

Important dates for 2001

90% Membership Target	Apr 11
National Information Conferences	
Region 2 - Cherry Hill, NJ	Apr 20/22
Region 6 - Sioux City, IA	Apr 20/22
Spring N.E.C. - Indianapolis, IN	May 5/6
100% Membership Target	May 9
105% Membership Target	Jul 26
30th National Convention	
San Antonio, TX	Augt 24/26
National Information Conferences	
Region 4 - Dallas, TX	Sep 21/23
Region 8 - Boise, ID	Sep 21/23
Fall N.E.C. - Indianapolis, IN	Oct 6/7

Training future leaders

by Tom Timcoe, Chairman
National Member Training & Development Committee

The National Management Institute will conduct another session this May during spring N.E.C. meetings in Indianapolis. NMI is a three part intensive training program providing future leaders of the Sons with useful management skills. Past National Adjutant Joe Pavagilanti developed and runs the program. This will be just the second time a class of graduates will receive certificates for completing all three phases of the program.

Sons who will hold the offices of Detachment Commander or Detachment Adjutant during the next year need to make plans to be in Indianapolis in October. The Member Training and Development Committee will again sponsor the Detachment Commanders' National Instructional Institute, the National Adjutants' Gathering and the National Ambassadors' Program for National Vice Commanders during fall N.E.C. meetings, scheduled for the weekend of October 6-7.

Also, National Information Conferences are held annually in each region of the country. Sons should attend because special sessions are built into each NIC specifically for the S.A.L. and its Legion Advisors.

The Sons of The American Legion

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NATIONAL UPDATE

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April 2001



Last look at the year gone by

Most S.A.L. Detachments close their yearly membership books in late spring time, but that doesn't mean we stop counting members who sign up afterward. In fact, individuals can continue to enlist their memberships for the current calendar year right up to the end of December.

At the same time we crossed over into a new year back in January (and started the new millennium for real this time), the S.A.L. closed its membership books on the just-ended year. We wound up 2000 with a total of 234,738 members, or 469 cards over our goal of 105% and the 18th

consecutive year the Sons has set a new all-time high in membership.

The largest Detachment, Indiana, celebrated the New Year with 29,390 members, followed by Ohio (24,491), Pennsylvania (23,174), New York (17,745), Michigan (13,438), Maryland (12,441) and Illinois (10,453).

The Detachment of Montana reached 140% of its goal by closing the year with 194 members. Other leaders by percentage totals included District of Columbia (77 - 136%), France (105 - 133%), West Virginia (2,671 - 120%), Nevada (124 - 119%)

Michigan \$8,609, Florida \$6,550, Colorado \$5,715, Minnesota \$4,490, Ohio \$4,235, Indiana \$3,700 and Texas \$3,147.

At least nine other Detachments have contributed more than \$1,000. Colorado remains the nation's per capita leader with an average contribution of \$3.34 per member.

The deadline for Child Welfare contributions for the current year is May 31st.

Several Detachments still need Regional Action Team (RAT) members. Unless volunteers come forward before spring N.E.C., the National Vice Commanders will make RAT appointments.

Veterans Day in Honolulu, HI (left). Sons assist in ceremonies at the World War II Memorial, recognition for those who never returned.

and South Carolina (415 - 113%). Only 13 Detachments failed to reach 100%. A total of 32 Detachments set new all-time high records during the calendar year 2000.

The organization's overall renewal rate of 86.2% was just slightly lower than the previous year's 86.7%, but it was still one of the highest renewal rates of the past decade. Special

Continued on Page 2

National HQ prints out new postcards and registers

By the time this newsletter hits the streets, tens of thousands of Sons across the country will have received renewal reminder postcards.

Postcards were to be mailed to everyone who held an S.A.L. membership in 2000 but whose renewal had not been received at National Headquarters by February 15th.

"The postcard just reminds the member to contact his Squadron for renewal of his membership," says National Adjutant Brian O'Hearne.

According to O'Hearne, "In addition to the postcards, an up-to-date Squadron membership register will be printed and distributed to Detachments. When Squadron adjutants receive the printout, they should compare it with the previous roster and transpose any changes. If corrections need to be made, submit them on a member data form.

The purpose of the mid-year register is to aid Squadron Adjutants and assist with renewals as well as other needs of the Squadron."



An open letter to all sons

Dear Fellow Members,

It has been six months since my election at the National Convention in Wisconsin. It's funny how time seems to slip away while I'm traveling around the country promoting this great organization. My concerns, needs and wants for this year are still in place, but I can see that every one of you are doing your best to fulfill these requests.

A few weeks ago, our membership surpassed 180,000 which is very close to 80% of our goal for this year and nearly 8,000 members ahead of last year's total at this time. I appreciate all of your hard work, but please do not quit now. We must continue to work on membership everyday. I know that you want to be part of this year's team that breaks last year's total and possibly the 250,000 member mark.

Donations for Child Welfare are coming in steadily. I believe we are slightly behind last year's pace but that may be due to so many squadrons donating to the Children's Miracle Network. These are both great organizations and all of your donations are appreciated. Please do not forget to report donations you've made to the CMN. I'd like each Squadron and Detachment that makes a donation to CMN to send a copy to Mike Deacon, our chairman. It's important that we keep up with these totals.

As we all work steadfastly for this organization, let us remember our commitment to our veterans, support for all children and youth programs and lend a helpful hand to The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary. I appreciate everyone's hard work and dedication. Keep up the good work and best of luck in all that you do. Always remember the key word PRODUCTIVITY.

For God and Country,
Kevin Winkelmann, National Commander



National Commander Kevin and Vice Commander-Central Ray Giehl, Jr. rub Abe Lincoln's nose for good luck during this year's Lincoln Pilgrimage in Springfield, IL.

Correction

The November issue of *National Update* contained some inaccuracies about a large number of veterans' records supposedly found recently.

The records in question are not a recent discovery. They were Army and Army Air Corps medical records from the 1940's, 50's and 60's which were uncovered back in the mid-1980's. They are being held at the Veterans Personnel Records Office in St. Louis and also in many Regional VA offices.

We regret any confusion the story may have caused.

This publication has succeeded because you have contributed to it. Please continue to send story ideas and pictures to:

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 612 Knightridge Rd #35-C
 Bloomington, IN 47401

or send via e-mail to:

mpipher@indiana.edu

2000 remembered

Continued from Page 1

congratulations are due to the Detachment of France for having the only 100% renewal rate, no small feat when one considers the Detachment had no deaths and every one of the Detachment's 105 members from the previous year were signed up again. Other Detachments with leading renewal rates included: District of Columbia (97%), Hawaii (97%), Iowa (92%), Wisconsin (91%) and Nebraska (90%). A total of 20 Detachments had renewal rates higher than the national renewal rate.

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included *Shiloh, OH Squadron 503, Bucyrus, OH Squadron 181, New Washington, OH Squadron 405* and *Avon Lake Squadron 411*. The "Fool's Open" has a unique format where golfers tee-off with baseball bats and putters and putt with pool cues, brooms, hockey sticks and other equipment on designated holes. More than 125 'fools' took part in the festivities last year.

Until recently, *Kearns, UT Squadron 132* was like so many others; a few individuals renewing but not active. All of that changed through the work of a single, active S.A.L. member and a few Legionnaires from the Post. They started by recruiting a few more active folks and electing new officers. They sponsored Monday Night Football by preparing and selling food and donating all the proceeds back to the Post. They held an auction and raised \$516, donated half to the 'Sub for Santa' program. They started with a few, gained many, and so far have done what they said they would do: be part of The American Legion Family and their local community.

Sons from *Newport, CA Squadron 291* used the holiday season to hold their first Members Appreciation Dinner and Award Ceremony. A variety of awards were handed out to those who have helped with special projects, membership and fund raising. One person was singled out as member of the year with the Davey Jones Memorial Award. During the past year Squadron 291 has raised

over \$14,000 through events like The Blues On The Bay, Christmas Boat Parade, Fourth of July lunch and serving at a host of Post dinner functions. The money has been donated to local and veteran organizations in Long Beach and northern Orange County.

Phelps, NY Squadron 457 held its 4th annual Charity Pig Roast last fall.



All of the money raised was given to The House of John, a home that provides hospice care to anyone in the community. Squadron Adjutant Duane Kline (left) and Commander Ray Lawson hand over a sizeable check to House of John Director Nancy Ferrell.

Serving communities

by Joe Monti, Chairman
National Community Service Committee

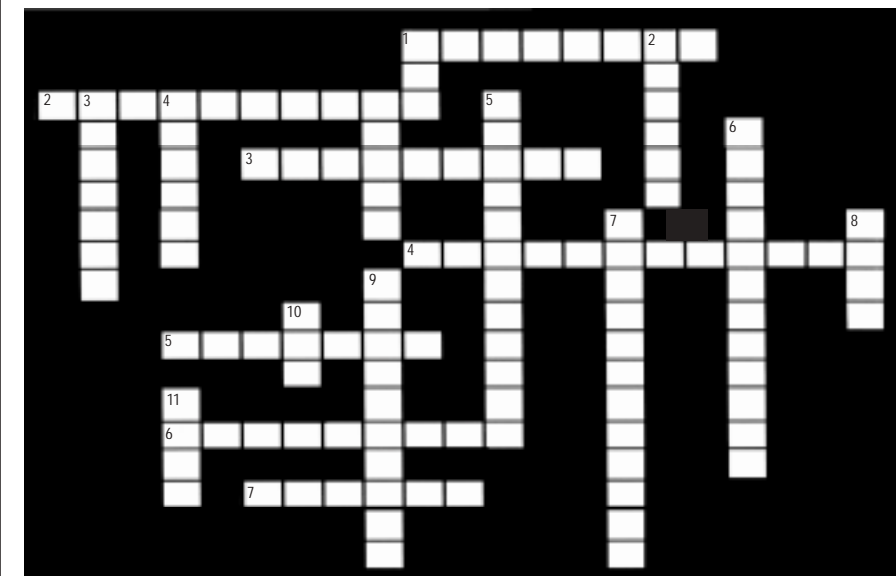
Community service helps to make our communities better places in which to live. In order to make an impact we need to study community needs, recommend projects, raise funds and donate time to accomplish any specific objectives. Some examples include, blood drives, first aid and CPR training, child safety programs, donations to shelters for the homeless, tree plantings, recycling programs, and disaster and emergency preparedness programs.

We should remember "to adopt in letter and spirit, all the programs of The American Legion." We can do that, in part, by working community service projects sponsored by American Legion Posts and work with other organizations to implement practical, worthwhile projects for the benefit of the community.

See if you can complete this crossword puzzle. All of the answers can be found somewhere in this newsletter.

- ACROSS**
- 1 - best CWF per capita
 - 2 - thinks he's in charge
 - 3 - they gave sleigh rides
 - 4 - home of the Davey Jones Award
 - 5 - knows he's in charge
 - 6 - youth program teaches civics
 - 7 - 100% renewal rate last year

- DOWN**
- 1 - an outstanding organization
 - 2 - he works with children and youth
 - 3 - still the world's largest
 - 4 - frog; also an outstanding Squadron
 - 5 - we do this better than anyone else
 - 6 - one of the newest S.A.L. color guards
 - 7 - the key word this year
 - 8 - fools golf here
 - 9 - be there in August
 - 10 - works hard for CWF
 - 11 - he's all wet



“One good turn deserves another; do me a service, and I will give you a helping hand when you require one.”

-- proverb

4 When the Veterans Administration sent stones to mark the graves of veterans in the Kermit, TX cemetery, there was no provision made for having those markers placed. That's when **Kermit, TX Squadron 339** members (right) grabbed shovels and took over the project. Some of those who helped are pictured here with a descendant of one of the vets.



Don't call these guys turkeys, even though these members of **Summit Hill, PA Squadron 316** helped deliver 60 turkeys (below) to the Summit



H i l l Shepherd House Food Pantry at St. Stanislaus Church.

Legionnaires present a Certificate of Appreciation to John Pickard, a member of **Gladstone, MI Squadron**

71 in recognition of John's efforts in planning the Armed Forces Day ceremonies (right) and presenting flag education classes at local schools.



The old adage "charity begins at home" has special meaning for members of **Michigan's 18th District Association** and in particular **Squadron 143 of Auburn**

"Vote It Up" project which promoted voting to 650 area high school students.

Enthusiasm for God and Country is running rampant throughout Pennsylvania. Detachment Western Vice Commander Dennis Rowe of **Sharon, PA Squadron 299** built this float (right) on his own truck for last year's Memorial Day Parade.



One of the nation's newest S.A.L. color guard units has been formed by **Madeira Beach, FL Squadron 273**. In addition to normal appearances at the VA hospital, Four Chaplains and Post functions, the unit has twice been invited to present colors at Tampa Bay Devil Rays ballgames (right). The Devil Rays and a local TV station provided color guard members with 25 tickets. Instead of using the tickets themselves, the unit gave them to some kids from a Salvation Army sponsored youth home. And let's not forget the Squadron's \$500 donation to the World War II Memorial Fund!

Papers" contest. Find contest rules at www.nalpa.org If you are **idel**



Those who give thanks



Why are these people smiling? Probably because **Hollidaysburg, PA Squadron 516** Commander Ronald Imler (right) is handing over one of two \$500 scholarships his members provided this year. The Squadron also hosts bingo at a local veterans home, makes donations to the Altoona, PA Vietnam Memorial, runs an annual toy drive for needy children and was also a major sponsor in the

sometimes get thanks. Such was the case this year when **Berkeley Springs, WV Squadron 60** received a plaque (right) from the Office of Veterans Affairs because the Squadron provides a quarterly donation to support veterans who are hospitalized in Ward C of the VA's Hospital's fifth floor.



It's important to collect and transmit to the National Headquarters every member's birth date. But don't forget to keep that info handy. Many Squadrons list member birthdays in their monthly newsletters.

Speaking of newsletters, does your Squadron, District and/or Detachment publish one? If so, you should consider entering it in the **NALPA** (National American Legion Press Association) annual "Best

past year. All of the poles include flags that can be raised and lowered. The Squadron charges \$100, which covers all of the parts and labor. Squadron Commander Jim Staggs says it takes about three days from the time they start digging until a brand new flag can be hoisted.

A new tradition seems to be taking shape inside the Detachment of Texas. In recent years, each new Detachment Commander has found himself tossed into a pool at the fall DEC. A hat is then passed around to help the sopping wet Commander get started on Child Welfare donations. This year, the group raised \$316 and Commander

Abel Silva, Jr. had to match it for a total of \$632. Isn't that National Commander Winkelmann in the white hat (right) lending a hand with the dunking?

Great news from overseas! **Detachment of France N.E.C./Adjutant Bill West** reports ground has been broken and construction of a new Fisher House is zipping along at the Landshut Army Medical Center in Landshut, Germany. Plans call for the

building to be dedicated in May. Fisher Houses provide low cost or free housing for veterans and their families while undergoing treatment at military and VA hospitals.

Two Pennsylvania Squadrons joined forces to help patients at a nearby VA hospital. More than \$7,000 worth of toiletries, games, playing cards and other items were collected and donated (below) just after Thanksgiving by members of **Enola, PA Squadron 751** and **West Fairview, PA Squadron 984**. Meanwhile, the



guys from Squadron 751 also collected enough money to purchase and donate more than 800 toys for the local U.S. Marines' Toys for Tots program.

Playing golf in northern Ohio in early April is foolish, but some members of



the **Fifth District of Ohio** do it every year in New Washington and have turned it into a Child Welfare fund raiser. The 'Fool's Open' golf scramble was started in 1989 by four golfers. Last year, those four found out they were fellow Sons and decided to donate a portion of the entry fee to an S.A.L. charity. Child Welfare received \$503 in the form of a big "Happy Gilmore" check. Organizers

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Sons make Christmas merry

Santa is probably stretched out on a beach somewhere in Tahiti by now. Meanwhile, S.A.L. elves the world over can once again take pride in their holiday achievements. Here are just a few of the many contributions Sons made to others during Christmas 2000.

These guys know how to make Christmas special. Members of **Marion, IN Squadron 10** raised money and collected gifts (right) to provide a Christmas party for 21 special needs children in the local school system. Oh yeah, one Squadron member also played Santa.



We know of 500 kids who enjoyed a special Christmas this year because members of **LaBelle, FL Squadron 130** served up a pancake breakfast with Santa. Each child received a gift and had their picture taken with the bearded guy.



It's become an annual event and Squadron members have been able to solicit donations for all of the gifts and food.

Carlisle, PA Squadron 101 Commander Leroy Smith, Jr. presents a \$1,000 check (left) to the parents of a young cancer patient just in time for Christmas.

For the sixth straight year, Santa made his appearance thanks to **Wyalusing, PA Squadron 534**. Area children and the residents of three local nursing homes were brought to the Post to enjoy a breakfast, candy, balloons, door prizes and sleigh rides. In the afternoon, a mangerie made up of Santa, Mrs Clause,



Frosty, Minnie, The Grinch, Chuck the Elf and Rudolf (left) made their way to a local hospital to visit with patients.

Celebrate youth

by **Michael Deacon, Chairman**
National Children & Youth Committee

April is Children and Youth month, and a good reason to devote the whole month to The American Legion Family Programs that will benefit the children of our country. Please help us curb the high levels of Juvenile Delinquency. Juveniles account for about 35% of our population, but they account for better than 50% of all serious crimes. I believe that we have the tools and the manpower to stop this, because the majority of our membership is under 21 years of age. We know what is needed. We as a part of The American Legion Family need to promote positive programs to guide our youth into the future.

I'd ask you to get involved with American Legion Baseball, high school award programs, and furnishing safe houses for abused children. Educate them and give them the chance to grow and be best that they can be. Remember, our children, our country, our flag, and our future.

One of the most important things you can do is record and report your activities. Your ideas and successes are shared with others. Each of us can learn from others, and the winners are our children and youth.

Deadline

If you have story ideas or photos for the next issue of *National Update* they must reach us by

June 1, 2001

Suggested surfing for Web-conscious Sons

Sons have several new reasons to surf the Web.

*National Chaplain Harold Trombley has posted a page listing (by Detachment) the names of deceased S.A.L. members at:

<http://homepages.together.net/~hdhnr1/~hdhnr1/index.html>

*National Membership Chairman Kent Blanchard has a site containing news of interest to Detachment and Squadron membership chairmen throughout the country (see related story at right) at:

http://home.talkcity.com/LibertySt/kent_b/

*Here are some Web sites that might help track military records for deceased veterans at:

<http://www.genealogy.com/genealogy/00000652.html>

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~rwguide/lesson14.htm>

<http://www.iigs.org/newsletter/9807news/military.htm.en>

<http://www.daddezio.com/catalog/recndx05.html>

*S.A.L. Webmaster Gary Winters keeps weekly membership reports and a list of links to Sons sites on our National Web Page at:

<http://www.sal.legion.org>

Thinking about Boys State

by **Fr. Gary Gummersheimer**
Past National Chaplain

This is the time of year Squadrons begin making selections of youngsters for Boys and Girls State, two of the best Americanism/Children & Youth programs that The American Legion and Legion Auxiliary offer.

What are you or your squadron doing for these great leadership and patriotic programs? Have you talked to the members of your Post or Unit and offered to help raise money so that they can send qualified members of your local high school junior class? Have you volunteered your time and effort to help them to be part of the selection process? Have you contacted the programs in your state and asked if there is a place for you on the staff? If you went to Boys State, have you shared your positive experience with the younger members of your Squadron?

Boys State is what prompted me to get my dad to join The Legion so that I could get involved with the S.A.L. And now for more than 25 years I have served on the staff of Illinois Premier Boys State. So you see, getting involved with Boys State is also a terrific, if somewhat roundabout way of getting involved in membership. Did you know that The American Legion Samsung Scholarship program is administered through the Boys State program? And did you know that in order to be eligible for that scholarship you have to show that either your parent or grandparent served in the military? And the last time I checked, that would also make that individual eligible for membership in the SAL!

So you see, it's never too early to gear up or get involved with Boys State. Let's see how many Squadrons out there can get involved in this program!

Membership Chair knocks homer out into cyberspace

National Membership Chairman Ken Blanchard is using cyberspace to meet "face-to-face" with Detachment Membership Chairmen all over the country. Blanchard has been holding live, weekly Internet chats with National Vice Commanders, regional Membership Team Members and Membership Sub-Committee members. Those cyber discussions have worked so well, Detachment Membership Chairmen are now being invited to join in once each month.

"This is not a required event to take part in, it's just a manner that we can all keep in better contact with each other between our national meetings," says Blanchard.

Connection to the server is free via the Web. Those taking part in the chat simply follow a few rules of courtesy.

Detachment Membership Chairmen who have not already been contacted about this service are encouraged to e-mail Blanchard at KentSALNMC@webtv.net and receive instructions on how to connect to the monthly membership discussions.

Calling all cameras

National Historian Mike Moss is asking for help in compiling the National Commander's Scrapbook. Anyone with pictures of Commander Winkelmann's visits are encouraged to share copies of those pictures. One way to insure that pictures get taken is to assign a single individual to be responsible for photography at any event. Be sure to include names of people in the photos, date the photo was taken, name of the event, city/state/Post & purpose. Mail them to: Mike Moss, S.A.L. National Historian, 5842 Owens St., Arvada, CO 80004