

# SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

## INFORMATION

This handbook is the property of \_\_\_\_\_,

Who belongs to Squadron \_\_\_\_\_,

Within the Detachment of \_\_\_\_\_,

And a member of the Sons since \_\_\_\_\_.

Office(s) held within the Sons of The American Legion:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Office) (Dates)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Office) (Dates)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Office) (Dates)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Office) (Dates)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Office) (Dates)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Office) (Dates)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Office) (Dates)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Office) (Dates)

**MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL COMMANDER  
OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION**

To my fellow members of the Sons:

Whether you are already a member or a new recruit into our ranks, you are a very important part of this great organization. Ours is a fraternity of service, dedicated to helping others, providing educational, recreational, and leadership opportunities to people from all walks of life. Preserving American traditions and values, improving the quality of life for our nation's children, caring for veterans and their families, and teaching the fundamentals of good citizenship are what this organization is all about.

An understanding of the rituals, the programs, the Constitution and By Laws is essential to fully appreciate your membership in the Sons of The American Legion. This handbook has been developed to help you better understand your obligations as a member of the Sons and assist you in understanding how our organization is structured and operates.

I welcome you into the Sons of The American Legion and offer you my best wishes for success.

Yours in service to America,

S.A.L. National Commander  
(signature)

## INDEX

<b>Section 1: Handbook for Members</b>	<b>1-1</b>
Preamble to the S.A.L. Constitution	1-2
American's Creed	1-2
Pledge of Allegiance	1-2
History of the Sons	1-3
Membership and Eligibility	1-6
S.A.L. Emblem	1-7
Organizational Structure & Flowchart	1-8
Squadron Officers/Duties	1-11
S.A.L. Cover and Uniform	1-13
Suggestions for Squadron Organization	1-14
Suggested Programs and Activities	1-16
Suggested Programs Throughout the Year	1-19
Contests, Trophies and Awards	1-21
Adult Leadership	1-23
Discipline/Expulsion	1-24
Suggested Squadron Constitution	1-25
<b>Section 2: Handbook for Officers</b>	<b>2-1</b>
Suggested Regular Meeting Layout	2-2
Regular Squadron Meeting Script	2-3
POW / MIA Empty Chair Ceremony	2-4
Presentation of Awards, Badges, Medals, Etc.	2-6
Initiation Ceremony	2-7
Installation of Squadron Officers	2-13
Squadron Everlasting (Memorial) Service	2-19
Memorial Service – Funeral Home	2-20
Memorial Service – Gravesite	2-21
Dedication of Colors Script	2-23
Disposal of Unserviceable Flags	2-24
Squadron Everlasting	2-27
<b>Section 3. National Guidelines</b>	<b>3-1</b>
Sons of The American Legion National Constitution	3-2
Sons of The American Legion National By-Laws	3-9
<b>Section 4. Statements</b>	<b>4-1</b>
Statement of Policy	4-2
Statement of Status	4-3

Section 1

**HANDBOOK  
FOR MEMBERS**

## **PREAMBLE TO THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION**

Proud possessors of a priceless heritage, we male descendants of veterans of the Great 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 the Great Wars- to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the Community, State and Nation, to combat the 9 I 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.

## **THE AMERICAN'S CREED**

I believe in the United States of America as a government for the people, by 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 principals 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.

## **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.

## **HISTORY OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION**

Born in the midst of the Great Depression of the 1930's, and almost killed by the one-two punch of two wars, the Sons of The American Legion lives on. The idea of a junior American Legion organization was first discussed at the Legion's 3rd National Convention in 1922. Because so few Legionnaires had yet become parents, the idea had little national appeal. But by the late 1920's, Legion Posts around the nation were enrolling Sons of Legionnaires in junior organizations on their own. These groups were variously known as Legion-Heirs, the Junior Legion, Sons of American Legionnaires, and Sons of World War Veterans.

The Legion's 1930 National Convention created a committee to study the feasibility of a junior Legion. The establishment of the Sons as a non-profit, nonsectarian civilian organization was authorized by action of The American Legion's 14th National Convention in Portland, Oregon in September 1932. The 1933 National Convention officially changed the name of the organization to "The Sons of The American Legion," authorized the abbreviation "S.A.L." and set annual national membership dues at 25 cents.

The first Squadron chartered was Bruce P. Robison Post #133 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The very first membership card was issued to John P. Ragsdale; his brothers Edward and Robert were also charter members and received cards #2 and #3. John was killed in an aerial mission over Germany in 1943. In 1946, the name of the Post was changed to Robison-Ragsdale Post 133. By 1934, the S.A.L. expanded to 24 Detachments, 170 Squadrons, and 524 members. In the late 1930's, Sons were closely involved with Legionnaires in nationwide radio programs and printed a monthly national newspaper called "The Legion Heir." There were over 60,000 members in 1938 when Paramount Pictures released a film entitled "Sons of The Legion" starring Donald O'Connor, William Frawley, and Evelyn Keyes. The movie played in thousands of theaters around the country where local S.A.L. musical units furnished live entertainment.

The S.A.L. had over 70,000 members in the late 30's and was growing rapidly. But World War 11 erupted and most Sons marched off, many of them never returned. Sons who remained on the home front also did their part working in civil defense, helping to operate aircraft warning posts, participating in war bond drives, collecting scrap metals and working in defense plants.

When Sons returned home after World War 11, they found their military service had made them eligible to join the ranks of The American Legion. In the decade between 1946 and 1956, an era, which included the Korean War, millions of ex-servicemen and women, joined The American Legion. Paradoxically, as the ranks of The Legion swelled, membership in the Sons dropped to fewer than 6,000 and the organization flirted with extinction.

Only through the efforts of dedicated Legion Family members did the S.A.L. turn around. In 1958, membership inched passed the 10,000 mark then climbed to nearly 17,000 in the early 1960's. The Legion's 441 National Convention in October 1962 appointed a special study group to revamp the structure of the Sons. A study group met in April 1963 and recommended increasing dues to 50 cents per member, eliminated military sounding S.A.L. officer titles and designated an official S.A.L. uniform. The study group met again in January 1964 and recommended updating the S.A.L. Constitution, initiating membership awards and revising the S.A.L. handbook.

The Sons' first National S.A.L. Workshop was conducted during the Legion's 1964 National Convention in Dallas. National Workshops continued annually through 1967, and then were replaced by National Caucuses, which were held annually through 1971. All Past National Caucus Chairmen are now recognized as Past National Commanders of the S.A.L. In 1972, the Legion's National Executive Committee approved the creation of a national S.A.L. organization under the full supervision and control of the Legion's N.E.C., thus opening the door for the Sons of The American Legion to hold their first National Convention in Chicago in August 1972. Robert Faust of California was elected the 1st National Commander of the Sons.

Sons celebrated their 50th Anniversary in 1982. At the S.A.L. National Convention in Chicago that year, the Sons held a Gala Golden Anniversary Banquet. A 501 Anniversary Book and special commemorative lapel pins were issued and the movie "Sons of The Legion," produced in 1938, was shown.

In 1992, the S.A.L. National Organization began a reorganization of its commissions and committees. Various committees were placed under the oversight of one of six national commissions for the purpose of coordinating activities. Under this new structure, the S.A.L. established Squadron Americanism Awards in 1993, Scholastic Awards for Boys Nation and Junior Shooting Sports in 1994, and re-established the S.A.L. National Color Guard Award in 1996.

The Sons conducted their first Training Institute for Detachment Commanders in 1995, providing state officers with valuable leadership skills and managerial expertise. At their 1996 National Convention in Salt Lake City, Sons celebrated their Silver Anniversary National Convention. That same year, S.A.L. members nationwide contributed more than \$116,000 to the American Legion's Child Welfare Foundation, making them the largest contributor to the Foundation that year.

Every year since the establishment of the National Organization in 1972, the S.A.L. has recorded new all-time membership records. In 1990, membership in the Sons exceeded 100,000 for the first time ever. S.A.L. membership broke the 200,000 mark in 1997.

## NATIONAL S.A.L. WORKSHOPS

- |                                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Dallas, TX 1964      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Portland, OR 1965 |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Washington, DC 1966  | 4 <sup>th</sup> Boston, MA 1967   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> New Orleans, LA 1968 | 6 <sup>th</sup> Atlanta, GA 1969  |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Portland, OR 1970    | 8 <sup>th</sup> Houston, TX 1971  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> Chicago, IL 1972     |                                   |

## NATIONAL S.A.L. CAUCUSES

- |                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Portland, OR 1970 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Houston, TX 1971 |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|

## NATIONAL S.A.L. CONVENTIONS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Chicago, IL; 1972         | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Honolulu, HI; 1973      |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Miami Beach, FL; 1974     | 4 <sup>th</sup> Minneapolis, MN; 1975   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Seattle, WA; 1976         | 6 <sup>th</sup> Denver, CO; 1977        |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> New Orleans, LA; 1978     | 8 <sup>th</sup> Houston, TX; 1979       |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> Boston, MA; 1980          | 10 <sup>th</sup> Honolulu, HI, 1981     |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> Chicago, IL; 1982        | 12 <sup>th</sup> Seattle, WA; 1983      |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> Salt Lake City, UT; 1984 | 14 <sup>th</sup> New Orleans, LA; 1985  |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> Cincinnati, OH; 1986     | 16 <sup>th</sup> San Antonio, TX; 1987  |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> Louisville, KY; 1988     | 18 <sup>th</sup> Baltimore, MA; 1989    |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> Indianapolis, IN; 1990   | 20 <sup>th</sup> Phoenix, AZ; 1991      |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> Chicago, IL; 1992        | 22 <sup>nd</sup> Pittsburgh, PA; 1993   |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> Minneapolis, MN; 1994    | 24 <sup>th</sup> Indianapolis, IN; 1995 |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> Salt Lake City, UT; 1996 | 26 <sup>th</sup> Orlando, FL; 1997      |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> New Orleans, LA; 1998    | 28 <sup>th</sup> Anaheim, CA; 1999      |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> Milwaukee, WI; 2000      | 30 <sup>th</sup> San Antonio, TX; 2001  |
| 31 <sup>st</sup> Charlotte, NC; 2002      | 32 <sup>nd</sup> St. Louis, MO; 2003    |

## **MEMBERSHIP AND ELIGIBILITY**

Membership is the lifeblood of our organization. Membership in the Sons of The American Legion is directly related to the success of our projects and programs. Every member should concern himself with the recruitment of new members as well as helping secure renewals each year.

You should always carry an application for membership with you should the opportunity to recruit a new member ever arise. Just as every member is important to the overall success of the organization, the renewal and recruitment of members is everyone's responsibility.

All male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of members of The American Legion, and such male descendants of veterans who died in service during World 1, World War 11, Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf War, during the delimiting periods 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 following eligibility periods have been established for membership in The American Legion:

**Aug. 2, 1990 thru (still open)**  
**Dec. 20, 1989 thru Jan. 21, 1990**  
**Aug. 24, 1982 thru July 31, 1984**  
**Feb. 28, 1961 thru May 7, 1975**  
**June 25, 1950 thru Jan. 31, 1955**  
**Dec. 7, 1941 thru Dec. 31, 1946**  
**April 6, 1917 thru Nov. 11, 1918**

If an individual meets the eligibility requirements for both organizations, it is possible to belong to both, The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion. Individuals who belong to both are known as dual members.

There shall be no forms or class of membership except an active membership.

## THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION EMBLEM

The design of our 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 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 willingly gave their lives for their country.*

*The ten points of the emblem represent the ten ideals of every Legion son.*



S.A.L. ADMINISTRATIVE FLOWCHART

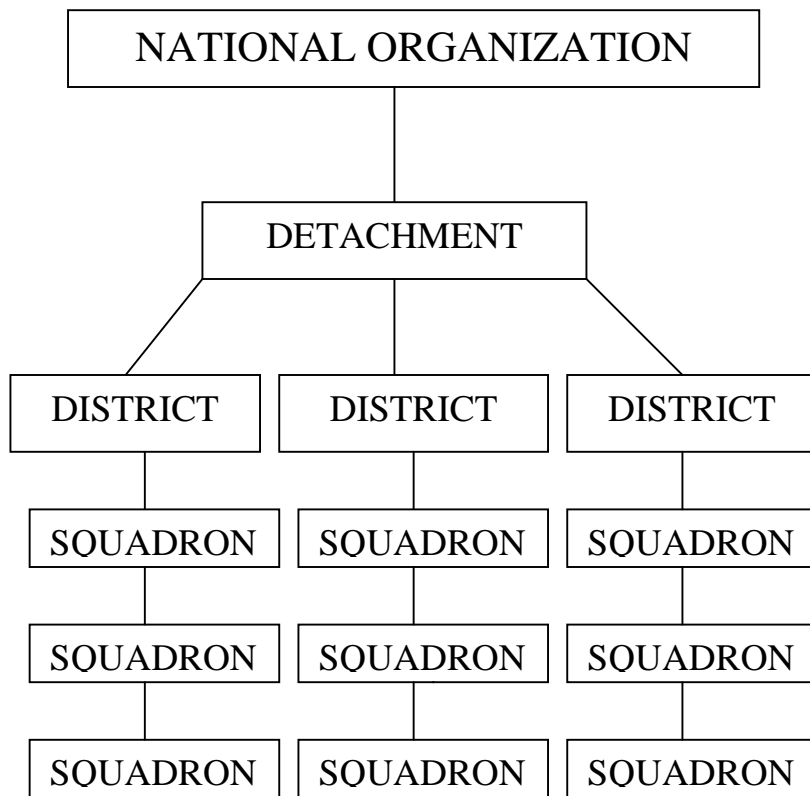
# Organizational Structure

**Policy and Programs**

**Administration & Publicity**

**Coordination**

**Membership & Activities**



## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION**

### **National Organization**

The American Legion created the National Organization of the Sons of The American Legion in 1971 to better coordinate the efforts of Squadrons and Detachments. The Annual National Convention is the chief legislative body of the organization, and is held each year in conjunction with The American Legion's National Convention. The Convention elects a National Commander, five National Vice Commanders (one for each Region), and a National Chaplain. All other National Officers (National Adjutant, five Assistant Adjutants, Judge Advocate, Historian, Sergeant at Arms, five Assistant Sergeants at Arms and Commander's Aide) are appointed by the National Commander with the consent of the National Executive Committee. Between Conventions, the administration of the S.A.L. is vested in it's National Executive Committee, a body made up of one representative and one alternate representative from each Detachment, plus all elected National Officers and all Past National Commanders. The N.E.C. meets twice each year in Indianapolis, Indiana, and also immediately preceding and following the National Convention. The several Detachments are organized into five regions (East, South, Central, Midwest, West). In addition, there are seven standing National Commissions (Americanism, Finance, Public Relations, Legislative, Veterans Rehabilitation, Internal Affairs, Children & Youth) and seven standing National Committees (Convention, Membership, Child Welfare, Membership Development & Training, Community Service, Commanders Advisory, Resolutions). Members of National Commissions are appointed for a term of three years. The newly elected National Commander appoints two National Commission members each year. The National Commander appoints members of National Committees for a one-year term. All appointments require the consent of the N.E.C.

### **Detachments**

Generally speaking, all Squadrons within a state's boundaries comprise the Detachment Organization. A Detachment is organized and operates under the supervision of the American Legion Department Organization in that state. Detachments elect State officers and delegates to the Annual National Convention of the S.A.L. and are entitled to representation on the S.A.L. National Executive Committee. Detachments establish their own per capita dues rates, write their own constitution and by-laws and are the body with authority to approve their constitution and by-laws written at the intermediate and squadron levels. The Detachment Organization is primarily responsible for promoting National programs within that state, communicating information to Squadrons within that state, and expanding S.A.L. membership in the state. The Detachment has the power to suspend or cancel Squadron Charters for violation of the Detachment or National Constitution & By Laws. The Legislative Body of the Detachment is the Annual Detachment Convention, and each Squadron is entitled to participate in the meeting. The number of delegate votes allotted each squadron is determined by the squadron's paid membership for the current membership year.

## **Intermediate Bodies**

Detachments employ intermediate organizational bodies, which group squadrons into geographic regions. Often referred to as Districts, Areas, Counties, Sectors, Zones or other names, intermediate bodies are created by the Detachment, elect their own officers, write their own constitution and by-laws and exist to coordinate efforts and communications between the Detachment and its squadrons.

## **Squadrons**

The grass roots unit of the Sons of The American Legion is a Squadron. Currently, there are more than 5100 Squadrons throughout the United States, and in four outlying Detachments in foreign countries. There may be only one Squadron attached to any American Legion Post. A Squadron Charter (legal authority to exist and operate as part of the organization) is issued by the National Organization, upon request of the sponsoring Post, with the approval of that respective Department Organization of the Legion. Squadrons may establish their own by-laws, provided they are not in conflict with the S.A.L. National Constitution and By-Laws or Detachment by-laws. AU membership in the Sons of The American Legion exists through membership in a particular squadron. Eligible applicants may join any squadron, regardless of the location of their Legion parents' membership. Only a squadron may admit and/or expel members from the Sons of The American Legion. All members must meet eligibility requirements. There are no honorary members permitted in the S.A.L. or in The American Legion.

## **SQUADRON OFFICERS AND DUTIES**

**Squadron Commander** - This individual is entrusted with the important duty of teaching and protecting the cardinal principles of the Sons of The American Legion and the supervision of duties of all other officers of the squadron. He is guided by the squadron constitution and by the decision of the squadron as a body. Yet, responsibility for the squadron's success rests largely upon his shoulders.

Accomplishments of squadron depend greatly upon the leadership abilities of the commander. During his term in office, the commander presides over squadron meetings and makes every effort to see that meetings are conducted properly. A recommended order of business and the ceremonial ritual for the opening and closing of a squadron meeting are outlined elsewhere in this handbook.

**First Vice Commander** - The responsibilities of this office are devoted largely to the membership enrollment activities of the squadron and other duties as assigned by the Commander. There is nothing more important to the life and blood of the squadron than the membership. The First Vice Commander should be willing and able to fill in for the Squadron Commander if the need arises.

**Second Vice Commander** - The responsibilities of this office are concerned primarily with patriotic observances, the development of squadron activities, and planning entertainment and social features that may be scheduled in conjunction with squadron meetings.

**Adjutant** - This officer is the secretary of the squadron, maintaining contact with individual squadron members and higher levels of the organization, keeping squadron records, and publishing any necessary orders, announcements, and instructions.

**Finance Officer** - This officer has the responsibility of receiving squadron moneys and paying all squadron bills when the Squadron Commander, and/or the Post Officials have given authorization for payment. The Finance Officer should have financial reports ready for every Squadron meeting.

**Chaplain** - This officer is responsible for the spiritual leadership of the squadron. In addition to attending all meetings, he should be ready upon occasion to take part in the initiation of new members, dedication ceremonies, and the funeral services of a comrade. His opening and closing prayers should be in tune with the type of meeting being attended. The Chaplain needs to be aware of the sick and injured members of the Squadron and take it upon himself to send the appropriate cards or well wishes.

**Historian** - This officer maintains a current record of the activities of the squadron as a mean of continuing a historical account of its endeavors over the years. The Historian should start a scrapbook, take pictures, send articles to newspapers, and become the public relations persons of the squadron.

**Sergeant-at-Arms** - This officer is 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. During meetings, he is the eyes and ears for the Commander, keeping the flow of traffic to a minimum during meeting and announcing and escorting any guests to the speakers table.

## **THE S.A.L. COVER AND UNIFORM**

The S.A.L. cap, sometimes referred to as a member's cover, should be worn at all S.A.L. and Legion Family functions. Different colored caps, or covers, denote different administrative levels throughout the Sons:

Squadron member or officer - *French blue with red, white and blue piping*

District officer - *French blue bottom with piping and white top*

Detachment officer - *French blue with piping and gold top*

National officer - *Solid gold with piping*

A member of the Sons of The American Legion wearing the cap should render and respond to salutes and conduct himself in the same manner as he would if he were wearing a military uniform. If not wearing the S.A.L. cap, the ordinary rules of etiquette for civilian dress should be observed. (The proper salute to the Flag in civilian clothes is to remove one's hat and hold it at the left shoulder, with right hand over the heart.)

The S.A.L. cap is not to be worn during meals or while eating, or while consuming alcoholic beverages.

Members of a Squadron Honor Guard should wear the S.A.L. cap in a place of worship while in marching order or standing guard. S.A.L. members not in formation will uncover upon entering the place of worship and remain uncovered during the entire service and re-cover after leaving the place of worship.

An official uniform for members of the S.A.L. was adopted in 1963. For several decades, Sons were encouraged to attend official functions dressed in a French blue blazer with S.A.L. emblem embroidered on the chest pocket, dark blue trousers, dark blue tie, white shirt and black shoes. Many members continue to wear this prescribed outfit. However, specific fashions rarely stand the test of time and members are now encouraged to wear clothing appropriate to the function or event they are attending.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR SQUADRON ORGANIZATION**

### **Part One – Preparation**

The committee that undertakes the organization of a squadron must first carefully study the aims and purposes of the organization as set forth in the Preamble to the Constitution and the ritualistic work. The entire procedure of organization should be placed in the hands of this committee and the Post should pledge its active support to the work of the committee.

Following a careful study of plans for organization of the squadron, the first step should be the compilation of a complete list of eligible members. Department Headquarters will furnish individual application blanks and applications for charter on request from any American Legion Post in the Department. There is only one form of charter, and there is no fee charged in connection with its issuance. A Post cannot sponsor more than one squadron of the Sons of The American Legion.

When the list of eligible candidates has been completed, each applicant will be given an individual application for membership in duplicate (the form is one copy). The Adjutant of The American Legion Post sponsoring the squadron will certify the eligibility of each applicant. One copy of the application should remain with the Post Adjutant for record and one copy accompanies the application for squadron charter to Department Headquarters of The American Legion.

### **Part Two – Organization**

A letter of invitation to the meeting should be addressed and mail to each eligible Son. Both, the Post Commander and the chairman of the Post Sons of The American Legion Committee should sign the letter. Many squadrons have been formed as the result of holding a father/son banquet in connection with the organization meeting.

Believing that the future of an organization is often determined by the original meeting, it is suggested that the first or preliminary meeting be planned with careful thought. There should be particular emphasis placed on the responsibility of membership, opportunity for service, and pride in being eligible to carry on the ideals and programs of The American Legion, the world's largest veterans' organization.

It should be stressed that the Sons of The American Legion is a part of The American Legion, but responsibility for the success or failure of the squadron rests with the squadron membership. They should be told of the regalia and insignia available to members. If possible, it is well to arrange a short entertainment program for the meeting. Keep in mind at all times that the program must be presented for what it is - a program of staunch Americanism.

Following the organization meeting, plans should be carefully made for the initiation. An invitation to the public may be made through adequate newspaper publicity as well as through special invitations to the initiate and members of his family. Every son of a Legionnaire should be given the opportunity to join and should be urged to do so. Notice should be sent to each Post member, urging attendance at the initiation meeting.

## **SUGGESTED PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES**

Since eligibility in the Sons begins from date of birth, activities and programs of any squadron should be determined by: 1) age groupings of those eligible; 2) apparent needs of the eligible; 3) needs of the community for the programs and activities which could be provided by the S.A.L.; and 4) capabilities of those serving as leaders and advisors.

Just as each Legion Post determines the extent of its services to the community, state and nation, so each squadron is permitted flexibility in planning programs and activities to meet the needs of its own age groups.

### **Major Activity Areas**

**Color Guards** - The type of uniformed group for any particular squadron depends upon such factors as the size of the squadron, the age span of the members, and the interests and needs of the community. Once established, a uniformed group can be a source of pride for both the squadron and its sponsoring Post. Such a group should be a willing participant in patriotic holiday observances and other worthy civic functions, not only to help expand the sponsoring Post's representation at such events, but, also, to develop within the Squadron an awareness of its purpose "to foster and perpetuate a true spirit of Americanism." S.A.L. Color Guards are eligible to participate in the American Legion's National Color Guard Competition, held each year at the National Convention. The S.A.L. Color Guard receiving the highest score in the competition is named the S.A.L. National Color Guard Champion, receiving a plaque, Championship Guidon, and cash award.

**Volunteers** - There is perhaps no activity in which a Son may participate that will reward him with more satisfaction than having performed a valuable service as a volunteer hospital worker within the program of the Veterans Administration Voluntary Service (VAVS). There is a constant need for these volunteer hospital workers. S.A.L. members serving as VAVS volunteers should register with the Chief of Volunteer Services at the nearest VA Hospital or Facility. All S.A.L. volunteers' service hours should be recorded and reported annually as part of the Squadron's Veterans Rehabilitation Report.

**Boys State** - American Legion Boys State is a leadership action program where qualified male high school juniors take part in a practical course designed to develop a working knowledge of the structure of government, from the township to the state level. Students "wishing to attend Boys State must be sponsored by one of The American Legion Family organizations. Boys State is conducted in every State except Hawaii and is fashioned after the government structure of each respective state, with similar political offices and agencies. Each Boys State program operates under a two party system with instruction provided in the organization and operation of political parties at different levels of government. Eligible S.A.L. members are encouraged to attend Boys State through sponsorship of their local Post, Squadron or Unit. For more information, contact your Post Adjutant or Department Headquarters.

**Legion Baseball** – American Legion Baseball was established in 1925 for the purpose of developing team discipline, individual character, and leadership qualities in young people. Legion Baseball is the oldest and largest nationwide baseball program in America. More than 4000 Legion baseball teams play each year, comprised of nearly 90,000 players, ages 15 to 18. More than half of the Major League Baseball players got their start in Legion Baseball as teenagers. S.A.L. members interested in playing, or S.A.L. squadrons interested in sponsoring a Legion Baseball team, should contact Department Headquarters for more information.

**High School Oratorical Contest** - The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest is designed to develop a deeper appreciation of the U.S. Constitution in high school students. U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents of the U.S. are eligible to participate in the program. Participants are required to deliver a prepared oration on some phase of the U.S. Constitution. Students participating in local Oratorical Contests sponsored by one or more Legion Posts, advance through qualification to the Department (state) level then to the National Contest. Scholarships are awarded to each Department (state) winner and to the three finalists in the National contest. S.A.L. members interested in participating should contact their Department Headquarters for more information.

**Junior Shooting Sports** - Many local Posts and squadrons sponsor Junior Shooting Clubs and provide training in gun safety and marksmanship for student's ages 14 through 20. The American Legion Junior Position Air Rifle Tournament is an annual competition that begins with Post- level matches to determine state and regional champions. The top 30 competitors, as well as the state and regional champions compete in the Qualification Round, also a Post-level match. The Qualification Round determines the top 12 shooters in both the Precision and Sporter categories, who will compete in the National Championship, held annually at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado. To inquire about sponsoring a Shooting Club or participating in the Tournament, contact the Program Coordinator, American Legion Junior Shooting Sports, National Headquarters, and P.O. BOX 1055, INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206. Child Welfare Foundation - Formed in 1954, the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Inc. (CWF) provides financial assistance to other non-profit organizations involved in national public education programs about the care of children. Since 1955, the Foundation has awarded nearly \$5,000,000.00 in grants to assist America's children. All contributions to the Foundation are tax deductible. The vast majority of all contributions to the CWF come from members of The American Legion, S.A.L., Auxiliary, and 8 & 40.

**Crime Prevention/Child Safety** - The American Legion and McGruff the Crime Dog® are working together to help your local post, Auxiliary or Squadron make the community and it's children safer. The National Crime Prevention Council, home of McGruff, has approved a McGruff Safe Kids Identification Kit-The American Legion Edition that can be the basis for a great family outreach in your community. Designed to help parents communicate with children ages 4 to 12, the program can be purchased by your Legion Post at special rates and passed out at key locations throughout the community or at special events. McGruff Safe Kids Identification Kit, P.O. Box 931, Wayzata, MN 55391, Tel: 1-800-288-3344 Fax: 612-473-7123.

**Blood Donor** - Many S.A.L. squadrons sponsor blood donor drives in conjunction with their Post and Local American Red Cross chapters. Contact your local chapter of the Red Cross to see if you can get involved in sponsoring an event, or try bringing your Squadron members to the next drive in your community.

Fund raising is a major activity for any Squadron. Many Squadrons sponsor steak fries, fish fries, raffles, car washes, and many other activities to raise money for their favorite projects. With the help of the Post, a squadron can also increase revenue by holding their event at the Post. Throughout the year the Squadron can expand their community involvement by participating in the following: Adopt-A-Highway Program, Sponsor a High School Student to Girls or Boys State, Give away a scholarship to a local graduating High School Senior, cutting grass at a local veterans cemetery, and many others.

## SUGGESTED PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

### **Patriotic Holiday Observance**

The observance of major holidays and other appropriate patriotic occasions should be considered a major activity of any Squadron. On June 28, 1968, the 90th Congress enacted and the President signed Public Law 90-363, mandating that certain legal public holidays fall on Monday. This law went into effect on Jan. 1, 1971. The following are legal public holidays: New Year's Day, January 1., Martin Luther King Day, the third Monday in January, Washington's Birthday, the third Monday in February, Memorial Day, the latest Monday in May, Independence Day, July 4., Labor Day, the first Monday in September. Columbus Day, the second Monday in October. Veterans Day, November 11. Thanksgiving Day, the fourth Thursday in November. Christmas Day, December 25.

**January** - A formal initiation meeting should be planned during January. Appropriate entertainment and short speeches should precede the initiation ritual. Invite public officials, local civic leaders, American Legion dignitaries and members of the sponsoring post to attend. Study emphasis during the month should be devoted to "Citizenship" as required for point number 2 of the Five-Star Program. February - Through the observance of the birthdays of two great presidents this month, it is an appropriate time for a study of "Patriotism" and "Discipline" in both the Ten Ideals and Five-Star Programs. Squadron members who are high school juniors should sign up to participate in The Boys State program in early summer. Squadrons should begin recruiting candidates from local high schools for squadron sponsorship to Boys State.

**March** - This is the birthday month of The American Legion and an appropriate time to study "Legionism" covering such items as the organization and histories of The American Legion Family organizations, their national programs and local community service projects, as well as the Preamble of the S.A.L. Constitution. Squadron members should participate in the local Post's observance of the Legion Birthday, March 15- 17.

**April** - The program of study for this month should emphasize "Leadership" as required for point number 4 of the Five-Star Program of Service. Also, those S.A.L. 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 should be an active participant in its sponsoring Post's Memorial Day ceremonies. Members of the squadron should assist the Post in decorating the graves of veterans. Study emphasis this month should be given to "Patriotism" in both the Ten Ideals and Five-Star Programs, "Citizenship" in the Ten Ideals Program, and "Citizenship" and "Leadership" in the Five-Star Program of Service.

**June** - June 14 is Flag Day. The squadron should assist its sponsoring post whenever and wherever possible in the promotion of Flag display in the community.

**July** - Squadrons should cooperate with the sponsoring Post in observance of Independence Day, July 4.

**August** - The month will be devoted mainly to outdoor activities and athletics. S.A.L. 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 in many areas will take place during August. Squadrons should be aware that there is the publication "Need A Lift" that lists grants and scholarships for local high schools graduates.

**September** - With the opening of a new school year, the squadron should turn its attention to occupations. Guest speakers may be invited to visit the squadron meetings to tell about the various occupations in which the S.A.L. members may be interested.

**October** - Squadrons may participate in the annual observance of American Education Week, during this month. Squadrons may purchase and distribute copies of the Legion's "Need A Lift?" Catalog to local high schools. In addition, this month is particularly suited to Squadron sponsorship of a "Get Out The Vote" voter registration program in the local community.

**November** - Veterans Day Observances: Squadrons should observe Veterans Day with appropriate ceremonies and through participation in the observances as planned by the sponsoring post. Study program during this month should emphasize Legionism with proper instruction provided by informed Legionnaires.

**December** - The squadron can be of valuable assistance to its sponsoring post in the performance of such services as distribution of Christmas baskets to needy families, helping in any seasonal charity fund raising drive, etc. Many posts plan special visitations to hospitalized veterans at this time.

## CONTESTS, TROPHIES AND AWARDS

**The Aurthur D. Houghton Sons of The American Legion Trophy:** This award is "given annually to a Detachment of Sons of The American Legion which on January I of each year has attained the greatest percentage of increase over the previous year's total membership. The award is presented by Mrs. Arthur Houghton of San Fernando, California in memory of the late Dr, Houghton, one of the founders of The American Legion. A laminated plaque of the Arthur D. Houghton Membership Award is presented each year to the top S.A.L. Detachment in each category: CATEGORY I - Detachments with 200-1000 members, CATEGORY II - Detachments with 1001 - 3000, CATEGORY III - Detachments with 3001 or more members.

**The Community Service Award:** This award is presented each year to the Squadron that submits the best Community Service Scrapbook in the National Community Affairs Scrapbook Contest. A copy of the contest rules is available from Department or Detachment Headquarters.

**Honor Ribbons:** Pursuant to Resolution NC2-76, 100% Squadron Honor Ribbons will be awarded to Squadrons that have equaled or surpassed their previous year's membership by July 1st of each year. During its Fall 1985 meeting, the Sons of The American Legion National Executive Committee voted to award the S.A.L. All Time High Ribbon to those Detachments which achieve a record "All Time High" in membership by the end of the membership year.

**V A & R Recognition:** Each year at the National Convention, the S.A.L.'s National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission presents awards for the best VA&R report submitted in each of these categories:

**Kirby E. Keplen Memorial Rehabilitation Award:** This award is given annually to the Squadron, which produces the best report pertaining to Squadron rehabilitation activities.

**Allen I. O'Brian Memorial Rehabilitation Award:** This award is given to the District, which produces the best report pertaining to District rehabilitation activities.

**Earl A. Webster Memorial Rehabilitation Award:** This award is given annually to the Detachment, which produces the best report pertaining to Detachment rehabilitation activities.

**Charles B. Rigsby "Volunteer of the Year" Award:** This award is presented annually at the National Convention to one individual who is singled out as the best VAVS volunteer in the nation. A plaque and savings bond is given for this very prestigious award, which is named in honor of the late S.A.L. Past National Commander Charles Rigsby (1992-1993). For further information contact your Detachment Adjutant for application forms and details.

**Membership Awards:** The S.A.L. National Membership Committee presents awards at the Annual National Convention. The 100% Award is presented to the first Detachment in each of the five regions to achieve 100% of its previous year's membership. The Renewal Award is presented to that Detachment in each of the five regions which attains the highest percentage of membership renewals.

**The National Commander presents Squadron Citation of Achievement certificates annually** to those Squadrons that surpass their previous year's membership total by the date of The American Legion Birthday, March 15-17. The S.A.L. National Americanism Commission recognizes one Squadron in each of the five regions for the best **Squadron Americanism Reports** submitted. The awards are handed out at the National Convention.

**The National Color Guard Award** is presented to the highest-ranking S.A.L. Color Guard participating in The American Legion National Color Guard Competition, held during the National Convention. The award consists of a plaque, guidon, and a cash award. Rules and entry forms are available from National Headquarters upon written request. A **Target Date Award Certificate** will be given to each Detachment that achieves 100% membership by the May target date. These certificates are redeemable at National Emblem Sales for merchandise. Information and details on Detachment awards are contained in the S.A.L. National Administrative Manual.

**Continuous years membership cards** are available in five-year increments from five to sixty years. These cards should be ordered by Squadrons (without cost) from the Detachment or Department Adjutant.

## **ADULT LEADERSHIP**

It is of paramount importance on the part of the sponsoring Post that extreme care be exercised in the selection of adult supervisory leadership for the squadron. Legionnaires selected for the post's S.A.L. Advisory Committee must have a knowledge and understanding of this program and the initiative and determination to see that the program is perpetuated. S.A.L. activities must be stressed which will help to develop worthwhile American citizens with the strength and courage to face the responsibilities and challenges of life in an increasingly complex world.

It cannot be overemphasized that the establishment of a squadron of the S.A.L. or the development of any squadron programs should not be accomplished with the intent of competing with or luring members from worthwhile organizations already existing and active in the community. Membership and active participation in the S.A.L. should serve the purpose of complementing other existing worthy programs and should serve as an enhancement of the individual S.A.L. member in both his scholastic, professional, and extracurricular endeavors.

Care must be taken to permit the members to develop and use their own initiative and ideas in working out the details of all activities. Legionnaires on the Advisory Committee should serve primarily as counselors for the leadership of the squadron. The suggested program of activities outlined in this handbook are intended to help develop good character, sound judgments, and essential leadership skills for active S.A.L. members.

As the S.A.L. member becomes older, his experience and talent should be utilized in leadership and counseling capacities within the squadron. The S.A.L. member who has completed the Ten Ideals and Five-Point Programs can be of valuable service to the squadron in counseling younger members still striving for such honors. Older S.A.L. members who have had Boys State experience can provide a junior counselor service, where necessary, to The American Legion in its sponsorship of this annual program.

## **Discipline/Expulsion**

The Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion Constitution states:

"Article XI Section 1. A Detachment Headquarters may suspend, cancel or revoke the charter of any Squadron of the Sons of The American Legion over which it has jurisdiction in the event it violates the provisions of this Constitution, subject, however, to the approval of the Department Executive Committee of The American Legion Department in which the Squadron and Detachment are geographically situated."

Section 2. Upon the cancellation or revocation of the charter of any Squadron of the Sons of The American Legion, the property and assets belonging to such Squadron shall thereupon become the property of the Post of The American Legion to which the Squadron is attached."

Individual members of the Sons may only be expelled from the organization at the Squadron level upon a proper showing of cause. Not all Detachments or Squadrons have adopted specific methods of practice and procedure for the suspension or expulsion of a member. In the absence of such procedures, The American Legion Officers' Manual contains one recommended method. In essence, the procedures outlined in the Officers' Manual sets out a procedure which requires charges against any individual must be made under oath in writing, requires a fair trial for the accused, and provides appropriate channels through which to appeal an unfavorable decision.

## SUGGESTED FORM FOR SQUADRON CONSTITUTION

Constitution of \_\_\_\_\_, Squadron attached to \_\_\_\_\_,  
Post No. \_\_\_\_\_, Department of \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Preamble**

Proud possessors of a priceless heritage, we mate descendants of veterans of the Great 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 the Great 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.

### **Article I - Name**

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the Sons of The American Legion Squadron, attached to \_\_\_\_\_ Post No. \_\_\_\_\_ Department of \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Article II - Nature**

Section 1. The Sons of The American Legion Squadron, attached to \_\_\_\_\_ Post No. \_\_\_\_\_ Department of \_\_\_\_\_, is a civilian organization. Membership therein does not affect nor increase liability for military or police service.

Section 2. The Squadron shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment.

Section 3. The Squadron shall be absolutely non-sectarian.

Section 4. Each member shall perform his full duty as a citizen according to his own conscience and understanding, in accord with the law.

### **Article III – Organization**

Section 1. This Squadron is organized as a subordinate body of the Sons of The American Legion, Detachment of \_\_\_\_\_ and under the sponsorship and jurisdiction of Post No. \_\_\_\_\_ Department of \_\_\_\_\_, The American Legion.

Section 2. This Squadron shall be governed by such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, by such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the Detachment Headquarters, approved by the Department Executive Committee of The American Legion, and by such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by its sponsoring Post of The American Legion, not inconsistent with those prescribed by the National Organization.

### **Article IV - Eligibility**

Section 1. All mate descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of members of The American Legion, and such male descendants of veterans who died in service during World War 1, World War 11, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf War, as defined in the 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.

### **Article V - Officers**

Section 1. The officers of this Squadron shall be a Commander, First Vice Commander, Second Vice Commander, Adjutant, Finance Officer, Sergeant-at-Arms, Chaplain and Historian, all of whom shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Squadron.

### **Article VI – Executive Committee**

Section 1. Between Squadron meetings, the administrative power of the Squadron shall be vested in the Squadron Executive Committee, which shall consist of all elective officers for the current year, and in addition the three immediate Past Commanders.

Section 2. All other Past Squadron Commanders shall be members of the Squadron Executive Committee without vote.

## **Article VII – Duties**

Section 1. The annual membership dues of this Squadron shall be \$\_\_\_\_\_ payable on October 20<sup>th</sup> of each year, for the following year.

A member whose dues for the current year have not been paid by January first shall be classed as delinquent. If his dues are paid on or before February first, he shall be automatically reinstated. If he is still delinquent after February first, he shall be suspended from all privileges. If he is still under such suspension on June thirtieth of such year, his membership in the Sons of The American Legion shall be forfeited. A member so suspended or whose membership has been so forfeited may be reinstated to active membership in good standing by vote of the Squadron and payment of current dues for the year in which reinstatement occurs. Provided, however, that the Squadrons, Detachments, and the National Organization may waive the provisions hereof, upon payment of dues for the year in which reinstatement occurs, with reference to former members who have been prevented from the payment of dues by reason of active military service.

## **Article VIII – Amendments**

Section 1. This Constitution is adopted, subject to the provision of the National Constitution and the Detachment constitution of which this Squadron is a subordinate member. Any amendment to the National or Detachment Constitutions, which is in conflict with any provision hereof, shall be regarded as automatically repealing or modifying the provisions of this Constitution, to the extent of such conflict.

Section 2. This Constitution may be amended at any regular Squadron meeting by vote of two-thirds of the members attending such regular meeting, provided, that the proposed amendment shall have been submitted in writing, and read at the immediate preceding Squadron meeting, and provided further, that written notice shall have been given to all members at least five days in advance of the date which such amendment is to be voted upon, notifying said members at such meeting a proposal to amend the Constitution is to be voted upon.

NOTE: Only members in good standing will be privileged to participate in the business of a meeting, vote or hold office.

Section 2

**HANDBOOK  
FOR OFFICERS**

# Plan of Squadron Meeting Room

## Sons of The American Legion Emblem

Chaplain	Commander	Adjutant/Finance Officer
National Colors		Squadron Standard
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Commander		2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander
Membership		

Sgt-at-Arms	Past Commander
-------------	----------------

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 above sketch. (not included) Ceremonial for Regular Meeting is listed below.

Other officers or members than those designated may be assigned to parts in the initiation ceremony. It is recommended that each squadron have a drill team, trained and uniformed for degree work.

The business of initiation of candidates is an important function of the officers of each squadron. AU new members should be conducted through the prescribed initiation ceremony upon being admitted to membership. The above script can be amended or abbreviated as to the time allotted for this ceremony and number of officers being installed.

## REGULAR SQUADRON MEETING SCRIPT

The Squadron Commander shall announce that the meeting is about to open. Officers shall take their stations. American Legion Post members acting as Advisors will take their places among the membership. The Squadron Commander will seat the membership with one rap of the gavel and doors of the meeting place shall be closed by the Sergeant-at-Arms. The Adjutant shall proceed through those present, and after the membership cards have been examined, shall return to the station of the Squadron Commander, where he shall report, giving the names of A visitors, if there are any, and their post and squadron name and number as they are being introduced. The Commander shall then give three raps of the gavel and all present shall stand at attention.

**SQUADRON COMMANDER: "The Color Bearers will advance the Flag of our Country."**

(If a trumpeter is available he will sound "To the Colors." (A Color Guard may also be used.) The membership shall continue to stand at attention and render salute while the flags are being advanced and placed in position. Commander shall give the command "Two" to end the salute.

**SQUADRON COMMANDER: "The Chaplain will invoke the blessing of God."** (Commander gives the order to "Uncover", members present remove their caps.)

**SQUADRON CHAPLAIN:** In place of the following prayer, the Chaplain may deliver one of his own in the same general tenors.

**"Almighty God, Father of mankind and Judge over nations, we pray thee to guide our work in this meeting and in all our days. Send thy peace of our Nation and 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 blessings they may be enabled to discharge their duties honestly and well. We pray for our comrades, 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. Especially do we ask thy blessing and comfort to those defenders of our Nation on sick beds in hospitals and elsewhere who are suffering mental and physical disabilities. Cheer them and bring back to them the blessings of health and happiness. Finally, O God of Mercy, we remember lovingly before Thee our departed comrades and those of our fathers who receive with Thee the reward of life everlasting. May their splendid example of patriotism and sacrifice guide us in our duty to our God and Country now and forevermore, AMEN."**

**SQUADRON 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 CEREMONY**

**SQUADRON COMMANDER: “Resolution 288, adopted at the 67<sup>th</sup> National Convention, of The American Legion and Resolution N.C. 2-94, adopted at the 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 / MIA’s still unaccounted for, as 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 for this vital endeavor.**

**SQUADRON COMMANDER: “Place the POW / MIA, flag on the Empty Chair.”**

(The Sergeant-At-Arms, or other designated individuals, approaches the Empty Chair carrying a folded POW / MIA flag. Upon reaching the Empty Chair, they reverently unfold and drape it 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). Following the Empty Chair Ceremony, the Commander and the membership will together recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**SQUADRON COMMANDER: “Please uncover as we recite 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.”**

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Squadron Commander will lead the Preamble to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion.

**“Proud possessors of a priceless heritage, we male descendants of veterans of the Great 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 the Great 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.

**SQUADRON COMMANDER: "I now declare this meeting of Squadron No.\_\_\_\_\_, Detachment of \_\_\_\_\_regularly convened."**

**ORDER OF BUSINESS:**

1. Reading of minutes of previous meeting.
2. Committee reports /Officers Reports
3. Sick call and relief
4. Unfinished business.
5. Balloting on applications.
- 6 Initiation of candidates.
7. New business and correspondence.
8. Good of the S.A.L. (The membership shall be permitted to make any suggestions of any kind, character or description, except for religion or partisan politics.)

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

The Commander shall give three raps of the gavel, and membership shall arise, uncover, and stand in silence.

**SQUADRON 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."**

**SQUADRON COMMANDER: "Till we meet again let us remember that our obligation to our Country can only be fulfilled by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state and nation be ever a main objective of the Son of The American Legion. Let us ever be watchful of the honor of our Country, The American Legion, our organization and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of Justice, Freedom, Loyalty and Democracy."**

**SQUADRON 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 shall give the command:

**SQUADRON 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.)

**SQUADRON CONDAANDER: "I now declare this meeting of \_\_\_\_\_Squadron No.\_\_\_\_\_, the Sons of The American Legion, adjourned."**

The Commander gives one rap of the gavel.

## PRESENTATION OF AWARDS, BADGES, MEDALS, ETC.

COMMANDER OF SQUADRON: "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 Sons of The American Legion 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).

## INITIATION CEREMONY

The initiation of candidates for membership is important in the life of the squadron. New members taken into the Sons of The American Legion should be initiated with full ceremony. The first impression is often the most lasting.

Each member of the ritual team should be equipped with the regulation squadron cap and the initiation should be conducted with strictest decorum. The members of the team should also wear badge of office.

It is recommended that a trained and uniformed ritual team be in charge of all ceremonies and initiations, and that all members memorize their parts, so as to make the more effective presentation.

The official uniform consisting of official Sons of The American Legion cap, Legion blue trousers (without cuff and without stripe), black belt with SAL buckle, white shirt, Legion blue necktie with SAL emblem, socks (solid color black, navy blue, or white), and black shoes will add an effective appearance to the ritual team.

The Squadron Commander shall be in the center and at the end of the hall. (Gavel on Commander's desk.)

At the Commander's right and slightly in front shall be the American Flag- at his left and on line with the flag shall be the squadron colors.

An effective display of the SAL emblem can be obtained through a cutout portion at the front of the Commander's desk, with the emblem painted on glass and with an electric light behind it, to be illuminated during a later part of the initiation ceremony. A large emblem of The American Legion should also be prominently displayed.

Adjutant shall be seated on the Commander's left. (All necessary record books of the squadron, together with complete list of candidates on Adjutant's desk.)

Finance Officer is seated at same desk as Adjutant, at the Adjutant's left.

Chaplain shall be seated at the right of the Commander.

First Vice Commander shall be seated in the center of the side of the hall to the Commander's right.

Second Vice Commander shall be seated directly opposite the First Vice Commander, to the left of the Commander, in the center of the side of the hall.

Past Commander shall be seated in the center at the end of the hall opposite the Commander. The

Sergeant-at-Arms shall be entrusted with the duty of preparing the hall for initiation. He shall be in charge of paraphernalia, have it properly placed, see that the desks of the officers are properly equipped, and that the emblems of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion are properly prepared.

The business of the meeting having been cleared for initiation, the Commander shall call the meeting to order with ONE rap of the gavel.

**COMMANDER: "We will now proceed to the initiation of new members into Squadron, No. The Sons of The American Legion, Detachment. You are requested to remain silent until the conclusion of the ceremony. The Sergeant-at-Arms will ascertain if there are any candidates seeking admission to our squadron of the Sons of The American Legion."**

Sergeant-at-Arms will the Flag and turning, proceeds to the anteroom. Returning, he stands just within the door and addresses the Commander as follows.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: "Sir, (give names of candidates), await initiation into \_\_\_\_\_ Squadron, \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_ the State of The American Legion, Detachment of \_\_\_\_\_"**

**COMMANDER: "Applications of those whose names have been presented have been proceed with the initiation. Sergeant-at-Arms"**

Sergeant-at-Arms retires, and returns with candidates, in line before, and facing the Commander.

**COMMANDER: "The Squadron Chaplain will offer prayer."** Chaplain steps forward, removing his cap, and say:

**CHAPLAIN: "Let us pray. All-powerful and all merciful God, ruler of the destiny of all 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 has 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 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 the Great 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 conducts the candidates in single file to the First Vice Commander's station and faces them toward and in front of him.

**FIRST VICE COMMANDER: "Justice - The American Legion teaches that Justice is one of the noblest concepts of the human heart. True Justice makes no distinction of persons. It recognizes neither high nor low, rich nor poor, the classes nor the masses. It knows neither race nor creed. Justice lights the way of friends and comrades. To the sick and the disabled, to the widows and orphans of those who gave their lives that we might live, The American Legion has solemnly pledged that Justice shall prevail. Justice is stern, yet kind; Justice is not weak, but merciful. Justice views all opinions impartially, without anger, without malice. Foster with all of your energy a spirit of Justice in the affairs of this organization, and in your everyday life. Let no one be unjust to his fellow member within this organization, or upon the broad highways of life.**

**I present to you a copy of the Constitution of the United States of America.** (A copy is handed to each candidate.)

**"Sergeant-at-Arms, conduct the candidates to the Post Commander for further instruction."**

(Candidates are brought to designated position, in front of and facing Past Commander.)

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: "Sir, I present these candidates for instruction in Freedom."**

**PAST COMMANDER: "Freedom is, among the fights of mankind, the one held most dear. Freedom is an ideal of surpassing strength, for which men throughout the ages have willingly fought and died."**

**In the War of the Revolution, Freedom was won for the people of the United States. In all wars, Freedom was the torch that led the defenders of the world through the wilderness of the conflict**

**You must guard well the Freedom of this organization. You must keep the Sons of The American Legion a free organization of free men, ever faithful to the ideals that Above all, you must prevent anything being done to prejudice the Freedom of the people of the United States, whose very foundation is the rock of liberty.**

**By your appreciation of Freedom through citizenship, you will cause to be reechoed the clarion sound of our Liberty Bell throughout our Nation forever.**

**I give you the emblem of Freedom, an American Flag.**

(Past Commander hands each candidate a small American Flag.)

**PAST COMMANDER: "Sergeant-at-Arms, conduct the candidates to the Second Vice Commander, who will instruct them in Democracy."**

(The Sergeant-at-Arms conducts candidates to the Second Vice Commander for further instruction. They are brought to designated position, in front of and facing Second Vice Commander.)

**SECOND VICE COMMANDER: "Democracy as exemplified in the United States of America is the highest form of government of which the mind of man is capable. It must be maintained and preserved at all hazards by the Sons of The American Legion. Democracy is government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Democracy is distinctly American in principle. It extends a voice in the government to every citizen, and all partake of its benefits."**

**To The American Legion, Democracy is concrete and actual. It is expressed in their meeting halls, where no distinction of rank is recognized, but where all are equal by virtue of a common service and a common ideal. I charge you ever to maintain that spirit of equality, in the meeting halls of the Sons of The American Legion and in your daily lives, which is a manifestation of Democracy. Permit every member a free voice, but no voice so free as to transcend the limits of Liberty. Seek to prove in all things that all are born equal with certain inalienable rights, and that a nation dedicated to this proposition shall endure forever. We, as the Sons of The American Legion, adhere to this great principle with unswerving loyalty.**

**I give you the emblem of the Sons of The American Legion, which is also the emblem of Democracy."**

(Second Vice Commander hands each candidate an emblem of the Sons of The American Legion.)

**SECOND VICE COMMANDER: "Sergeant-at-Arms, conduct the candidates to the Commander who will instruct them in Loyalty."**

(The Sergeant-at-Arms conducts candidates to the Commander for further instruction. They are brought to designated position, in front of and facing the Commander.)

**COMMANDER: "Loyalty is the corner stone of our organization. It is as dear as Justice is desirable, as Freedom is glorious, as Democracy is practical. The most despised of all men is the traitor. He who gives aid or comfort to the enemy behind the lines, or he who gives information to the enemy, endangers the lives of his comrades and his country's cause.**

**"Loyalty is one of the first requisites of a citizen. The Sons of The American Legion, it will cause us to defend our organization in all that is right, and to use our every power to keep it in the right. You must ever see that the officers of this organization are loyal to their duties; that the members are loyal to the Sons of The American Legion; that the Sons of The American Legion is loyal to its principles and that our United States is every loyal to itself. You must understand, by this time, that the Sons of The American Legion is in no sense a military or a political organization. Composed, as it is, of members of every race and creed, it is obligated to strict neutrality of every question concerning a religion and politics.**

**You have heard its four great principles - Justice, Freedom, Democracy and Loyalty. Are you now ready and willing to obligate yourselves to its pledge of membership?"**

CANDIDATES: **"I am."**

(Chaplain comes forward and addresses the candidates:)

**CHAPLAIN: "You will repeat after me, I (giving your names), do solemnly pledge myself to carry out the aims purposes and ideals of the Sons of the American Legion to the best of my ability, and I do further solemnly 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."**

(At the conclusion of the obligation, all lights except that in the emblem of the Sons of the American Legion are extinguished by someone stationed by the Sergeant-at-Arms for that purpose. Gavel is rapped three times by Commander, bringing all members to their feet. For ten seconds silence is observed and without any cue the Chaplain speaks, saying:)

**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 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 be easily distinguished."**

(The Commander then addresses the membership, saying:)

**COMMANDER: "The emblems of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion are emblems of Americanism. Americanism is unity of love, singleness of allegiance, practicality of purpose, all directed to a common good. It is that spirit of patriotism which shall ever preserve our land from the stagnation which is the death of peoples."**

**As members of the Sons of The American Legion we must preach and teach the religion of patriotism throughout our daily lives. We must not forget our obligations as citizens, and we must continually strive to strengthen and retain those obligations. In the emblems of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion are great prophecies. They bespeak the fullest good for each in the betterment of all. They bespeak the promise of the defenders of the Republic. They exemplify the ideals for which they fought. We, as loyal members of the Sons of The American Legion must assist in the carrying out of those ideals."**

(The lights of the meeting hall are again lighted.)

(At the sound of the gavel the membership is seated.)

**COMMANDER: "I now welcome you into the Sons of The American Legion as a member in good standing. May you, by your every act and deed, carry on the purposes set forth in the Preamble to the Constitution of this organization with credit to yourselves, your organization and The American Legion. Always, in all ways, be a man; always, in all ways, be an American!"**

**Sergeant-at-Arms, conduct the newly initiated members of \_\_\_\_\_ Squadron No \_\_\_\_\_, to the Adjutant, where they will sign their names to the membership roll and take their places amongst their comrades."**

(The Sergeant-at-Arms executes the above command and after the last member is seated returns to his station.)

(If the ritualistic ceremony has been performed in a meeting other than in its own squadron meeting place, the Commander may introduce the members of the team following the introduction, the command is given. "Assemble Team," and Sergeant-at-Arms will escort team from the room. This procedure may vary according to conditions and is not a mandatory part of the procedure.

## **INSTALLATION OF SQUADRON OFFICERS (LONG FORM)**

All squadron officers shall at the earliest opportunity following their election be installed in p the following manner: The installing officer, who shall be either a department officer of The American Legion, a member of the Detachment Sons of The American Legion Committee, a post officer of The American Legion, or a duly appointed representative, shall preside following the opening ceremony. He shall then call 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 any of the Great Was, 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 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 the Acting Historian then charges him. Escorts the Historian to the right of the Commander.

**ACTING HISTORIAN: "Historian, to you is entrusted the recording of all current records of this squadron. The collection of records of your fathers post of The American Legion 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 conducts the Chaplain to a position between the Commander and the Historian. The Acting Chaplain then charges him.

**ACTING CHAPLAIN: "Chaplain, to you is given 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 conducts 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 for such payment. Your position is an important one, demanding integrity and honesty; your election to this office signifies that comrades have implicit trust in you. Guard well that trust."**

Sergeant-at-Arms next conducts 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 conducts the Second Vice Commander to his state 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, which 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 conducts 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 are given the responsibility of an active cooperation between yourself and the Commander. Particularly you should interest yourself in the membership of the squadron. The most active and devoted members should assist you. 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, which you have rendered. Sergeant-Arms, you will conduct the junior Past Commander to his post, opposite this station."**

Sergeant-at-Arms conducts 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 the 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, is 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.

If there is no other business to be done, then a closing prayer from the new Chaplain will take place.

**INSTALLATION OF SQUADRON OFFICERS  
(SHORT FORM)**

**INSTALLING OFFICER: "The Sergeant-at-Arms will bring before me the newly elected officers of Squadron, \_\_\_\_\_No. \_\_\_\_\_."**

**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 any of the Great 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 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."**

**Sergeant-at-Arms conducts 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 the 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. Loyalties 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."**

## **SQUADRON EVERLASTING (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 -The 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: An interim, it is the Squadrons discretion to adopt a temporary ritual and follow the same ritual as outlined in the Post Officer' s Guide.**

**COMMANDER: "The Memorial Services are now completed."**

**\*APPROVED BY FIRST NATIONAL SAL CONVENNON. AUGUST 19 - 20, 1972, CHICAGO,**

The SAL Chaplain's Manual of Ceremonies and Prayer is available from National Headquarters.

The Sons of The American Legion is nonsectarian. 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 pastor .

## IN THE FUNERAL HOME

COMMANDER: "Death has entered our ranks, we members of, \_\_\_\_\_ will now pay final respects to \_\_\_\_\_ 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 daybreaks 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."

FOOTNOTES: 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.

## FUNERAL SERVICE 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 Sons of The American Legion are used in connection; 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 Sons of The American Legion standard.

Benediction, if desired.

BUGLER: Taps. (With two bugle echoes from different positions of the cemetery if possible).

If uniformed musical organizations of the Sons of The American Legion are used in connection; 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 Sons of The American Legion standard.

(Squadron Adjutant begins procedure to put S.A.L. Emblem on Headstone Marker)

The proper procedure for having the Emblem of the Sons of The American Legion placed on the headstone grave marker of a deceased Son of The American Legion 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; and
- 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 onetime use of the name and Emblem of the Sons of The American Legion on the specific grave maker.

Permission also may be obtained to use the Emblem of the Sons of The American Legion on grave markers on a pre-need basis. All requests are handled individually, but only through the Department Adjutant's office and to the Sons of The American Legion members with at least 20 years consecutive membership, only on a pre-need basis.

Post Adjutants can save a lot of time, confusion and needless correspondence by making sure these procedures are followed. 7. New business and correspondence.

## **DEDICATION OF COLORS**

**SQUADRON COMMANDER: "The assembly will 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" or "The Star-Spangled Banner" will be played.

POST CHAIRMAN OR COMMANDER - (Introduction of Legionnaire or 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 your 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. Legion Sons, you will join me in saluting the Flag, YOUR Flag."**

## DISPOSAL OF UNSERVICEABLE FLAGS

This is a very desirable ceremony to present as part of a Flag Day observance. The Squadron assembles in meeting, out-of-doors, at night. Members are aligned in two parallel rows about twenty 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: "**Comrade Commander, we wish to present a number of unserviceable flags of our Country for inspection and disposal.**"

Commander: "**Comrade 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: "**Comrade 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: "**Comrade 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, command 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: "Comrade 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: "Comrade Second Vice Commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?"**

**Second Vice-Commander: "Comrade Commander, since Flags have become unserviceable in a worthy cause, I recommend that they be honorably retired from further service."**

**Commander: "Comrade First Vice Commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?"**

**First Vice-Commander: "Comrade Commander, since Flags have become unserviceable in a worthy cause, I recommend that they be honorably retired from further service."  
Commander: "Comrade First Vice Commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?"**

**First Vice- Commander: "Comrade 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: "Comrades, 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 previous 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.

## SQUADRON EVERLASTING

The diagram on the preceding page illustrates the proper position of flags and tables or---\_ stands which the officers who take part in this ceremony use. This equipment (with the exception of the tripod, with brazier and stacked rifles, which are posted during the ceremony) should be put in place before the meeting opens.

Commander: **"It is my sad duty to report that Comrade \_\_\_\_\_ has been called from our midst, and gone to report to the Commander of all."** (Hesitate momentarily.)

Commander: **"Before proceeding with other business of this meeting, we conduct the Squadron Everlasting Ceremony for Comrade \_\_\_\_\_."**

Commander: **"Sergeant-at-Arms, allow no one to enter or leave this room until the conclusion of this ceremony. All present will remain silent and will refrain from smoking until the conclusion of this ceremony."**

Commander: **"Sergeant-at-Arms, you will place the brazier and stack the rifles before this rostrum, properly arranged for our Squadron Everlasting Ceremony."** (Sergeant-at-Arms salutes and gives necessary commands to three (3) Rifle bearers and Comrade with brazier. Commander returns salute.)

Sergeant-at-Arms: **"The Equipment is properly arranged, Comrade Commander."**

Commander: **"Sergeant-at-Arms, you will retire the detail."** (Hesitate momentarily)

Commander: **"This moment is sacred with the almost visible presence of the one who has gone before."**

**We come to honor the memory of one who offered his (her) life in the service of country and who has now enrolled in that great spirit army, whose footfalls cause no sound, but in the memory of mankind, their souls go marching on, sustained by the pride of service.**

**Because of them our lives are free; because of them our nation lives; because of them, the world is blessed.**

**May this service deepen our reverence for our departed comrades."** (Hesitate momentarily)

Commander: **"The Adjutant will place a Sons of The American Legion cap on the rifles in remembrance of Comrade ('s) service to our Country."**

(Adjutant places cap on top of stacked rifles.)

(Commander waits until Adjutant returns, then gives three raps of gavel.)

Commander **"Sergeant-at-Arms, lights out."**

Commander: **"Our Comrade Chaplain will offer prayer."**

Chaplain: **"Our Heavenly Father in His infinite wisdom has transferred Comrade to the jurisdiction of the Squadron Everlasting of The American Legion. May your soul rest in Peace. Amen."**

Commander: **"Comrade Adjutant, enter the name of Comrade in the record of members of (Post Name and #) who has transferred to the Squadron Everlasting."**

(Adjutant enters name in book provided for this purpose; Commander waits until Adjutant stands up.)

Commander: **"Comrade Adjutant, hand me the letter containing the Service and Legion records of Comrade which we will transmit to the Squadron Everlasting of The American Legion."**

(Commander then reads letter)

Commander: **"Comrade Chaplain, transmit this letter containing the Service and Legion records of Comrade to the Adjutant of the Squadron Everlasting."**

(Commander hands letter to the Chaplain who places it in brazier; record is then burned.)

NOTE: The record burned by the chaplain can be either a blank piece of paper or a typed document. DO NOT burn the deceased member's post records.)

Commander: **"Bugler, sound Taps in memory of Comrade and in memory of all the comrades of the Squadron Everlasting of The American Legion."**

(Taps)

Commander: **"Sergeant-at-Arms, turn on the lights."** (One rap of gavel seats membership)

Commander: **"Comrade Adjutant, remove the hat,"**

Commander: **"Sergeant-at-Arms, remove the brazier and rifles."**

Section 3

**NATIONAL GUIDELINES**

# **Sons of The American Legion National Constitution**

## **PREAMBLE**

Proud possessors of a priceless heritage, we male descendants of veterans of the Great 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 the Great Wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and 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.

## **ARTICLE I - NAME**

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the "Sons of The American Legion."

Section 2. The National Headquarters of the Sons of The American Legion shall be located at the site of the National Headquarters of The American Legion in the city of Indianapolis, Indiana.

## **ARTICLE II - NATURE**

Section 1. The Sons of The American Legion is a civilian organization. Membership therein does not affect nor increase liability for military or police service.

Section 2. The Sons of The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person or group seeking public office or preferment.

Section 3. The Sons of The American Legion shall be absolutely nonsectarian. Section 4. Each member shall perform his full duty as a citizen according to his own conscience and understanding in accord with the law.

### **ARTICLE III - ORGANIZATION**

Section 1. The local unit of the Sons of The American Legion is the Squadron and one (1) Post of The American Legion may sponsor not more than one (1) Squadron. With the approval of the Department of The American Legion having jurisdiction, Squadrons sponsored by the Posts of that Department may be organized in Detachments.

Section 2. The organization of Detachments and Squadrons shall conform to regulations of the Department of The American Legion having jurisdiction, with regulations of the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, and with the National Constitution and By-Laws of the Sons of The American Legion.

Section 3. The National Executive Committee of The American Legion may establish Detachments in territorial possessions of the United States and in foreign countries provided such territories and foreign countries presently are organized as American Departments and provided further that the appropriate American Legion Department recommends their formation.

Section 4. The Sons of The American Legion Squadron shall be organized under the jurisdiction and sponsorship of a local Post of The American Legion and shall bear the name of such sponsoring Post as follows: "Sons of The American Legion Squadron of \_\_\_\_\_ Post No. \_\_\_\_\_ Department of \_\_\_\_\_.

Section 5. Detachments, when organized shall have jurisdiction over the Squadrons within the Detachment's geographic area, subject to such limitations as may be prescribed by the Department of The American Legion having jurisdiction over the Detachment.

Section 6. The Sons of The American Legion shall be governed by such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion.

### **ARTICLE IV - ELIGIBILITY**

Section 1. All male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of members of The American Legion, and such male descendants of veterans who died in service during World War 1, World War 11, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf War, during the delimiting periods set forth in Article IV, Section I., 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.

Section 2. There shall be no form or class of membership except an active membership.

## **ARTICLE V - LEGISLATIVE BODY**

Section 1. The legislative body of the Sons of The American Legion shall be the National Convention, to be held annually in conjunction with the National Convention of The American Legion. All acts of the National Convention are subject to ratification by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion.

Section 2. The National Headquarters of The American Legion shall issue a Call to the National Convention to each Detachment Headquarters no less than sixty (60) days prior to the opening day of the National Convention.

Section 3. In the National Convention, each Detachment shall be entitled to one (1) delegate and one (1) additional delegate for each two hundred (200) members or major fraction thereof, whose current dues have been received by the National Treasurer of The American Legion, thirty (30) days prior to the meeting of said National Convention and one (1) alternate for each delegate.

Section 4. Each duly registered delegate shall be entitled to one (1) vote. The vote of any registered delegate absent and not represented by an alternate shall be cast by the majority of the registered delegates of registered delegates except that of voting. A registered delegate is one who has received his credentials and has paid such registration fee as may be required.

Section 5. Delegates from five (5) Detachments shall constitute a quorum.

Section 6. The National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion shall provide a Uniform Code of Procedure for the orderly organization and operation of National Conventions with continuing power of revision, and said Code shall be applicable at all National Conventions unless it is amended, suspended, or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the registered delegates at a National Convention. The National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion may establish in the Uniform Code a registration fee to be paid by delegates to a National Convention and may determine the amount of said fee.

Section 7. All Past National Commanders of the Sons of The American Legion shall be delegates to the National Convention with vote to be exercised with their respective Detachments. The National commander, National Vice Commanders, and National Chaplain of the Sons of The American Legion shall be delegates to the National Convention with vote to be exercised with their respective Detachments.

## **ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL OFFICERS**

Section 1. The National Convention shall elect a National Commander, five (5) National Vice Commanders, who shall serve without seniority; and a National Chaplain. No person shall be eligible for re-election to the office of National Commander, National Vice Commander or National Chaplain. There shall be one Vice Commander from each of the following areas:

- A. EAST: Connecticut, District of Columbia, Delaware, France, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and West Virginia.
- B. SOUTH: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.
- C. CENTRAL: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin.
- D. MIDWEST: Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming.
- E. WEST: Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Philippines, Utah and Washington.

Section 2. Such officers shall serve until the adjournment of the succeeding National Convention following their election and thereafter until their successors are chosen. Vacancies in these offices, occurring between National Conventions, shall be filled by election by the National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion, and for this purpose a mail ballot may be taken. Any member of the Sons of The American Legion, in good standing, shall be eligible for election to such vacancy.

Section 3. The National Commander by and with the approval of the National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion shall appoint a National Adjutant, Assistant National Adjutants, National Judge Advocate, National Historian, National Sergeant-at-Arms, and such Assistant National Sergeant-at-Arms as are deemed necessary and/or desirable. Such officers shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing power.

Section 4. The Sons of The American Legion shall recognize an individual or individuals designated by the National Commander of The American Legion as National Advisor or Advisors to the Sons of The American Legion, and he or they shall be ex-officio members of all committees or commissions of the National Organization of the Sons of The American Legion.

Section 5. The National Commander and the National Adjutant of The American Legion, and the staff members of The American Legion at the National Headquarters responsible for the routine administrative work for the Sons of The American Legion, shall be recognized as ex-officio Advisors to the National Organization of the Sons of The American Legion.

Section 6. In fulfilling their duties and responsibilities the National Officers of the Sons of The American Legion shall be responsible to the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, or to a subordinate body by it designated.

## **ARTICLE VII - NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Section 1. The National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion shall meet at least twice each year. It shall meet immediately preceding the National Convention to establish the agenda for that National Convention, and immediately following the National Convention to approve the National Commander's appointments. Between National Conventions the administrative power shall be vested in the National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion, the membership of which shall be composed of the National Commander, National Vice Commanders, National Chaplain, the immediate Past National Commander or Chairman, and one (1) National Executive Committeeman and one (1) Alternate National Executive Committeeman from each Detachment, to be selected as such Detachments shall determine. The Alternate National Executive Committeeman may act only in the absence of the National Executive Committeeman from his Detachment. All Past National Workshop Chairmen and all Past National Commanders shall be nonvoting members of the National Executive Committee. Actions of the Sons of The American Legion shall be subject to ratification by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion.

Section 2. The National Executive Committee of the Sons of The American Legion without meeting may transact business by mail, telegraph or telephone on matters or urgency not involving new policy and on which action cannot be delayed until the next regular meeting. Thirty (30) days shall be allowed for the return, by mail or telegraph or telephone, of the votes thereon by the National Adjutant. The National Adjutant shall notify the National Commander of the results of the vote taken. The National Executive Committee may also meet on the call of the National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion or on the written request of at least five (5) Detachments, at any time during the year for sufficient reason to it appearing.

## **ARTICLE VIII - DETACHMENT ORGANIZATION**

Section 1. Detachments shall be comprised of the Squadrons within their respective geographic areas, which shall coincide with the boundaries of the appropriate Department of The American Legion.

Section 2. Each Detachment shall have a Detachment Commander, one or more Detachment Vice Commanders, a Detachment Adjutant, and a Detachment Executive Committee, and may have a Chaplain and such other officers, as the Detachment shall determine.

Section 3. Detachments shall have authority to create intermediate bodies between the Squadrons and Detachment to act as a liaison between such organizations and for the purpose of promoting the program of the Sons of The American Legion. Such intermediate bodies shall conform to the framework within The American Legion Department in which the Detachment is geographically located.

Section 4. The Detachment Executive Committee shall define the powers of such intermediate groups, but in no event shall such powers invade the prerogatives now vested in Squadron or Detachment or National Organization.

## **ARTICLE IX - SQUADRON ORGANIZATION**

Section 1. Those who desire to form a Squadron of the Sons of The American Legion shall make application for a charter to the Post Commander of the local Post of The American Legion in the area in which they reside. Upon approval by the Post Commander the application shall be forwarded to the Department Commander of The American Legion, and upon his approval it shall be forwarded to the National Headquarters of The American Legion, where the charter may be issued by the National Commander and the National Adjutant of The American Legion in the same manner as prescribed for the issuance of charters for Posts of The American Legion.

Section 2. The minimum membership for the formation of a Squadron of the Sons of The American Legion shall be ten (10).

Section 3. There shall be no more than one (1) Squadron of the Sons of The American Legion for each Post of The American Legion. Squadrons may be organized into sections based upon age.

Section 4. The Squadron officers of the Sons of The American Legion shall consist of a Squadron Commander, Squadron Vice Commander or Vice Commanders, Adjutant, Finance Officer, Chaplain, Sergeant-At-Arms Historian, and such other officers as may be required.

Section 5. Officers of the Squadron shall be elected annually, and the date of such election should conform if possible with the annual election of Post officers of The American Legion. Squadron officers elected shall be subject to the approval of the sponsoring American Legion Post. This sponsoring may be delegated by the Post to a Post Supervisory Committee or other designated body.

Section 6. Squadron meetings shall be held not less than one month in accordance with the ritual of the organization.

## **ARTICLE X - FINANCES**

Section 1. The revenue of the Sons of The American Legion shall be derived from annual membership dues and from such other sources as may be approved by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion.

Section 2. The amount of such annual National dues shall be \$2.00 per member and shall be payable October 20 of each year and for the succeeding year.

Section 3. The amount of annual Detachment dues shall be determined by the Detachment organization of the Sons of The American Legion under such procedures as The American Legion Department having jurisdiction over the Detachment provides; such funds shall be transmitted to the officer charged with the custody of Department funds and shall be held and accounted for separately from other funds of such Department.

Section 4. The Squadron shall determine the amount of such annual Squadron dues.

Section 5. The annual National dues shall be collected by each Squadron and transmitted through the Department Headquarters of The American Legion in which the Squadron is geographically located and then to the National Treasurer of The American Legion.

#### **ARTICLE XI - DISCIPLINE**

Section 1. A Detachment Headquarters may suspend, cancel or revoke the charter of any Squadron of the Sons of The American Legion over which it has jurisdiction in the event it violates the provisions of this Constitution, subject, however, to the approval of the Department Executive Committee of The American Legion Department in which the Squadron and Detachment are geographically situated.

Section 2. Upon the cancellation or revocation of the charter of any Squadron of the Sons of The American Legion, the property and assets belonging to such Squadron shall thereupon become the property of the Post of The American Legion to which such Squadron is attached.

#### **ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS**

Section 1. This Constitution may be amended at any National Convention by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the registered delegates thereat, subject to ratification by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion.

# **Sons of The American Legion National By-Laws**

## **ARTICLE I - DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

Section 1. Commander: The Sons of The American Legion Commander is the executive head of the organization at his level with full power to carry out the mandates and policies of the Son of The American Legion as approved by The American Legion. He shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 2. Vice Commander: The Vice Commander or Vice Commanders shall act as representative of the Commander on all matters referred to them by him, and shall, on his request, preside over meetings and perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 3. Adjutant: The Adjutant, who corresponds to the secretary of an organization, shall be charged with the usual duties on an adjutant or secretary. He is the administrative officer of the policies and mandates of the organization.

Section 4. Finance Officer. The Finance Officer shall be the custodian of the funds of the organization. He shall be charged with the receiving and disbursing of the funds of the Squadron, intermediate level, or Detachment and shall make reports on the condition of the treasury at each regular meeting, and when called for by the Commander or Executive Committee; provided, however, that all disbursements shall first be approved at the appropriate level of The American Legion. He shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 5. Sergeant-at-Arms: The Sergeant-at-Arms shall be charged with the responsibility of preserving order at all meetings and shall be given the custody and responsibility of the colors of the organization. He shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Section 6. Chaplain: The Chaplain shall perform such divine and nonsectarian service, as shall be necessary adhering to the ceremonial rituals as may be prescribed.

Section 7. Historian: The Historian shall collect from year to year all records and data of value and interest to the Sons of The American Legion and The American Legion, and shall compile during his term of office a complete history of the year's activities.

Section 8. All officers of the Sons of The American Legion in the performance of their duties shall be governed by The American Legion at the appropriate level. All actions of the Sons of The American Legion at the Squadron level, intermediate level, and at the Detachment level shall be subject to review and ratification at the appropriate level of The American Legion.

## **ARTICLE II - SQUADRON AND DETACHMENT CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

Section 1. Each Squadron, intermediate group and Detachment may adopt a Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 2. In the formation of the Constitution and By-Laws referred to in Section I hereof there shall be no conflict with the National Constitution and By-Laws governing the Sons of The American Legion.

## **ARTICLE III - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Section 1. The Constitution of a Squadron or Detachment may create an Executive Committee and define the powers and composition thereof.

## **ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1. Membership in the Sons of The American Legion is membership in the National Organization of the Sons of The American Legion by affiliate with a Squadron.

Section 2. Each Squadron shall be the judge of its own membership, subject to the restrictions of this Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 3. Members may be suspended or expelled under the same procedures provided for the suspension or expulsion of a member of The American Legion.

## **ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP AND ARREARS IN DUES**

Section 1. Applications for Squadron membership shall be verified by the designated officials of the sponsoring Post of The American Legion having jurisdiction over the Squadron. Section 2. A member whose dues for the current year have not been paid by January first shall be classed as delinquent. If his dues are paid on or before February first, he shall be automatically reinstated. If he is still delinquent after February first, he shall be suspended from all privileges.

If he is still under such suspension on June thirtieth of such year, his membership in the Sons of The American Legion shall be forfeited. A member so suspended or whose membership has been so forfeited may be reinstated to active membership in good standing by vote of the Squadron and payment of current dues for the year in which reinstatement occurs. Provided, however, that the Squadrons, Detachments, and the National Organization may waive the provisions hereof, upon payment of dues for the year in which reinstatement occurs, with reference to former members who have been prevented from the payment of dues by reason of active military service.

## **ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS**

Section 1. These By-Laws may be amended by any National Convention by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the registered delegates thereat, subject to ratification by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion. This Constitution and By-Laws have been amended and brought up to date as of September 1, 1991.

Section 4

# **STATEMENTS**

## **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 Sons of The American Legion is a legally constituted organization, instituted and recognized by official action of The American Legion in National Convention assembled, empowering the National Executive Committee 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 National Executive Committee. Recognition of district and detachment organizations of "Sons have been approved by the National Executive Committee to more effectively coordinate the activities of the Sons of The American Legion and the District and Department of The American Legion.