

Sons of The American Legion Fall NEC Sets Priorities for Service Membership and the Year Ahead

INDIANAPOLIS — October 4, 2026 — National Commander Thom Skelley led members of the Sons of The American Legion (SAL) from across the country during the Fall 2026 National Executive Committee meetings in Indianapolis, where national leaders outlined priorities for the coming year centered on veterans, Americanism, children and youth, membership, communication and service.

Commander Skelley emphasized accountability, participation and the importance of getting information from the national organization into the hands of members at the detachment, district and squadron levels.

American Legion National Commander Jay Bowen addressed the Sons and shared his theme, *BPOTS Be Part of the Solution* while emphasizing the Legion Family's commitment to the Be the One veteran suicide prevention mission. American Legion Auxiliary National President Dr. Coral May Grout also encouraged continued cooperation across the Legion Family and highlighted priorities including military spouse scholarships, education, membership, Wreaths Across America and youth recognition.

The weekend demonstrated the continued growth and impact of the Sons. SAL membership reached approximately 405,000 members, continuing a historic period of growth for the organization. Members were encouraged to renew before December 31 and to share SAL accomplishments as a tool for recruitment and retention. The Membership and Squadron Activities Committee is also working toward transitioning the History Book Contest to a digital format, in coordination with the National Historian.

PNC JR Hall addressed membership messaging and encouraged the organization to focus on the value of belonging to the Sons of The American Legion. Hall advocated for a “Why Would You Leave?” campaign that highlights what the organization accomplishes and demonstrates how membership dues are put to work. He encouraged the Sons to tell that story broadly through The Millennium, social media, magazines and other communications, while emphasizing the accomplishments and opportunities that come with SAL membership.

Children and Youth remains an important part of the SAL mission. Plans for the National Convention Youth Academy in Kansas City include expanded hours and additional hands-on activities, with a goal of increasing participation by 20 percent. The committee also emphasized raising awareness of youth suicide prevention and sharing available resources with members and communities.

The Child Well-Being Foundation continues to receive strong support from the Sons. Year-to-date SAL contributions totaled approximately \$83,130, representing 48.2 percent of the Legion Family's reported contributions at the time of the meeting. Plans also include finding additional ways to involve younger members in supporting the foundation, including recognition based on age.

Service to veterans remained at the center of the NEC. Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation reported approximately \$3 million donated and 354,000 volunteer hours, representing a combined contribution valued at nearly \$15.9 million. The commission is working to expand SAL VAVS representation at VA medical centers and is also pursuing solutions to help ensure veterans' service dogs can be properly cared for during extended VA stays. Wreaths Across America will remain another major area of support.

The Legislative Commission encouraged members to remain engaged with their elected representatives and monitor congressional activity affecting veterans and the Legion Family. With Congress moving through its legislative calendar, members were reminded that continued grassroots communication is an important part of advancing veterans-related priorities.

The Media & Communications Commission outlined plans to strengthen how the Sons tells its story at every level of the organization. Among its priorities are improving communication with detachment historians,

identifying SAL social media accounts across the country and encouraging members to participate in the “Share Your Why” video initiative. The effort is intended to provide members with more opportunities to showcase the work being accomplished by squadrons and detachments nationwide.

Americanism leaders established ambitious goals for the year, including expanding Flying Flags for Heroes with a national goal of 750,000 flags placed and 100 percent detachment participation, along with continued promotion of POW/MIA remembrance.

Looking toward the future, the SAL continues preparing for its 100th anniversary, including development of an SAL history website that will provide squadrons with opportunities to share photographs, captions and their histories.

Emergency preparedness also remains part of the organization's commitment to communities and veterans. The Emergency Preparedness Committee is encouraging detachments to appoint qualified representatives, strengthen relationships with local emergency-management agencies and advocate for renewed and strengthened support of the National Emergency Fund.

The Fall NEC demonstrated that the strength of the Sons of The American Legion extends well beyond membership numbers. Through service, advocacy, communication and participation, members at every level have an opportunity to carry forward the legacy of the veterans through whom they are eligible and continue making a measurable difference in communities across the nation.

###

Fall NEC Calls to Action

National commissions and committees outlined several specific requests for detachments, squadrons and members during the Fall NEC.

Americanism Commission

1. **Flying Flags for Heroes:** Work toward 100% detachment participation and help reach the national goal of 750,000 flags placed, up from approximately 560,000 last year.
2. **POW/MIA:** Continue promoting POW/MIA remembrance tables in public locations.

Children and Youth

3. **COTA:** Help SAL exceed \$300,000 in donations to the Children's Organ Transplant Association.
4. **Veterans Children's Foundation:** Reach participation from more than 80% of detachments.

Child Well-Being Foundation

5. **Increase Detachment Participation:** Encourage additional detachments to contribute; 34 of 50 had donated at the time of the report.

Internal Affairs

6. **Regional Calls:** Leaders should participate in regional calls and remain engaged with national activities.
7. **Pass Information Down:** Detachments are expected to ensure information from the national organization reaches Blue Cap members at the local level.

Membership Training and Development

8. **NRIC:** Promote participation in upcoming NRIC training events.

Membership and Squadron Activities

9. **Renewals:** Encourage members to renew before December 31, 2026.
10. **Tell the SAL Story:** Share 2025–2026 accomplishments as a recruitment and retention tool.
11. **Membership Resources:** Utilize and promote the national membership toolkit available through officer resources.

National Conventions and Meetings

12. **Photos and Videos:** Detachments are asked to submit pictures and videos of their activities for use during national convention reports.

Legislative Commission

13. **Commission Appointments:** Detachments should submit commission membership paperwork in early spring.
14. **George B. Evans Veterans Award:** Submit deserving members for consideration for the George B. Evans Veterans Award.

Media and Communications

15. **Detachment Historians:** Detachments should submit their Historian's contact information to the Media & Communications Commission.
16. **Social Media:** Identify and catalog SAL-related social media accounts that are not currently known at the national level.
17. **Share Your Why:** Encourage members to submit "Share Your Why" videos for potential use in national convention materials.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

18. **SAL VAVS Representation:** Help expand SAL VAVS representation at VA medical centers, with a national goal of representation at 60 VA medical centers.
19. **Wreaths Across America:** Support the December 19 wreath-laying effort; wreath orders are due December 1.
20. **Report Accomplishments:** Improve reporting of VA&R donations and volunteer hours; only 44% were reporting at the time of the meeting.

Veterans Employment and Education

21. **Hiring Our Heroes:** Support events connecting veterans with employment opportunities.

SAL 100th Anniversary Committee

22. **Historical Material:** NEC members are requested to submit at least one photograph or article by the end of 2026 for the "Blast from the Past" feature.
23. **Squadron Histories:** Prepare to contribute photographs, captions and historical information for the developing SAL history website.

Emergency Preparedness

24. **Detachment Representatives:** Detachments are encouraged to appoint Emergency Preparedness representatives, preferably members with emergency-management or public-safety experience.