your respective Department Headquarters to find out how you can be of assistance.

Opportunities abound and there is plenty of time to conduct a fund raising event for these important programs. You have the power to help make a difference in someone's life. Please include The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund and the Boys State program in your fund raising and donation plans this year.

## MySAL launches on the web

By **Brian J. O'Hearne**  
*National Adjutant*

During the fall National Executive Committee meeting held in Indianapolis, a special presentation was made on the new "MySAL" program and the initial rollout of this on-line support system. It should be of interest to all Sons squadrons across the country. The presentation was made by Joe Gallagher, Deputy Director of the National Headquarters IT Division and included a Power Point presentation describing what the program is and features that are now available for all squadrons.

For those of you who are now getting word of this new program for the first time, **MySAL.org** is a secure internet site linked to the membership data base for the Sons. The portal site **MySAL.org** provides officers with access to the membership data and member-management tools.

The squadron adjutant or his designated representative can view and edit squadron membership on this web site, including changes to names,

*Continued on Page 3*

## Americanism sights big goals

The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund, the premier project of The American Legion Riders, is now a priority for Sons of The American Legion, as well. Commander Gladden is requesting increased participation through donations to the fund by squadrons, detachments and individual members. Even though the Legacy Scholarship is relatively new, it has touched the lives of many children.

Legacy scholarships are given to children whose military parent has been killed while serving our country. Dependant children of active duty United States military and National Guard, and military reservists who were federalized and died on active duty on or after September 11, 2001 are eligible.

*Continued on Page 8*

## Strikes to spare transplant-needy kids: COTA

The Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA) recently introduced COTA Bowling for Life as a fun, easy-to-use fund raiser that many local squadrons, posts and units have already implemented to help a COTA family in their community. This program and its support materials were funded by a generous grant from The American Legion's Child Welfare Foundation.

By following the suggestions in the COTA Bowling for Life Fund raising Event Guide, squadrons can turn an ordinary 'bowl-a-thon' into a turbo-charged fund raiser that can raise thousands of dollars. The trick is to take advantage of the

*Continued on Page 3*

## CWF awards 2014 grants

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, in its 59th year, has awarded \$644,005 to 21 non-profit organizations. These grants, determined during the annual meeting of the Board of Directors, have been awarded to support worthwhile youth-serving projects and to assist in the dissemination of information to the general public and specific target groups.

Sons of The American Legion have contributed heavily to the CWF. Donations in the upcoming weeks are expected to push all-time S.A.L. contributions to more than \$6 million. Many of the grants awarded in October were sponsored by the Sons. They included:

**Autism Speaks of New York, NY** - awarded \$32,350 to provide information kits on Autism and will encourage early intervention and supportive services.

**Children's Hospital & Medical Center Foundation of Omaha, NE** - awarded \$14,000 to underwrite the production of an infant injury prevention program that will include the distribution of DVDs and educational booklets.

**Father Flanagan's Boy's Home of Boys Town, NE** - awarded \$35,500 to fund an internet publicity campaign to promote awareness of the Boys Town National Hotline.

*Continued on Page 7*



# You can help leave a Legacy

By **Joe Gladden**  
National Commander

On August 25, 2013, the Delegates to the 42nd National Sons of The American Legion Convention gave me the great honor of being elected your National Commander. This is an honor and experience that I will never forget. While being a 23 year member of the Sons, I have been involved at the national level for the last 18 years. Since attending my first National Convention in September of 1995 in Indianapolis and then attending my first NEC meeting one month later, I have been blessed that I have not missed a convention or an NEC meeting since then. During this time I have had so many incredible experiences, have met and made friends with so many incredible people and I have had the opportunity to be the chairman of five different commissions and committees. I truly believe that all of these opportunities have made me the man and Commander I am today.

I am asking the membership to get behind my National Commander's Project this year; The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. This is a foundation started in 2001 in the wake of terrorist attacks against the United States. The scholarships are being awarded to the children of soldiers killed since September 11, 2001 and it doesn't matter whether or not the soldier was killed in combat - just that the soldier was killed while on active duty. Since forming the foundation after 9/11, U.S. soldiers that have been killed have left behind over 6,000 children, and these are children that will someday need the help that the Legacy Scholarship Fund is going to provide. While Legion Riders have made the Legacy their pet project, I believe that the Sons of The American Legion can really make

*Continued on Page 6*

## Legion confronts IRS over membership

The American Legion has authorized the staff of its Washington, DC office to work with Congress to settle growing differences between The Legion and the Internal Revenue Service over conflicting opinions about membership and fund raising conducted by the Sons. A number of posts throughout the country have felt the scrutiny -- and in some cases, hefty fines -- because the IRS has called into question whether money raised by non-Legionnaires should be treated as taxable unearned income.

One of the resolutions approved at The Legion's Houston Convention calls on Congress to clarify IRS guidelines for exempt organizations. The other resolution calls upon Congress to amend the U.S. Code to make it clear what percentage of a post must be made up of card carrying Legionnaires.

## Meet our newest National Commander

New National Commander Joe Gladden is a 23 year member of the Sons, carries an honorary life membership card and is also a member of The Legion Riders. He has always belonged to **Overlea-Perry Hall, MD Squadron 130**.

In addition to his aggressive goal of raising \$250,000 for the Legacy Scholarship Fund, he'll be busy "Shooting for the Moon." That's an appropriate theme for this year's membership campaign because the goal has been set at 375,000 S.A.L. members signed up by next August -- a 6.3% increase over 2013. In order to reach such heights, Joe will commission each of his Vice Commanders as captains of their own space ships (regions). He'd also like to see every member of the Sons map out a family tree that starts with the first person in their family who is or was eligible to be a member of The American Legion, then list all brothers, sisters, sons, daughters and so on in an effort to identify those who are and are not currently members of each branch of The American Legion Family today.

"Of the 45 people in my own family tree, I know only about a third are members and that's something I plan to work on," says Gladden. "I'm sure others will see something similar when they try this exercise."

There's no lack of involvement in his immediate family. His wife, Bobbie, is a member of Unit 130. All three of Joe's sons are members of the S.A.L. and his oldest currently serves in the Maryland National Guard. Joe's eligibility flows from his father, an Army veteran of World War II who served in England and passed away when Joe was just 10.

In his other life, Joe owns a tax and accounting company. He's a 1982 graduate of the University of Baltimore.



## CWF Leaders Highest Per Capita Contributions by Detachment

Colorado	\$3.12
Washington	\$1.58
Florida	\$1.21
Arkansas	\$1.09
Oregon	\$1.08
France	\$1.04
Alabama	\$0.86
Vermont	\$0.70
New Jersey	\$0.62
Montana	\$0.56
Connecticut	\$0.56
Delaware	\$0.52
Texas	\$0.49
New Mexico	\$0.46
Louisiana	\$0.46
Michigan	\$0.45
Arizona	\$0.42
New Hampshire	\$0.41
Virginia	\$0.31
Iowa	\$0.30
West Virginia	\$0.26
Tennessee	\$0.25

## Memories from Page 3

stand the realities of war."

Eric sought help from Wauconda American Legion Post 911 and Lake Zurich Post 964. Commanders from both posts helped him identify veterans of various ages who had served in World War II, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. Following VHP requirements, each interview had to last more than 30 minutes, had to be recorded and time logs with transcribed questions and answers had to be submitted. All of Eric's work was accepted into the Library of Congress and has been made a part of the VHP.

But Eric wasn't finished. He en-

**CWF** from Page 1 **Joe Foss Institute of Scottsdale, AZ** - awarded \$10,000 to provide students with copies of the United States Constitution and Declaration of Independence.

**Klinefelter Syndrome and Associates of Pine, CO** - awarded \$20,000 to provide informational booklets to parents of children with chromosomal variation.

**National Alliance of Child Abuse Prevention Funds of Seattle, WA** - awarded \$25,260 to produce toolkits for trainers to educate professionals and caregivers to help prevent child abuse and neglect.

**National Braille Press of Boston, MA** - awarded \$18,500 to produce a Braille primer for sighted parents to teach their blind children to read.

**Organization for Autism Research of Arlington, VA** - awarded \$67,400 to develop an interactive, web-based program to enhance the lives of children with autism.

**Partnership for Food Safety Education of Arlington, VA** - awarded \$20,600 to develop online resources to educate the public about food borne illnesses and safe food handling.

**The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Gateway Chapter of St. Louis, MO** - awarded \$5,000 to provide booklets and hospital visitation kits for families with children diagnosed with leukemia and lymphoma.

Other organizations that received funding this year include: Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation of Baltimore, MD (\$25,000), Chadwick Center for Children and Families at Rady Children's Hospital of San Diego, CA (\$40,350), Cornelia de Lange Syndrome Foundation of Avon, CT (\$18,287), Face the Future Foundation of Chicago, IL (\$6,575), National Autism Center of Randolph, MA (\$50,000), Prevent Child Abuse America of Chicago, IL (\$14,383), Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide, Inc. of Freehold, NJ (\$30,100), Songs of Love Foundation of Forest Hills, NY (\$25,000), The American Legion National Headquarters Americanism Division of Indianapolis, IN (\$69,000), Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors of Arlington, VA (\$26,500) and Young Marines of Washington, DC (\$90,000).

listed the help of teachers at his high school and formed a history club. He helped raise money to send eight veterans from his hometown on an Honor Flight trip to Washington, DC and rode along as a guardian. Rather than leaving his VHP interviews solely in the hands of the Library of

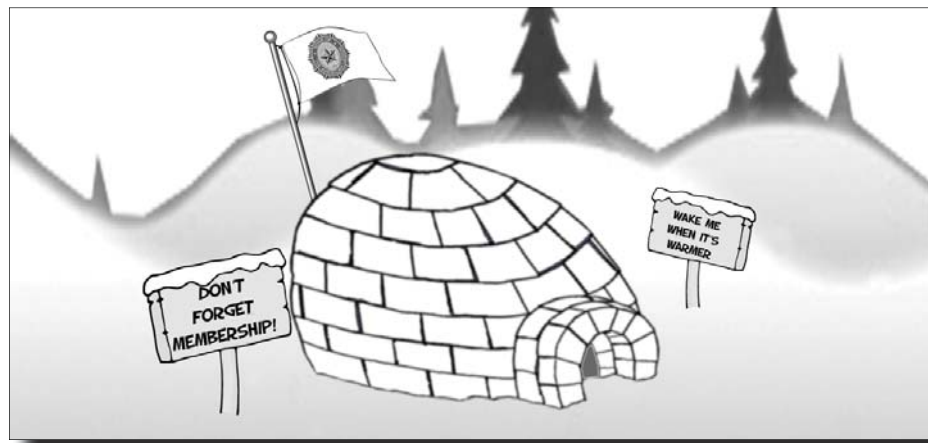
Congress, Eric has built a web site called "Veterans Tribute of Northern Illinois" ([www.veterans-tribute.org](http://www.veterans-tribute.org)) that proudly displays the stories and gives them added exposure.

Eric is a senior this year in high



school and still has not made up his mind about a military career. But he has made a lot of good choices, including the one to join the S.A.L. and become one of the newer members of **Wauconda, IL Sq 911**.





It was certainly an event to remember. **Pasadena, CA Sq 13** members came up with an idea to permanently enshrine those who have contributed to our organization and convinced their Legion Post to let them create a “Sons of The American Legion Hall of Honor” on the building’s beautiful marbled walls. The first-ever Hall of Honor induction took place in early November. Inductees included Past S.A.L. National Chairmen Michael Seaton (CA), Robert McBride (OH), John Smolinsky (MA) and J.R. Stillwell (IL), as well as the first elected S.A.L. National Commander Robert Faust (CA), as well as Past American Legion National Commander John “Jake” Comer (MA). (Right)



Veterans Day tends to bring out some of the best that Sons have to offer each year. On recent Veterans Days, Sons from **Mooreville, IN Sq 103** visited a nearby nursing home to meet and talk with veterans. In the process, they found a woman who had served in USO troupes a half a century ago. Sons from **Saint Joseph, MO Sq 359** helped dedicate a flagpole at a homeless shelter in their community.

Of course, nobody has to wait for Veterans Day or Memorial Day to do something nice for our vets. The guys from **Corry, PA Sq 365** got a picture in the paper when they went to a local nursing home, served refreshments and handed out gift bags to vets.

Sons from **Webster, MA Sq 184** recently honored one of the community’s last WWII veterans. They purchased a granite bench and engraved it with the background of 1st Sgt. Donald A. Baker, Sr. then had it placed at the entrance to nearby Memorial Beach. Baker served 41 years in the Army and another 25 years as the local veterans’ agent. (Left)



Sometimes good news travels slowly. We’re

just now finding out that **Jeannette, PA Sq 344** had a banner year in 2012. They helped with a dinner for The Legion’s National Commander, served 500 spaghetti dinners at the Heinz VA Medical Center, carried the colors various times in the combined Legion/VFW Honor Guard, hosted a summer picnic cookout at the Heinz VAMC (the biggest event since they were chartered in 2007), took part in a POW/MIA ceremony during an event to recognize Korean War vets, organized a gun raffle and made Christmas a little brighter for others.

Here are two stories about how perseverance pays off: Ed Drown belongs to **Lyndonville, VT Sq 30** and is a Past Commander of the **Detachment of Vermont**. When he was young he heard his father talk about a brother who was MIA during the Korean War. Starting in 1995, Ed tried to track down information about his uncle and attempted to get a Veterans Administration memorial marker for the family’s grave site. It took 16 years and a lot of refusals by government officials, but with the help of a Congressman, Ed finally received the written reports of his uncle’s disappearance in Korea and was given a memorial grave marker. Meanwhile, almost

nobody wants to see veterans’ grave left unmarked, but that’s what’s happening because of a Department of Veterans Affairs policy that says only next of kin can apply for free government-issued markers. **Past S.A.L. National Commander John Dietz** serves on a committee in his community near Cincinnati that is working to get the VA’s policy reversed so groups like The Sons of The American Legion can assist in honoring the graves of veterans. Dietz and others worked diligently to mark the graves of four African-American Civil War soldiers. They ran into a brick wall with the VA but wound up acquiring markers through the donation of a private monument company. More than a hundred years after their burials, the soldiers’ graves are finally marked appropriately.



Cody and Peter Polega are two of the youngest members of **Mountain Top, PA Sq 781**. This summer they marched the two miles of the Fourth of July parade alongside Raymond Samolis, Post 781’s oldest active member, a veteran of WWII. (Left)

Sons in **Walkerton, IN Sq 189** are pretty well known for their Christmas basket giveaway. But they have also given out \$500 scholarships to a pair of local high school graduates, sponsor a Little League team and a girls soccer team and actively help the community parks department.



Forget the movie stars. **Hollywood, CA Sq 43** recently signed up a member of Congress. Sons and Post officials presented a membership card, S.A.L. cover and license plate to Rep. Adam Schiff whose father was a veteran. (Left)

The Sons of **Calabash, NC Sq 503** have established a nursing scholarship at nearby Brunswick Community College. Applicants for the scholarship must have prior military service.

The Sons of **Le Mars, IA Sq 241** recently sponsored an “Honor Bus” to take a load of veterans to the Iowa State Fair. On August 12th the Iowa State Fair hosted a Veterans Day with a parade and several military concerts. Thanks to these guys from the S.A.L., a bunch of vets were able to enjoy the thanks accorded them by folks behind the Iowa State Fair.

The **Detachment of California** teamed up with another group back in September to throw an end-of-summer beach bash for the Marines, Sailors and families of the Marine Corps 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion. Food, fun, games and prizes were spread out across Del Mar Beach at Camp Pendleton.

Sons in **Covington, LA Sq 16** helped convince the local mayor to sign a proclamation declaring September 11 as a Day of Remembrance and then squadron officers were on hand for the photo opportunity when the mayor made his mark. (Left)



When 18 National Guardsmen from New York’s Alpha Troop 2/101st Cavalry returned home from Afghanistan this summer, Sons from **Geneva, NY Sq 396** were there to welcome them and host a cookout for the soldiers and their families. (Below)





## Commander from Page 2

goal easily. I am asking you to go to your squadron, your district and your detachment and ask about raising and donating that money to the Legacy Scholarship Fund. By helping me reach this goal, you will be helping the children of our fallen soldiers have a future.

We will also be working on a number of other different projects this year under each of the three big commissions. The Children & Youth Commission will be focusing on Special Olympics and Josh Dogs. The Americanism Commission will be focusing on the Legacy Scholarship Fund and Boys State. The Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission will be focusing on Fisher House and the Missing In America Project. While these commissions will be focusing on these particular projects, we will be supporting all the programs of The American Legion. The national organization is here to support you with information and education. The chairmen and commission and committee members are dedicated to providing you with as much information as you need. I have asked all the commission and committees to make a real effort to find ways to convey the information and programs we are working on all the way into the squadron level.

It is very important that you, the blue cap member, stay abreast of what is going on in our organization. There are several ways you can do this. Your first resource is your squadron and post. Are you attending meetings on a regular basis? I have heard it stated that organizations like ours get 10% or less of their membership to attend meetings and participate. That means, if your squadron has 250 members, then 25 members will participate. Unfortunately my own squadron is only around 8%. The real question is...are you part of the 10% that does or are you part of the 90% that don't?

Another way to stay abreast of what's going on is to attend district and detachment meetings. These meetings give you a different perspective on the material, seeing how it is being presented by someone new. Also, you get to meet members from different squadrons and you get to hear first hand how they do things and hear about problems that they may be having. Often times, you will find that something you think affects only you is being felt by others. You may just find an answer to a problem that you couldn't solve. You may just hear about a program that would work really well from a squadron that you didn't know about.

And finally, a great resource and way to stay abreast of what's going on is to use the many websites run by the Sons of The American Legion. Whether it is our national website at [www.legion.org/sons](http://www.legion.org/sons) or your detachment or district's website, a wealth of information is available. At the national level, our chairmen are placing articles about the various programs we are working on. Each chairman's name and e-mail addresses is available for you to contact them with questions about their programs. All types of forms and publications are available for you to download and read. Please take advantage of this incredible tool!

Past National Commander Chris Huntzinger has often said that education and communication equals success and he is right. Please get involved. I have always stated that I have gotten more from this organization than I have ever given, but that only happens when you decide to give first.

Do you have a story to share?

**National Update**  
c/o Mike Pipher, Editor  
612 S. State Road 446 - #35C  
Bloomington, IN 47401  
or  
[mpipher@iu.edu](mailto:mpipher@iu.edu)

**Don't forget...**  
**The next deadline is**  
**February 1, 2014**

a difference in this program. I have established a goal of \$250,000 for us to reach this year. If we put the same dedication and support into it that we do the Child Welfare Foundation, we will reach this

goal easily. I am asking you to go to your squadron, your district and your detachment and ask about raising and donating that money to the Legacy Scholarship Fund. By helping me reach this goal, you will be helping the children of our fallen soldiers have a future.

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## Membership

Philippines	90.0%
Dist of Columbia	76.7%
Louisiana	63.3%
Hawaii	61.9%
Montana	52.1%
Wisconsin	51.2%
Georgia	50.6%
Maryland	49.4%
Kansas	49.3%
Mississippi	47.0%
Minnesota	46.8%
Alabama	44.8%
Iowa	44.4%
Florida	43.6%
Missouri	43.1%
Virginia	42.9%
Arizona	41.5%
Illinois	41.0%
Delaware	40.6%
Colorado	40.4%
Vermont	40.3%
Indiana	40.1%
Nevada	40.0%
National Avg	35.1%

## MySAL from Page 1

addresses, and date of birth information. He can generate membership lists and lists of current paid members as well as view current status (i.e. paid and transmittal information). The squadron adjutant can generate reports available in CSV file format which will allow users to work with the data in Microsoft Excel and Access spreadsheets. He will have the ability to generate

## COTA from Page 1

many fund raising tips outlined in the COTA Bowling for Life fund raising guide. A successful COTA Bowling for Life event involves planning and careful consideration of the many elements that can make your fund raiser more profitable. In addition to entry fees, for example, event organizers are encouraged to sell lane sponsorships, hold a silent auction of donated items, and to collect coins using the COTA-supplied coin collection boxes that include The American Legion Family logos.

No interest in going to a local bowling center to raise life-saving dollars? Then do what one Florida post did and hold a Wii bowling tournament at the post. Utilizing the tips and ideas in the COTA Bowling for Life guide, your squadron can raise thousands of dollars to help a transplant family in your community.

To get started please visit [www.cota.org](http://www.cota.org) and click on the COTA Bowling for Life logo, or call (800) 366-2682 and ask for Kari Wegmann.



mailing labels. When used properly, this web site will become an important tool that will greatly assist in membership renewals.

Now - how can you get started? Just go to the internet page [www.legion.org/sons](http://www.legion.org/sons) and click on the "MySAL" link. Print out and complete the authorization form, obtain the proper authorization signatures for your squadron and mail it to the address provided on the form.

To date, over 106 squadron applications have been received and more are arriving each day. Keep in mind only one person can be authorized per squadron. Also, the squadron adjutant or his designated person must be a Sons member with current membership dues paid.

What does this cost? It's free of charge! More importantly, this can be one of the greatest membership tools ever made available within our organization, if used.

## Get out and shake the family tree

*By Raymond Jarvis  
Nat'l Membership Chairman*

Our membership theme is "Shooting for the Moon." Our goal is to reach 375,000 members. This would be a 106.3% increase over last year.

At the same time we are boosting S.A.L. numbers we need to work equally hard at helping the overall Legion Family membership. One simple way to do this is to work on our own Family Tree. I want you to sit down and create a family tree. Look at each branch and see who are current Legion Family members and who are not. Take a look at those who are not and see if they are eligible to join the Sons, the Auxiliary and/or the Riders. Then, do all you can to sign them up. I can guarantee that each of us has at least one family member who is not a member that could be.

Anyone who signs up five new members will be eligible to receive the 2014 membership recruiter pin. The form is on line. Fill it out and send it in and you will receive your pin to wear with pride of a job well done.

We really need to work hard on our renewals as we lose approximately 40,000 members every year, mostly because we fail to contact them and ask them to renew, or ask if they are having problem and need a hand.

Membership is everyone's responsibility.

## Illinois Son preserves veteran memories

Eric Grier is a typical high school student. In recent years, he has been thinking about his future and has considered applying to the military academies and making a military career for himself. Even though his father is an Air Force Lt. Colonel who served in Iraq, Eric took it upon himself to interview nearly a dozen veterans in his community in an effort to find out what a military career might mean. It was during those interviews that Eric latched onto an idea he hadn't expected to find.

While surfing the internet one day he came across the Veterans History Project sponsored by the Library of Congress' American Folk life Center. As explained on its web site, the goal of the VHP is to "collect, preserve and make accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better under-

*Continued on Page 7*