



The New Jersey **SALute**

Official Publication of the Detachment of New Jersey, Sons of the American Legion

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We Remember Our Fallen

Sons of the American Legion
Detachment of New Jersey
171 Jersey St., Bld 5, 2nd Floor,

Trenton NJ 08611 www.NJSAL.org

Commander	Richard Hodum
Vice Commander	William Murphy
Vice Commander	Charles Taylor II
Vice Commander	Gregory Shaffer
Vice Commander	(vacant)
Vice Commander	(vacant)
Adjutant	Russell Myers
Finance Officer	PDC C. David Page
Chaplain	PDC Matthew Thalasinis
Judge Advocate	PDC Amel Balega
Historian	PDC Nicholas Wingler
Nat Exec Comm	PDC Robert Phillips Jr
Alt Nat Exec Comm	PDC Henry Hasselhan
Sgt-at-Arms	Darryl Cunningham
Ass't Sgt-at-Arms	Martin Widmer
Sgt-at-Arms Emeritus	Anthony Liberatore
SAL Chairman	Anthony Gladden
SAL Committee Liaison	Sophia Dmoch
SAL Committee	Michael Smith



NEVER FORGET OUR POW/MIAs

Remember Everyone Deployed (RED)

In This Issue:

- Washington DC Conference*
- Commander Jackson's Message*
- Commander Hodum's Message*
- Be-The-One Stories*
- Be-The-One Seminars*
- Palisades Park CA Post 283 - After the Fire*
- CSR Time Again*
- March Detachment Meeting Highlights*
- The Sons – Who Are We?*
- Snapshots of The Sons in Action*
- Food Warrior Project*
- Decorating the Graves*
- NJ's 40-and-8 Merci Boxcar Coming Home*
- Upcoming Events*

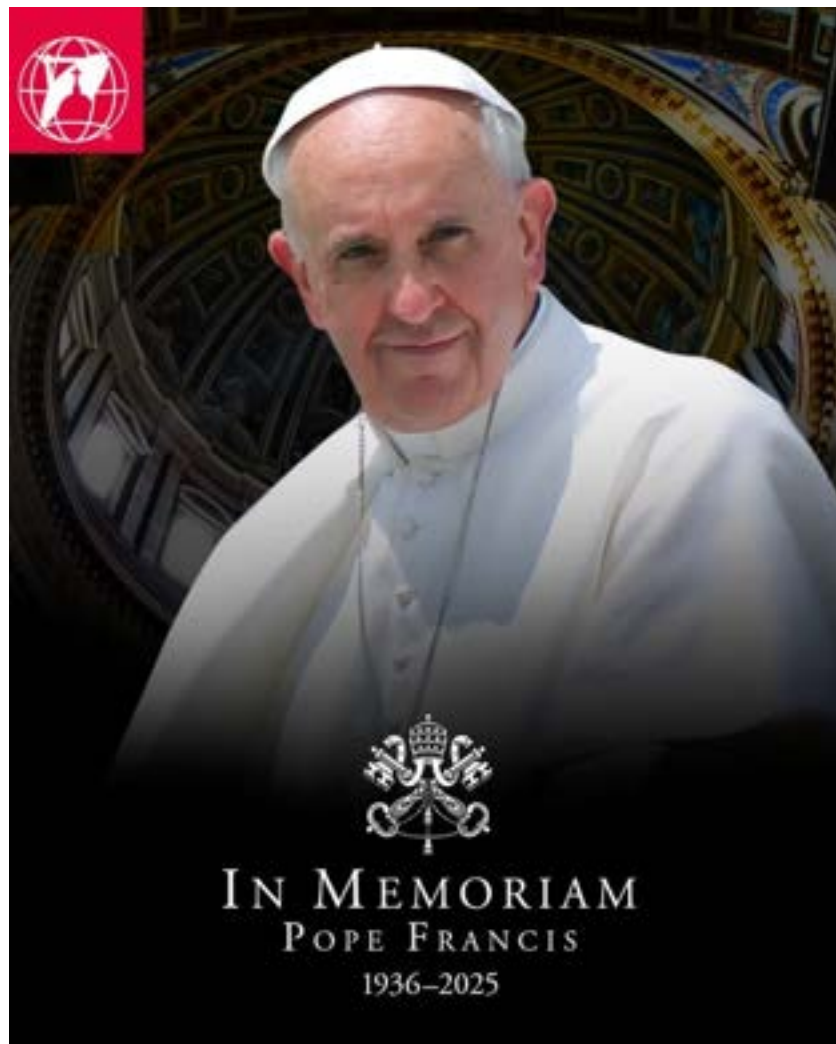
You're Never Alone – Call 9-8-8 - Option 1

For God and Country, Gary S. Crawford PC,
Commander Neptune Sq 346, DEC and Adjutant
Monmouth County Exec Committee, Editor *SALute*

njSALute@gmail.com

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**For many in the New Jersey Legion Family, our motto of “For God and Country”
was encouraged by this man. Remembering Pope Francis.**



Welcome Aboard – S. A. L. Sayreville Squadron 211!

Welcome Aboard – S. A. L. Morris County Executive Committee!



Twenty National Guard and Reserve officers serving in the A. E. F., representing the S. O. S., ten infantry divisions, and several other organizations, were ordered to report in Paris. ... Included in this number were Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., of the First Division, Lieutenant Colonel Franklin D'Olier of the S.O.S., and Lieutenant Colonel Eric Fisher Wood of the 88th Division. All of these officers have since told me that when they left their divisions they were distinctively permeated with the desire to form a veterans' organization of some comprehensive kind. When they got to Paris they immediately went into conference with the other officers. ... A dinner was spread in the Allied Officers' Club, Rue Faubourg St. Honore, on the night of February 16th... At that dinner the American Legion was born.

—*The Story of The American Legion* (1919)

Read the history at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Legion

Commander Rich Hodum's Testimonial Dinner – 5-Apr-2025



(Left) Tony Gladden introduces Commander Rich Hodum as Aux President Charline Gladden looks on. (Center) Commander Rich is presented with the dreaded “Wrecking Box”. He won’t know what’s in it until Convention! The PDCs responsible are LtoR: Jeff Hicks, Bob Phillips, Tom Marsden, Amel Balega, Rich, Lenny Free, Mark Natale, Matt Thalasinis, Dave Page, Mike Arner, Keith Barnes, Pat Gallagher, and Carl Albern. (Right) Just Rich.



(Left) Commander Rich (166) is escorted in by Ocean County ALA 1st VP Dawn Burger (455) and PDC Dave Page (455). (Center) Henry Hasselhan 5th (311) prepares the POW/MIA Empty Chair. (Right) It’s a Legion Family event. Of course there’s cake! (Rule #27A – Cake Required)



(Left) Rich is presented with Life Membership in Lakewood Squadron 166. (Center) Rich, ALA Department President Charline Gladden, and Department Commander Charles “Andy” Jackson as Rich cuts the cake. (Right) Ocean County Commander Rocky Lucia presents Rich with an Ocean County Home-Sweet-Gnome.

Commander Hodum's Message:

I would like to thank all the members of the Sons of The American Legion Detachment of New Jersey for their recent support and participation at the Washington Conference on 22-23-24 Feb. As you all know this was a National event. The Detachment of New Jersey was recognized for having the largest contingency at the conference. So comrades give yourselves a great big round of applause. I am very honored to have represented this Detachment at the Conference. Once again, thank you all for your support and participation.

*Rich Hodum,
Commander 2024-25
Sons of The American Legion Detachment of NJ*



The New Jersey Detachment at our New Jersey Memorial. LtoR: Jeff Hicks (526), Carl Albern Jr. (346), Marty Widmer (262), Mark Natale (321), Rich Hodum (166), Bob Phillips Jr. (262), Tony Gladden (455), Henry Hasselhan 5th (311), Henry Hasselhan 4th (311), Henry Hasselhan 3rd (311), Rusty Myers (105), James Elsmore (105), Steve Donald (105), Richard Vlasakakis (105)



Hallowed Ground

Proud Possessors of a Priceless Heritage . . .





L: National SAL Commander Joseph Navarrete. R: NJ's SAL attendees, the largest state contingent in attendance.



L: Rich Hodum and Dawn Burger at the Korea Memorial. C: Commander Rich Hodum and Adjutant Rusty Myers at the New Jersey Memorial.



LtoR Our NJ Leadership - Legion Riders Director Fannie Reagan, Detachment Commander Rich Hodum, Department Commander Charles "Andy" Jackson, and ALA President Charline Gladden salute at the Wreath Ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown. C: National SAL Wreath. R: Sons of The American Legion listening to members of the Old Guard after the wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery.

American Legion departments share their *Be the One* stories, plans during Washington Conference session.



American Legion Be The One Manager Tony Cross addresses a question during a Be The One Training session as Wendy Lasko looks on. Photo by Hilary Ott /The American Legion.

Article from <https://www.legion.org/information-center/news/be-the-one/2025/february/>

A session was scheduled for Feb. 23 during The American Legion's Washington Conference to provide an overview of the organization's [Be the One](#) veteran suicide prevention mission, as well as deliver a training session on the [Columbia Protocol](#).

But something shared during the session showed that at any time, anyone can be the one to reach out to another veteran, and that any phone call can end up being a [Buddy Check](#).

American Legion Department of Iowa American Legion Riders Chairman Cliff Baker, the department's 6th District vice commander and a member of the Iowa's Be the One Committee, spoke about the department's [Be the One QPR Team](#). The team will be made up of certified QPR (question, persuade, refer) suicide prevention gatekeepers through the QPR Institute and train others at the post level in their districts.

But before getting to that, Barker shared a personal experience he had before heading to the nation's capital. He was going through a list of Ames American Legion Post 37's members and called a 36-year member who had yet to renew his membership. "That turned into a Buddy Check call that went about 25 minutes," Barker said.

Barker proceeded to ask the Legionnaire if he felt he was in danger (of suicide) or if he'd been in danger before. He then gave the Legionnaire his cell number and told him he could reach out at any time, and reached out to others in the organization to help keep tabs on how the veteran was doing.

"I don't know him personally," Barker said. "Thirty-six years in the Legion, and he doesn't come in much. But I will get to know him. You don't know when Buddy Check calls are going to come up. You just don't.

"It could be someone in your post. It could be someone in your family. It could be someone you work with."

Iowa's QPR Team program was one of a handful of Be the One and suicide prevention efforts taking part at the department level shared during the session. The Department of Arkansas is encouraging posts to include Be the One on their monthly meeting agendas and also is incorporating the program in their mobile training team itineraries.

In New Jersey, the department is hosting Be the One training sessions at two different posts in conjunction with The American Legion birthday on March 15. And in Burlington County, the American Legion Auxiliary is conducting a women veteran suicide prevention seminar in late March.

As well as the sharing of grass-roots efforts and the Columbia Protocol training session, Be the One Program Manager Tony Cross also gave an overview of where Be the One is now and what he is looking toward in the future. He noted more than 13,000 Legion Family members have taken the Columbia training, putting the Legion on track to train 100,000 members by the end of 2025.

"Here's my belief. The American Legion has been around (since 1919). At no time have we ever focused on each other," Cross said. "We've focused on the PACT Act, on Agent Orange. We helped the VA create themselves. We've never focused on each other, really knowing each other. Half these members, you don't even know who they are. They've never even been communicated with. I think Be the One has the ability to help us grow."

It also has an impact at the personal level. "I've been here 24 hours, and I've had two people seek me out," Cross said. "You know what they want to talk about? That they attempted suicide. That's a good thing. Before we never had that."

"I don't know these people. They only knew that I was part of this Be the One mission. And I just let them talk. And it makes a difference. I've six people from (American Legion National Headquarters) come to me ... that had attempted suicide. It's more common than you think."

Cross said his program has the opportunity to impact the Legion nationwide. "Be the One has affected every one of us. And we're really just getting started," he said. "I believe the Be the One has the ability to change the whole Legion. You reach out to people, people will want to talk about it. This is our No. 1 mission."



Check what the Sons, and the Legion Family, are doing on a National level. Subscribe to the Millennium and other newsletters at:

www.legion.org/information-center/in-the-media/e-newsletters

Recent Snapshots:



26-Apr, Legion College at Sea Girt Camp. (Left) Department Commander Andy Jackson addresses the attendees. (Center) Listening to the lessons. (Right) Graduates from the SAL Basic and Advanced courses give the **BeTheOne** sign. Thanks to PDCs Tom Marsden, Nick Wingler, Jeff Hicks, and Carl Albern Jr. for proctoring the students.



(Left) In the Advanced class. (Right) After a hard day at school, a visit to Neptune Post 266 is in order. LtoR: Detachment Comdr Rich Hodum, ALA Dept Secretary Dawn Burger, Rob, ALA 266 President Carolyn Lundy, ALA Dept 1st VP Trish Muller, PDC Mark Natale, and ALA Dept 2nd VP Lisa Natale. The previous evening featured a visit to Neptune Post 346.



(Left) Advanced Instructors Carl Albern and Jeff Hicks. (Center) NJALA Sec'y Dawn Burger, President Charline Gladden, 1st VP Trish Muller, and 2nd VP Lisa Natale. (Right) New Jersey's Lady Veterans at Legion College.





Commander & Team:

Fantastic resurrection of our previous Boots 2 Business Workshop at Post 372 in Cherry Hill on 23-Apr! 15 proactive attendees, with DMAVA supporting, as well as Dept VEH&E Commission Member Bernie Kofoet and ANEC / PDC Henry Hasselhan, who led us in the Pledge and Invocation. (The next B2B Workshop will be at Little Ferry Post 310 on 13-May.)

For God & Country,

Bob Looby, National Employment, Homeless & Suicide Prevention Advocate
 Past State Commander 908-894-0746



(Left) SAL Ocean County Officers for 2025-26: LtoR: Outgoing Chaplain Steven Lance (348), Commander Rocky Lucia (129), and Adjutant Nick Wingler (166). Other incoming Officers include: Vice-Commander Tristan Buck (232), Vice-Commander Lee Dickson (455), Vice-Commander Joe Rutzler (129), Finance Officer Dean Staknys (348), and Chaplain Matt Thalasinis (232). Appointed Officers are: Sgt-at-Arms Tim Cassidy (455), Judge Advocate Tom Marsden (348), and Adjutant Nick Wingler (166). (Right) Attendees at the Ocean County Convention 16-Apr.





(Left) Debbie Hall and James Elsmore present checks to Manager Michael Vahoviak. (Center) James Elsmore, Michael Vahoviak, Rusty Myers, Jackie Elsmore, Debbie Hall, and Marcy Caruso present a check. (Right) Getting the 50 cent tour.



Sons of the American Legion Squadron 105 is with American Legion Auxiliary Unit 105 - Belleville, NJ and James J. Peters VA Medical Center (Bronx, NY).

The 105 Family took a road trip to drop off a check in-person to the **Fisher House Foundation** at the **James J. Peters VA Medical Center (Bronx, NY)**. It was the first time for a few of the members, and in their own words, they were “blown away”. Many thanks to Fisher House Manager Michael Vahoviak for taking the time on the Saturday before Easter to give us a tour. (19-Apr.) LtoR: ALA 105 President Debbie Hall, ALA 105 VP Marcy Caruso, Essex DEC and Squadron 105 Commander James Elsmore, ALA 105 Chaplain Jackie Elsmore, Detachment Adjutant Rusty Myers, and Fisher House Manager

Michael Vahoviak.



Camden County Legion Family serving Easter dinner at Vet Haven South on 19-Apr. (Left) PDP Jane Babli, Jerry Brown, and Marty Widmer plate up dinner. (Center) Henry Hasselhan(s) 3rd, 5th, and 4th man the serving station. (Right) Jerry Brown (286), Henry Hasselhan 5th (311), and Marty Widmer (286).



(Left) Camden County SAL Exec Committee. 16Apr. LtoR: DEC Bernie Kofoet, Chaplain Marty Widmer, Judge Advocate Myron Jones, Commander Charles Ross, Vice Commander Justin Olsen, and Sgt-at-Arms Brian McRory, (Center) Middlesex Post, Auxiliary, and SAL 306 at Menlo Park Veterans Home. 15Apr. (Right) Lucas Needham (286) Purples Up for Military Children, 15Apr.



(Left) Cape May County - Medford Squadron 524's donation of \$5000 to Tunnels-to-Towers 16-Apr. LtoR: Sq 1st VC Tom Cavallaro, T2T Ambassador Deno Parlo, Sq Commander Mike Byerly, and Dean Mitchell. (Center and Right) Marty Widmer (286) assembling 100 Easter snack bags for VA&R.



(Left) SAL Commander Hodum (left front) t meeting with Department of NJ DEC's, 12-Apr at Middlesex Post 306. (Center) Sweet treat time! Myers Family Crew's Girl Scout cookie delivery from Belleville 105 with staffers at Lyons VA Hospital. Also, they delivered cookies to East Orange VA Hospital, 16-Apr. (Right) Just a cheese pose from Nutley 70 SAL Vice Commander Infield and Post Commander Bennett.



Leadership Seminar at Burlington Post 336 on 30-Mar. (Left) Shannon Widmer (ALA 286), PDC Jeff Hicks (526), and Marty Widmer (262). (Center) Detachment Vice Commander Greg Shaffer (174) and Essex County DEC / Belleville Sq 105 Comdr James Elsmore. (Right) Detachment Adjutant Rusty Myers, Marty and Jeff in the back.

Memorial Day 2025 – We Remember



Be-The-One Seminar, 15-Mar-2025 at Neptune Post 346 and Rahway Post 5.



(Left) The morning session at Neptune Post 346. (Right) The afternoon session at Rahway Post 5.



Commander Jackson addresses the attendees at Rahway. Wendy Lasko from the Columbia Protocol speaks at Neptune as Dr. Adam Walsh looks on. “Just ask. You can save a life”. Info: www.CSSRS.columbia.edu

Veteran Suicide Awareness Training in Neptune, NJ on Saturday March 15th 2025. Here is the link to the video playlist <https://loom.ly/BGFrios>



Ronald Reagan-Palisades Post 283 · (California)

22-Mar. The picture says a lot. A gathering of agencies and community for a flag planting ceremony- as a sign of commitment, recovery and a positive look forward in spite of the Pacific Palisades wildfire disaster. God Bless.

CSR Report

The New Jersey Detachment of the SAL now has the CSR report form online. Click on the link and complete the form as usual. https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.cwjsoftware.csr_logger

(This is for Android users for now. An iPhone version will be available soon)

The Consolidated Squadron Report (CSR) is perhaps the most critical document a Squadron can complete. CSR information is combined with other Squadrons in creating a final report used by The American Legion, forwarded to the U.S. Congress, and used to apply and verify awards at National Convention. Not all Squadrons participate in every program; leave those fields blank. The key is to report on the activities your squadron participated in from June 1st to May 31st.

All Detachment/District/Squadron donations and activities should be reported individually to your Detachment Adjutant. The CSR will require inputs, such as the number of Veteran homes visited or volunteer hours contributed to a particular program. Other programs, such as The American Legion National Emergency Fund (NEF), enter the number of dollars donated or spent in whole numbers.

It was previously preferred that CSR's be filled out and submitted online via myLegion.org. Squadron Adjutants and Commanders have access to complete and submit the entire form. CSRs are also available for download at legion.org/publications and legion.org/sons/publications.

SCAN & EMAIL: CPRandCSRforms@legion.org Detachment Reminder: **July 1 is the final date** for transmittal to National Headquarters for Squadron Reports to be included the national tabulation for awards at National Convention.

Send completed CSR forms to NJ Detachment Adjutant Rusty Myers at (snail mail):
Sons of The American Legion Detachment of NJ
137 Highfield Lane, Nutley, NJ 07110

Or email the forms to Rusty: r.myers@sons.njamericanlegion.org

Detachment of NJ DEC Meeting, Chester Post 342, 22-Mar



Vice Commander Bill Murphy (center) chairs the meeting in the absence of Commander Rich Hodum, flanked by Adjutant Rusty Myers (left) and Judge Advocate Amel Balega Jr (right). (Right) Good turnout, good meeting.



(Left) NEF Chairman Dean Staknys accepts donation from Wayne Sq 174. (Center) Vice Commander Greg Shaffer accepts a donation to COTA. (Right) Hosting Chester Post and Squadron 342 makes a presentation to Bill Murphy.

Meeting Highlights:

Held at Chester Post 342, on 22Mar2025

In the absence of Commander Richard Hodum, Vice Commander Bill Murphy chaired the meeting. Adjutant Rusty Myers reminded everyone that CSR reports should be submitted to him by 15-May, and SDR reports by 15-Apr, immediately after County elections.

National Vice Commander Bob Nelson is on tap to attend our Convention in June. Detachment 1st Vice Commander William Murphy has been endorsed for Detachment Commander 2025-2026. Vice Commander Gregory Shaffer and Adjutant Russell Myers have been endorsed for 1st and 2nd Vice Commander, respectively. Murph, Greg, and Rusty have also been endorsed by their respective Squadrons and Counties.

The New Jersey contingent who attended the Washington Conference was the largest representation from any state.

An increase in dues is on the horizon, to take effect for the 2026-2027 year. There are rising costs to support our national candidates. Raises would be \$4 - \$3 to the budget increases and \$1 for candidate support. National Candidates will also hold fundraisers to support their campaigns.

Mylegion.org now includes a link to The Millennium, the national SAL newsletter, edited by our Adjutant Rusty Myers.

As of the meeting date, membership renewals are at 75.66%. The next target date is to have a 83.6% renewal rate. A goal of 10,203 members is sought.

The deadline for applicants for the Ernie Wilson Scholarship is April 15.

PDC Nick Wingler reported the Commander's Project now stands at \$25,547! The goal was \$25,000. Ocean County alone raised \$16,367.

COTA Chairman Greg Shaffer reported that \$1000 has been raised. Camden County has made numerous donations to COTA, NEF, and others. NEF Chairman Dean Staknys reported \$108 in cash from the meeting. Bernie Kofoet said that the Stand Down needed volunteers. He also reported that 2-1-1 has a database for state programs for health and homelessness.

PDC Gary Nelson told that PDC Keith Barnes' Commander's Project was successful, raising \$21,000 for his Paramus outdoor equipment program.

Detachment Chaplain and PDC Matt Thalasinis made a motion to honor PDC James Noble, who had passed away recently.

Greg Shaffer reported the Passaic County Vietnam War Veteran housing project had ground broken on 29-Mar, on Oldham Road in Passaic.

Adjutant Rusty Myers said a COTA picnic would be held at Belleville 105 on 27-Apr.

In other highlights:

Dean Staknys - \$313,700 in grants have been paid out assisting victims of hurricanes Helene and Milton down in Tennessee and North Carolina.

Murph: Help is needed for the Watchfire, both financially and physically. The 3rd Annual Family Feud Event will be held at Brick Post 348 on 11-Apr. The setup for the game will be available to other Posts as well. The Beard Contest will probably be held again.

Greg Shaffer: \$500 was donated to CWF. Wayne 174 donated \$1000 to COTA, bringing the current amount to \$2899. Still looking to have a \$1 donation per SAL Member in every Squadron statewide.

Nick Winger: The Special Olympics Annual Polar Bear Plunge saw 4,250 people in Wildwood and 12,500 in Seaside take the plunge. \$16,750 was raised.

PDC Patrick Gallagher V&AR: His report told that parties were again permitted at VA hospitals. New volunteers are needed to hold them.

ANEC PDC Henry Hasselhan: reminded everyone about 9-8-8. He said how bartenders are often the first person to see a potential problem with a Veteran. He had brochures for aid to Veterans, suicide prevention, and firearm safety. He also told of an upcoming Casino Career Fair on 24-Apr.

A reminder that every SAL Member in good standing is invited to the Detachment DEC meetings. Dates and places will be announced. Come see what is happening on the state level of your organization.



Essex County Adjutant Richard Vlasakakis (Left) along with Essex DEC James Elsmore (Right) at the Sgt. Larry Maycey Memorial in Chester after the DEC Meeting.

From the American Legion John W. Lupu Memorial Post 306 Middlesex NJ

The Sons of the American Legion – Who Are We?

Here is another American Legion program that is very integral to our organization. **The Sons or S.A.L.** The Sons of The American Legion (SAL) is a non-profit organization within The American Legion, founded in 1932, for male descendants of Veterans who served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces, aiming to support Veterans, youth, and the community.

Here's a more detailed look at the Sons of The American Legion:

Membership Eligibility: Membership is open to male descendants (sons, grandsons, adopted sons, or step-sons) of members of The American Legion, or Veterans who served honorably during specific periods, including World War I and since December 7, 1941.

Purpose: The SAL aims to honor the legacies of veterans, support veterans and their families, and promote patriotism and civic engagement.

Structure: The SAL is organized into squadrons at the local level and detachments at the state level, with a national organization overseeing the entire structure.

Activities and Programs: Civic Training: The SAL runs annual civic training events for high school juniors called Boys State, with two members from each Boys State selected for Boys Nation.

Youth Programs: The SAL also features programs like American Legion Baseball, Scouting, Oratorical Contests, Junior Shooting Sports, and Youth Alumni.

Support for Veterans: The SAL supports veterans through various programs and initiatives, including fundraising for The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

Community Involvement: The SAL actively participates in community events, supporting local veterans, and promoting patriotism and civic responsibility.

Key Facts: Founded in 1932.

Parent Organization: The American Legion.

Focus Areas: Veterans, youth, community, and patriotism.

Combined Membership: The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and Sons of The American Legion comprise the Legion family, with a combined membership of nearly 4.2 million.

We discovered this week that our youth and others have no concept of what the American Legion is.

The American Legion operates over 12,000 local posts worldwide, with a significant presence in the United States, serving veterans, military personnel, and communities.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

Global Presence:

The American Legion has posts not only in the United States but also in other countries, including France, Mexico, and the Philippines.

Organizational Structure:

The American Legion is organized into 55 departments, with one in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, France, Latin America, and the Philippines.

Membership:

The organization boasts nearly 2 million members, both men and women, in these posts worldwide.

Foreign and Outlying Posts and Departments of The American Legion (FODPAL):

More than 15,000 members belong to FODPAL, serving the needs of veterans, military, and communities outside the continental United States.



Left: COTA Fundraiser at Middlesex Post 310. Right: At Commander Andy Jackson's Ocean County Homecoming at New Egypt Post 455 26-Mar, PDC Nick Wingler presents a check to Andy's Commander's Project.

POAC Spring Fling for Autistic Kids



POAC Spring Fling for Autistic Kids at Post 166, 30-Mar. (Left) Ocean County Chaplain Steve Lance , Ocean County Finance Officer Dean Staknys, PDC and Past Ocean County Commander Nick Wingler, The Mouse, Sq 166 Commander Fran Cottrell, 166 Sgt-at-Arms Matt, 166 Commander Rob Nieratko. (Right) Matt Thalasinis (232), Rocky Lucia (129), Nick Wingler (166), and Fran Cottrell (166) serving up dinner.

Vietnam Veterans 50th Anniversary Parade



(Left) Murphy Izquierdo, Alexa Newland, Amari Acevedo, and Sayde Izquierdo place flags along parade route for the next day Vietnam Veterans 50th Anniversary parade at Neptune VFW 1333 on 28-Mar. Murphy and Sayde are SAL and ALA from Neptune Post 346 (and the editor's grandkids). (Center) Murphy and Amari place flags. (Right) Neptune 346's Color Guard marching in the parade on 29-Mar. LtoR Dual Member Jim Struble, Dual Member Mike Kennedy, Dan Sanford, SAL Sgt-at-Arms John Skislak, and SAL VC Paul Williams bring the colors.



Remembering those who didn't come back

South Jersey Regional Stand Down
 Serving All Veterans
Atlantic City 2025

Wednesday, May 21, 2025
 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

All Wars Memorial (Soldiers Home)
 1500 Adriatic Ave.
 Atlantic City, NJ 08401

VIA Medical, Mental Health, Benefits, Claims, Employment, Clothing, Housing, Lunch, Products

Donation: \$45 Per Person. Make Checks Payable: Ocala. Send Registration to: Ruby Cramer, PDP, 18 Cardinal Drive, Egg Harbor City, NJ 08215. rubicramer1@gmail.com

*****Deadline for reservation: May 21, 2025*****

TESTIMONIAL DINNER CELEBRATION HONORING:
Charline Gladden
 Department of New Jersey ALA President

Saturday, May 31, 2025
 Social Hour: 1PM, Dinner: 2PM

Buffet Style Dinner CATERED BY "Uncle Joe", Tuscany Caterers
 Salad, Buffet, Dessert (Cash Bar)
 New Kelley's Bar and Banquet Hall
 14 Railroad Ave, Wightstowns, NJ 08640

Donation: \$45 Per Person. Make Checks Payable: Ocala. Send Registration to: Ruby Cramer, PDP, 18 Cardinal Drive, Egg Harbor City, NJ 08215. rubicramer1@gmail.com

*****Deadline for reservation: May 21, 2025*****

FOOD WARRIORS

FOOD DRIVE FOR THE TROOPS

Help Us Support the Red Cross Food Pantry
 Assisting Service Members and Their Families at
 Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst

All Monetary Donations will be Used to Purchase Food for Our Service Members and Their Families!
 Thank You for Your Support!

Food Donations: Please Contact Mike Schaffer at C 732-685-7958
 Checks Payable to: MSA - Food Warriors
 Mail to: P.O. Box 5423, Toms River, NJ 08754-5423

Mike Schaffer
 MSA DEPARTMENT OF SENIORS
 Michael A. Schaffer @ Pajpaj@gmail.com
 C 732-685-7750

800 My Support @ Veterans.org
 FoodWarriors@JointBaseMcGuireDix.com

Mental Health FIRST AID

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID FOR MILITARY, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

WHY MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?
 Mental health first aid for military, veterans, and their families is a practical, evidence-based, and evidence-based program that teaches skills to help you and your loved ones manage mental health challenges.

1 in 4
 military veterans experience mental health conditions

57%
 of military veterans experience mental health conditions

88%
 of military veterans experience mental health conditions

REGISTER TODAY!

Delivery Format:
 7.5-hour live instructor-led training

Date and Time:
 Saturday, May 3, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Location:
 American Legion Post 286, 200 Elm St., Pine Hill, NJ 08221

Where to Register:
www.MHFAUSA.com

Lunch and other refreshments to be provided.

Camden County Resolution 22 is sponsoring a Mental Health First Aid Certification Class on Saturday, May 3rd, Pine Hill Post 286.

This is a full FREE 7 hour certification course!
 Breakfast and lunch will be provided by Camden County Resolution 22.
 YOU MUST REGISTER! At MHFA@NJHA.com

Ocean County American Legion

Hello Patriots and Friends:

(Left) I can't thank you enough for your support of the Food Warrior Project. I started this 5 years ago as my personal project as Department Chaplain. Because of you and many like you, Legionnaires, private citizens, large and small companies, many clubs, and Fraternal Organizations, we have delivered over 750,000 meals!

We are now into what I call GHOST season. It happens every year from January to May. Donations dry up because of all of the giving before the holidays, people are tired and money is tight. The need does not go away.

Please consider making a donation in support of our ACTIVE DUTY Warriors and their families, retired and disabled veterans. Food insecurity is the first step to homelessness and suicide let's make an effort to BE THE ONE to make sure they never trip over that first step!

Contact me for our mission critical needs list and our donor card with information on how to make a monetary donation.

Michael Schaffer
American Legion Chaplain
Board Member NJMSA
Chairman Food Warrior Project
Red Cross Volunteer Community Outreach
Brick Morning Rotary
732 685 7768 cell



Placing 660 Flags in honor of those who died by their own hands, Williamstown NJ on 30-Apr. Pictured are members of the Chrome Riders, Knights of Columbus, Williamstown Police, and other groups, along with SAL Detachment Sergeant-at-Arms Marty Widmer. (22 a day are too many, 660 per month is unacceptable.) **BeTheOne.**



Decorating the Graves for Memorial Day:

Although disputed as to the exact date it started, and whether Union or Confederate families were the ones who initiated it, today's Memorial Day, previously known as Decoration Day, was exactly that. Families would gather at cemeteries to "decorate" the graves of their loved ones lost in battle. Decorations included flowers, flags, and trinkets, while the families often brought along a picnic lunch to spend time with their loved ones. Usually observed on or around the end of May, it eventually became a National Holiday, observed on the last Monday of May, becoming another three-day holiday for many people. It is often seen today as the official start of the summer season.

Although hamburgers, hot dogs, and trips to the beach became part of it, many people remembered what it was all about. The American Legion, VFW, and other groups didn't forget why there is a Memorial Day. Volunteers walk the cemeteries and graveyards and place American Flags – decorate - the graves of fallen Veterans.

Remember the holidays honoring our military: Is **Armed Forces Day**, observed on the third Saturday in May, for those still serving. **Memorial Day**, the last Monday in May, is for those fallen Veterans who are no longer with us. **Veterans Day**, (previously known as Armistice Day, the end of World War One) on November 11, is to honor all Veterans who wore the uniform, especially those still with us.

Memorial Day is not the only day the American Flag is to be flown at half-staff. Flag Etiquette says to fly the Flag as half-staff from sunrise to noon, and then raised ceremoniously to full staff.

Days in the year that the flag is to be flown at half-staff include Memorial Day (May), Peace Officer Memorial Day (May), Patriots Day (Sept. 11), National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service (October) and Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (Dec. 7). The President of the United States or the Governor of each state may order flying the Flag at half-staff for someone worthy of the honor.



Beginning in 2022, SAL National Commander Michael Fox and Preston Sharp from California established ***Flying Flags for Heroes***. The goal was to place one million Flags on the graves of Veterans for Memorial Day. The goal was exceeded – some 1.6 million were placed. The program is ongoing, keeping with the original intent. We'd like to keep a New Jersey tally of Flags placed to be added to the national count. Please keep a record of the Flags you and your groups placed, and the names and towns of the cemeteries decorated. In New Jersey, your county Veteran Affairs office should have your flags and a printout of the Veterans to be honored. Totals will be added to the national count and you and your organization will be listed in an upcoming **SALute**. When the job is done, please send your info to njSALute@gmail.com



A little bit o' the Green in March:



Why not beat the March 17th rush? Belleville 105 Family in Nutley's St. Patrick's Day on 1-Mar. R: In the meantime, Commander Walter and Finance Officer Louie getting the corned beef ready for the day.



COTA Fundraiser Dinner, Little Ferry Post 310, 28-Feb. In Memoriam: Billy Reese, Commander Rahway Sq 5.



Morris County SAL Detachment Meet and Greet.

(Left) Great turnout as we get the SAL Morris County Detachment up and running. Thank you Denville Post 390 for allowing us to use your Post for this event on 8-Mar. (LtoR) SAL Chairman Tony Gladden (455) Rich Michael (Morris Co SAL DEC) David Marciano (Morris Co Comdr) and Detachment Commander Rich Hodum (166). (Center) Adj Rusty Myers (105) and James Elsmore (Essex Co DEC and Sq 105 Comdr) at the Meet & Greet. (Right) Later, that same day, Elsmore and Myers at Whippany Post 155.



(Left) A little off the top, please. Bernie Kofoet (Dual Member - Oaklyn 84 / 68 Merchantville) Baldrick's Foundation fundraiser "Shaved to Cure Childhood Cancer" 29-Mar. (Right) Bernie's March 2015 donation.



Children's Organ Transplant Association - COTA Miracle Makers, like **The American Legion Department of New Jersey**, help make a life-saving difference for transplant families. We are grateful to **The American Legion Post 310 Little Ferry, NJ** for their recent fundraising event that raised over \$6,000 to help COTA transplant families throughout the Garden state! 7-Mar-2025. [#COTAHope](#)

Where's Our SONS?

[#BeTheOne](#) is how we change lives and save lives. Ask veterans in your life how they are doing. Listen when a Veteran needs to talk. Reach out when a Veteran is struggling.





The Borough of Middlesex is proud to announce The Hometown Heroes Banner Program. This program is a living tribute meant to honor Middlesex Borough residents and former residents who have served or are currently serving in any branch of the military.

To learn more and fill out an application please visit: <https://www.middlesexboro-nj.gov/.../hometown-heroes...>



Pause to Thrive co-founder Linda Savino and Tom DeAngelis exhibited at the Army National Guard Yellow Ribbon Event in Parsippany this past Saturday, March 22nd in Parsippany. The event was held for soldiers returning from deployment in Syria. Approximately 350 returning soldiers and their families attended to hear presentations from community resources that are available to help them in their reintegration to life after deployment.

Linda and Tom engaged with other community partners to collaboratively meet the needs the of our reservists and their families

Pause to Thrive is presently partnering with one of these groups: The New Jersey National Guard Behavioral Health Unit, to provide resiliency training and other wellness practices to soldiers at the National Guard Base in Sea Girt, NJ.

If you know of a member of the military or their family who is struggling, please refer them to one of our team.

You can check us out and contact us at pausetothrive.org.



Preamble to the Constitution of the Sons of the American Legion:

Proud possessors of a priceless heritage, we male descendants of veterans of all 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 all 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.

New Jersey's 40&8 Merci Train Boxcar is Returning Home!



New Jersey's 40&8 Merci boxcar, arriving here in 1949.



Left: Article from 1949. Center: British soldiers in a 40&8 during WW1. Right: American doughboys in 40&8.



Left: Not NJ's car, but how they appeared when they arrived in 1949. Right: What a barn find! New Jersey's 40&8, believed lost or even destroyed for decades, was stored in a railroad museum warehouse in Kansas City after sitting in a field in Tennessee. Fundraising is in progress to bring the boxcar home, after making it secure for transport. It will be brought to the United Railway Historical Society's shops in Boonton for restoration.

Forty-nine cars were sent to the US from France in 1949, in thanks for our assistance in both World Wars . One car for each of the then-48 states and one to be shared by the District of Columbia and the Territory of Hawaii.

Fascinating history: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merci_Train and <http://www.mercitrain.org/>
More on its discovery: <https://www.nj.com/news/2025/03/one-of-njs-biggest-mysteries-has-just-been-solved.html>
40&8 Veterans' organization: www.fortyandeight.org



Upcoming Events:

- > Every Second Tuesday: Clam Night, W. Milford Post 289
- > Every Third Sunday: Breakfast, Union Beach SAL 321
- > Last Sunday of Every Month: Breakfast, Audubon Post 262
- > Every Wed 2-4, Every Fri 10-2, Veteran Center Food Pantry, Carteret Shop-Rite Shopping Center
- > Bowling for COTA, Bowler City, Hackensack, Apr 26
- > Wednesday Dinners, Mar-12 to Apr-30 (no Apr 23) Middlesex Post 306
- > Thursdays, 10-12, Veteran Wellness Program, Franklin Post 132
- > Saturday Dinners, Neptune Post 346
- > Food Drive for the Troops – Ocean County Food Warriors – for Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst
- May 02: Riders Sandwich Night, Wharton Post 91
- May 03: Veterans Stand Down, Passaic County Tech School, Wayne
- May 03: Building Bridges – Veterans Resource Workshop, So Amboy Senior Center, by So Amboy ALA 62
- May 03: Cars & Stripes, Hackettstown Post 164
- May 03: Camden County Resolution 22 Mental Health 1st Aid Certification Class, Pine Hill Post 286
- May 03: Live Music with Lori T, Englishtown Post 434
- May 04: Pancake Breakfast, Oaklyn SAL 84
- May 04: Breakfast, Little Egg Harbor Post 493
- May 04: VetFest 2025, Dave Waks Memorial Park, Wayne
- May 07: Veteran Village Groundbreaking, Tunnel-to-Towers Foundation, Bayville
- May 09: Beefsteak Dinner, Billy Pfaff Benefit, Rochelle Park Post 170
- May 10: Cocktail Sip, Neptune Post 266
- May 10: Super 50/50 Drawing and Picnic, Leonardo SAL 338
- May 10: DEC Meeting, New Egypt Post 455
- May 13: Boots-to-Business Reboot, Little Ferry Post 310
- May 17: Joint Testimonial, Whippany Post 155
- May 17: Riders 2nd Annual Convention & Gathering of the Chapters, Brick Post 348
- May 17: Flea Market, Edison ALA 435
- May 18: Serenity on the Sea, Sunset Yoga, Battleship New Jersey, Camden
- May 18: Adult Book Fair, Blackwood Post 281 (presented by Pine Hill ALA 286)
- May 18: Fundraiser for Dan Channel, Little Ferry Post 310
- May 18: Firing Over The Graves, Neptune Post 346
- May 23 – 26: Vietnam Traveling Wall, Veterans Park, North Brunswick – Ceremony May 26.
- May 21: South Jersey Regional Stand Down, All Wars Memorial (Soldiers Home) Atlantic City
- May 24: Memorial Day Pig Roast & BBQ, Toms River Post 129
- May 26: Neptune / Ocean Grove Memorial Day Parade, Posts 266, 346, and VFW 1333
- May 26: Memorial Day Celebration, Veterans memorial Park, Pine Hill Post 286
- May 26: Englishtown Memorial Day Parade, Post 434
- May 26: TAPS Across America 3 pm
- May 31: NJ ALA President Charline Gladden Testimonial, Hamilton Twp.
- May 31: Children & Youth Academy, Belleville SAL 105
- June 02: Annual Charity Golf Outing, Cobblestone Creek CC, Benefit Westfield Post 3
- June 08: Children & Youth Academy, Belleville SAL 105
- June 12: Golf Outing, NJ Friends of the Guard & Reserve, Cream Ridge CC
- June 12: Women Veterans Day Luncheon, Carlton R Rouh Vet Center, Lindewold
- June 12-13: Annual Convention, Wildwood
- June 14: Buddy Check – Be The One – Suicide Prevention 1K Walk and Breakfast, Wildwood Convention Center
- June 14: Wildwood Parade – on the Boardwalk
- June 14: Flag Retirement, Edison Post 435
- June 19: Art Jensen Jr Annual Pig Roast, Little Ferry SAL 310
- June 19: Flag Retirement, Neptune Post 346
- June 20: 414 Scramble Golf Tournament, Lawrenceville Post 414, Cream Ridge GC

June 21: Seafood Boil, Woodbridge Post 87
 June 23: Golf Outing, Eagle Oaks CC, Benefit Neptune Post 346
 June 24: Boots-to-Business Reboot, Brick Post 348
 June 28: Sarge's 9th Annual PTSD Awareness 5K Walk, Merchantville, to benefit Camden County Resolution 22 Committee and America's Vet Dogs
 July 04: 50/50 Raffle, Somers Point SAL 352
 July 10: Boots-to-Business Reboot, Somerville Post 12
 July 20: Pig Roast, Little Ferry SAL 310
 July 24: Boots-to-Business Reboot, Absecon Post 28
 July 26: Family VetDogs Fundraiser, Wayne Post 174
 Aug 03: Riders Poker Run, Lakewood Post 166 / Union Beach Post 321
 Sep 08: Golf Outing by Neptune Post 346, Shark River GC
 Sep 17: Boots-to-Business Reboot, Rochelle Park Post 170
 Dec 13: Wreaths Across America

Support your local American Legion, its Veterans, and its Programs.

Contributors:

	Detachment Commander Richard Hodum, Lakewood SAL 166
	Detachment Adjutant Rusty Myers, Belleville SAL 105
James Elsmore, Essex Co SAL DEC	VP Linda Savino, Neptune ALA 346, <i>Pause to Thrive</i>
ANEC Henry Hasselhan, Atco SAL 311	Tom DeAngelis, <i>Pause to Thrive</i>
PDC Nicholas Wingler, Lakewood SAL 166	Camden County SAL
PDC Mark Natale, Union Beach SAL 321	Essex County SAL
PDC Patrick Gallagher, Neptune SAL 346	Morris County SAL
PDC Jeff Hicks, Southampton SAL 526	Ocean County American Legion
2024 Son of the Year - Bernie Kofoet, Oaklyn SAL 84/Merchantville Post 68 (Dual is cool)	Middlesex Post 306
Nutley SAL Sq 70	Denville Post 390
American Legion Dept of NJ	www.legion.org
PDC Steve Fisher, Pine Hill Post 286	The Columbia Suicide Prevention Protocol
Michael Dean Smith, Wayne Post 174	United Railway Historical Society www.URHS.org
ShannonLee Widmer, Pine Hill ALA 286	VFW Post 1333, Neptune NJ
PDP Doreen Gallagher, Neptune ALA 346	

Please send items, articles, and pictures for inclusion in the ***NJ SALute*** to editor Gary Crawford at njsalute@gmail.com Please ID people in your pictures.

