



Round-Up



The Newsletter of Sons of The American Legion Central Region

Volume 2 – Issue 64 – January 24, 2021

Tools in the toolbox

Gentlemen,

During last Tuesday's National Membership Committee Conference Call, we heard from each region about the difficulties they are facing. National Commander Clint Bolt and National Liaison Ken George also joined the meeting to give us information from the national level.

The common theme mentioned by all was the use of [MySAL](#). It was reported that there are Squadrons that have been waiting for nearly six weeks to have their membership cards processed and transmitted at Department Headquarters. When this happens, it hurts our total membership numbers. We all understand that during these trying times and with many places closed, including Posts and Department HQs, we need to try being patient. We know that membership in The American Legion usually takes precedent over SAL membership. East Region National Vice-Commander Gary Nelson said it best, "Be willing to try something different."

As of our meeting, there were 1,254 Squadrons using [MySAL](#). That number represents 20% of our 6,203 active Squadrons. 20% is just the tip of the iceberg. This must change. We must get more of our Squadrons on board!

Look at it this way, a police officer a gun, radio, handcuffs, baton, and other tools available. A plumber has wrenches, torches, cutters. A fireman hoses, air tanks, axes. None of the people in these professions would try to do their job without their tools.

As Sons of The American Legion, we have Buddy Checks, email, phone calls, materials from The American Legion, our website & social media. And maybe our most important tool is [MySAL](#). Don't try to do your work without ALL of your tools!

Mr. George talked about our individual purpose as members. He said that some of us like the camaradery of hanging out with friends at the Canteen. Others like the community service they provide. He said, "What do you value in your membership, and what will you do next?" These are very powerful words as he asked us to "repurpose" our membership.

Under our current circumstances, what will you do? How will you continue ***Serving Those Who Served...Full Steam Ahead?*** What are your plans for 2021? Have you thought about it, or will you be happy with the status quo? Don't leave anything to chance. Make your path for our year and follow it. Come up with new ways of recruiting, retaining, and reinstating our members. Explore new avenues for fundraising. Continue your community service in a safe way. And always, always spread the messages of the American Legion Family!
Who's next?

On the January 18, 2021 National Membership Report, we saw our numbers drop further. We are more than 25,000 members behind where we were at this time last year. We are meeting or achieving our membership target dates, and we continue to recruit new members, but we cannot forget about our members who have not renewed yet. Make getting these members renewed a priority over the next few weeks. If we can see a drastic reduction of members who need to renew, that 25,000+ number will shrink, and it will be a direct result of your efforts.

And what's the best and easiest way to make your transmittals? [MySAL](#).

When you think about everything in this article, I want you to remember why, and who, you joined Sons of The American Legion for. Think about it, who did you join for? Have you ever been asked that question? Do you know the answer of who and

of why? If you want to share, please email me at jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com. Next week we will see our results, and I will tell you who and why I became a member of this great organization.

Until then...

Proud Possessor of a Priceless Heritage,



#SALSTRONG

Jeff Vrabel, Sr.
Central Region Chairman
Sons of The American Legion
National Membership Committee
jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com

*Serving Those Who Served...
Full Steam Ahead*
The American Legion
MEDIA ALLIANCE

JOIN

DONATE



Gentlemen,



Congratulations to all, and thanks to your hard work and dedication to the Sons of The American Legion, we surpassed the 60% goal and are in 2nd place.

We are currently about 3% behind last year this time but considering this pandemic did not begin until March of last year we are not that far off.

There are some new things coming out from National to help our membership. I will pass this information on to you as it is available.

Keep pushing [MySAL](#) and doing your Buddy Checks.

*Richard "Doc" Pfeiffer,
National Vice-Commander Central*

*Serving Those Who Served...
Full Steam Ahead*

Central Region Conference Call

Third Thursday of each month

7:30 p.m. Eastern Time

Call In # (774) 220-4000

Access Code 04423

COMING SOON

Renew

Online!



STAY TUNED

FOR MORE

INFO!



2021 Membership Report

2021 Renewal Report

2020 - 2021 MEMBERSHIP					01/21/21
Region	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Increase
Southern	42,775	30,041	12,734	70.23%	619
Central	132,706	83,731	48,975	63.10%	2,510
Midwest	30,377	18,828	11,549	61.98%	279
Western	26,405	14,923	11,482	56.52%	137
Eastern	146,287	84,558	61,729	57.80%	5,225
TOTALS	378,550	232,081	146,469	61.31%	8,770

Membership ahead/behind prior year date (20,152)

Detachment	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Increase
1 Wisconsin * ^ ~ ? ! # %	3,745	3,072	673	82.03%	69
2 Iowa * ^ ~ ? ! #	4,376	3,384	992	77.33%	32
3 Ohio ~ ? !	31,134	21,303	9,831	68.42%	794
4 Minnesota ^ ~ ? !	11,749	7,504	4,245	63.87%	238
5 Illinois * ^ ~ ? !	14,547	9,243	5,304	63.54%	106
6 Indiana * ^ ~ ?	39,365	24,552	14,813	62.37%	693
7 Michigan	24,084	13,070	11,014	54.27%	578
8 Missouri	3,706	1,603	2,103	43.25%	-
TOTALS	132,706	83,731	48,975	63.10%	2,510

Q = Quota

* Met 09/10/20 goal of 10%

Met 02/10/21 goal of 75%

^ Met 10/15/20 goal of 25%

% Met 03/10/21 goal of 80%

~ Met 11/12/20 goal of 35%

\$ Met 04/14/21 goal of 90%

? Met 12/09/20 goal of 45%

(Met 05/12/21 goal of 100%

! Met 01/21/21 goal of 60%

) Met 07/28/21 goal of 105%

Red Division					
Detachment	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Percent of Region
Wisconsin	3,745	3,072	673	82.03%	3.67%
Iowa	4,376	3,384	992	77.33%	4.04%
Missouri	3,706	1,603	2,103	43.25%	1.91%
TOTALS	8,082	4,987	3,095		5.96%

White Division					
Detachment	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Percent of Region
Minnesota	11,749	7,504	4,245	63.87%	8.96%
Illinois	14,547	9,243	5,304	63.54%	11.04%
TOTALS	26,296	16,747	9,549		20.00%

Blue Division					
Detachment	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Percent of Region
Ohio	31,134	21,303	9,831	68.42%	25.44%
Indiana	39,365	24,552	14,813	62.37%	29.32%
Michigan	24,084	13,070	11,014	54.27%	15.61%
TOTALS	63,449	37,622	25,827		44.93%

NOTE: Division totals are now sorted by overall percentage.

2020 - 2021 RENEWALS					01/18/21
Region	2020 Total	2021 Renewed	Renewal Percentage	Increase	
Southern	43,179	25,547	59.17%	1,662	
Central	127,080	72,651	57.17%	4,807	
Midwest	28,764	16,392	56.99%	1,010	
Eastern	138,433	70,028	50.59%	3,549	
Western	25,857	12,837	49.65%	595	
TOTALS	363,313	197,455	54.35%	11,623	

Detachment	2020 Total	2021 Renewed	Renewal Percentage	Increase
1 Wisconsin	3,974	2,827	71.14%	80
2 Iowa	4,646	3,105	66.83%	172
3 Minnesota	11,094	6,844	61.69%	358
4 Ohio	29,817	18,083	60.65%	1,306
5 Illinois	14,548	8,632	59.33%	480
6 Indiana	36,522	20,796	56.94%	1,446
7 Missouri	3,175	1,497	47.15%	0
8 Michigan	23,304	10,865	46.62%	963
TOTALS	127,080	72,649	57.17%	4,805

Red Division				
Detachment	2020 Total	2021 Renewed	Percentage	Percent of Region
Iowa	4,646	3,105	66.83%	4.27%
Wisconsin	3,974	2,827	71.14%	3.89%
Missouri	3,175	1,497	47.15%	2.06%
TOTALS	11,795	7,429		10.23%

White Division				
Detachment	2020 Total	2021 Renewed	Percentage	Percent of Region
Minnesota	11,094	6,844	61.69%	9.42%
Illinois	14,548	8,632	59.33%	11.88%
TOTALS	25,642	15,476		21.30%

Blue Division				
Detachment	2020 Total	2021 Renewed	Percentage	Percent of Region
Ohio	29,817	18,083	60.65%	24.89%
Indiana	36,522	20,796	56.94%	28.63%
Michigan	23,304	10,865	46.62%	14.96%
TOTALS	89,643	49,746		68.47%

NOTE: Division totals are now sorted by overall percentage.

SAL membership reports are available [here](#).



I WANT YOU TO RENEW!!!

2021
National Target Date
February 10, 2021

75%



VETERANS
STRENGTHENING AMERICA

[JOIN](#) [DONATE](#) [RENEW](#)



Dear American Legion Family and Friends,

I hope you have heard the exciting news that The American Legion has moved to a single sign-on for its collection of websites. This is great news for American Legion members and non-members since they will need to only have one username and password when they visit American Legion national (not department) websites.

This will mean easier access to American Legion related websites including Legion.org, MyLegion.org, Legiontown.org, Centennial.legion.org, Burnpit.us, and Baseball.legion.org.

At this time, this does not apply to registered users of the Emblem Sales website.

The single sign-on is the first step of many changes that are coming to improve user access and experience with MyLegion.org and Legion.org, that will build a foundation for the future for The American Legion. I'm very excited to be a part of this, and I hope you are too.

In order to enjoy the benefit of this new single sign-on, current registered users of the aforementioned American Legion websites need to take a moment to re-register. The reason for the re-registration is that American Legion National Headquarters moved from a vendor proprietary system that required us to renew accounts for all American Legion web properties, and the new platform requires each user to have a unique email address as the username. Please note that all member information is still within MyLegion, securely and safely housed.

**NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
 SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION**

January 22, 2021

TO: National Officers, Detachment Commanders & Adjutants
FROM: Anthony Wright, National Adjutant
SUBJECT: 60% - MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATE

"CONGRATULATIONS"

Thank you for all your efforts so far this membership year. Our standings as of our 60% Membership Target Date (1-21-2021) are posted below:

2021 Membership Goal:	378,550
Total Membership:	232,081
Percentage of Goal:	61.31%
Year-to-Date:	-20,152 (compared to 2020 Membership Year)
Renewal Rate:	54.35%
Detachments making Goal:	33

ALABAMA	GEORGIA	KANSAS	MONTANA	OKLAHOMA	TENNESSEE
ARIZONA	HAWAII	LOUISIANA	NEBRASKA	PHILIPPINES	WISCONSIN
CONNECTICUT	IDAHO	MAINE	NEW YORK	PUERTO RICO	WYOMING
DELAWARE	ILLINOIS	MARYLAND	NORTH CAROLINA	RHODE ISLAND	
FLORIDA	INDIANA	MINNESOTA	NORTH DAKOTA	SOUTH CAROLINA	
FRANCE	IOWA	MISSISSIPPI	OHIO	SOUTH DAKOTA	

GREAT JOB!!

Many detachments should achieve this membership goal soon!

Next Scheduled Renewal Notice Mailed: **January 29, 2021** (2nd of 3)

Next Membership Target Date: **February 10, 2021** (75%)

Renewal is the Key to Membership Success

Membership Is Everyone's Responsibility

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

MySAL

MEMBERSHIP DATABASE

Here are the five steps to set up your single sign-on account:

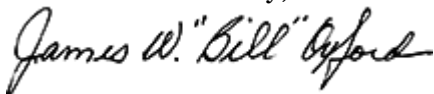
1. Click “Sign In” on an American Legion national website property. You will be taken to our SSO site at sso.legion.org.
2. Click “Register as a new user.” Fill in the form using your best contact email address and member ID (if applicable).
3. Enter and confirm your desired password.
4. Click “Finish” to receive your confirmation email.
5. In the confirmation email, click the link to confirm your account. The provided email will be from sso@legion.org.

It is important that you confirm the sent confirmation email from sso@legion.org. Please check your junk email folder if you don't see this email in your inbox. This step finalizes your account for single sign-on access.

As American Legion national website users register, there have been questions about the process. If you have questions, [please see our most frequently asked questions](#) to help you with the registration process.

I mentioned previously that this single sign-on is the initial step of many that will allow The American Legion to provide a streamlined and better user experience within its web environment. So, thank you for your patience as we navigate this process. Our focus is you, making your time on American Legion national websites valuable, resourceful, and easy to navigate.

For God and Country,



Bill Oxford, National Commander
The American Legion

‘We must end this uncivil war,’ President Biden says

By [Henry Howard](#)

JAN 21, 2021



Just before noon Jan. 20, Joe Biden took the oath of office of as the 46th president and commander-in-chief of the United States.

Biden begins his presidency as America grapples with a range of issues including political infighting, which escalated into a recent attempted insurrection at the United States Capitol, serving as a backdrop to his speech. Additionally, the new administration will face monumental challenges such as bringing the COVID-19 pandemic under control, ensuring the nation's security from enemies foreign and domestic, and healing racial injustices.

He noted that the coronavirus had taken more American lives than were lost during World War II. Additionally, millions of jobs have been lost and businesses have stumbled into difficult times.

"This is a great nation," Biden said during his roughly 20-minute address as part of a largely virtual inauguration. "We are a good people and over the centuries through storm and strife, in peace and in war, we have come so far. We still have far to go."

Biden takes on the role of commander-in-chief with a lengthy track record on defense and diplomacy. His work as a senator offers clues to how he will approach [issues related to defense and national security](#).

American Legion National Commander Bill Oxford extended congratulations to the new president.

"The American Legion Family congratulates President Biden on assuming the most powerful position in the free world," Oxford said. "We are eager to work with the administration to improve the lives of our military, veterans and their families. As the nation's largest veterans organization, our members are dedicated to strengthening America. We also promise to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States. We offer the same assistance and support to the new president as we have to all of his predecessors since our founding in 1919."

There are scores of bills in the halls of Congress that will affect veterans. As Congress debates the legislation, some bills will surely end up on the president's desk. This week The American Legion's Tango Alpha Lima podcast welcomed the organization's legislative director, Lawrence Montreuil, to discuss the Legion's legislative priorities for the 117th Congress. [Download and listen the episode here.](#)

Following the inauguration, Biden, and Vice President Kamala Harris, along with their spouses, Jill Biden, and Douglas Emhoff, conducted a review of

the military and laid a wreath at the Tomb of the unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery.

“Here we stand, across the Potomac (River), across from Arlington Cemetery, where heroes who gave the last full measure of devotion rest in eternal peace,” Biden said during his address. “And here we stand, just days after a riotous mob thought they could use violence to silence the people, to stop the work of our democracy, to drive us from this sacred ground. It did not happen. It will never happen. Not today. Not tomorrow. Not ever.”

Biden and Harris were sworn in as tens of thousands of National Guard troops provided unprecedented security for an inauguration around the nation's capital.

“The rise of political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism we must confront, and we will defeat,” Biden said. “To overcome these challenges and restore the security and soul of America requires so much more than words. It requires the most elusive of all things in a democracy: unity.”

Biden acknowledged how democracy survived a true test as unfounded allegations were aired since his electoral victory in November. “We have come so far but have so much to do. We have much to heal, much to build, much to gain.”

D.C. Police Officer Eugene Goodman, heralded for his role in protecting the U.S. Capitol during the insurrection, was named Acting Deputy House Sergeant at Arms. Goodman escorted Harris as she arrived for Inauguration Day. The violence at the Capitol was a theme Biden touched on throughout his address.

In reference to the violent uprising, Biden said, “We must end this uncivil war.”

Chaplain's Calendar

provided by
Jim Borgman, Member
National Americanism Commission

JANUARY	
New Years Day	January 1
Vietnam Cease Fire	January 27, 1973
Holocaust Remembrance Day (United Nations)	January 27
FEBRUARY	
Americanism Month	
Four Chaplains Sunday	First Sunday
Religious Emphasis Week	First week after the first Sunday
President's Day	Third Monday
MARCH	
American Legion Birthday	March 15, 1919
APRIL	
Children & Youth Month	
MAY	
Loyalty Day	May 1
Mother's Day	Second Sunday
Armed Forces Day	Third Saturday
Poppy Day	May 30
Memorial Day	May 30
JUNE	
<i>Consolidated Reports are due</i>	
D-Day	June 6, 1944
Flag Day	June 14
Father's Day	Third Sunday
JULY	
Independence Day	July 4, 1776
Korean War Ended	July 27, 1953
AUGUST	
National Convention	
SEPTEMBER	
V-J Day	September 2, 1945
Labor Day	First Monday
Patriot Day	September 11
Constitution Day	September 16
Citizenship Day	September 17
Combined Americanism Conference	Third weekend
POW/MIA Recognition Day	September 20
OCTOBER	
Columbus Day	Second Monday
NOVEMBER	
Election Day	First Tuesday after First Monday
Veterans Day	November 11, 1918
American Education Week	Week prior to Thanksgiving week
Family Week	Week of Thanksgiving
Thanksgiving	Fourth Thursday
DECEMBER	
Pearl Harbor Day	December 7, 1941
Hanukkah	December 21
Christmas	December 25
Kwanzaa	December 26 - January 1



SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION



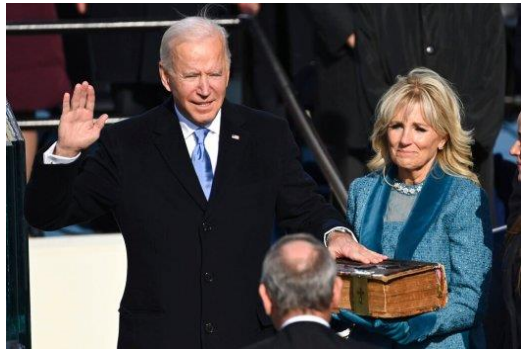
2021
Sons of The American Legion

DOES YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD SHOW 2020?

If so, your **2020** membership card is **EXPIRED** and no longer valid. Please pay your Sons of The American Legion dues today to support your Squadron and The American Legion Family

If your membership card doesn't look like this then you need to RENEW TODAY!!!

ON THE COVER
Inauguration of President Joe Biden
January 20, 2021
The United States Capital – Washington, DC



www.bostonherald.com/2021/01/19/live-bidens-inauguration-trumps-departure/



NOTE: Some of these dates may not match the National Call Calendar as some meetings have been changed.

Americanism Commission Conference Call

First Thursday bi-monthly
January, March, May, July
8:00 p.m. Eastern Time
Call In # (515) 606-5134
Access Code: 451074

Child Welfare Foundation Committee Call

Third Wednesday of each month
8:00 p.m.
Call in # (605) 472-5332
Access Code: 808417

Child & Youth Committee Call

Third Wednesday of each month
8:00 p.m.
Call in # (605) 472-5332
Access Code: 808417

Regards to all from the National Children & Youth Committee!

A reminder - The 4th Monday of the month is the National Children & Youth Committee call.

The first call of 2021 is Monday, January 25 at 8:00 p.m. EST (7:00 p.m. Central)

Call in number: (480) 297-0773
Passcode: 9582899

Please forward as appropriate - All are Welcome!

Agenda is as follows:

- Overview - Grass Roots Push for all 6,100+ Squadrons to host a Children & Youth Event - and Publicize It
- Pick any American Legion Children & Youth Program to support, but please consider one of the following:
 - CWF
 - NEF
 - Veterans & Children's Fund
- As Easy as 1-2-3
 1. Challenge Your Squadron to Host A 2021 Children & Youth Event
 2. Let Your Squadron Picks a Children & Youth Program to Support
 3. Squadrons Publicize their event with a 'Do It Yourself' Press Release
- Discussion – Ideas
 - Opportunities to Get the Word Out About This Initiative to All Squadrons

Thank You for Your Ongoing Support of our Committee and our Children & Youth Programs.

We are looking forward to the year ahead, and if COVID does not prevent us, having a massive swell of Children & Youth events this year!

Enthusiastically,
The National Children & Youth Committee

Bill Clancy (NY)
Phillip Shipley (IL)
Chris Sherman (WI)
John Lawrence (LA)
Jim Noble (NJ)

"Serving Those Who Served - Full Steam Ahead"

Legislative Commission Call

First Thursday bi-monthly
February, April, June, 7 August
7:00 p.m.
Call in # (712) 775-7031
Access Code: 988284103

Membership Committee Conference Call

Third Tuesday of each month
6:00 p.m. Mountain time
Call in # (515) 604-9644
Access Code: 889133

<http://join.freeconferencecall.com/jrnavarr>

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Conference Call

Fourth Monday of each month
7:00 p.m. Central Time

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6354565336?pwd=STBkdUlJQlRoQTRndnJPN1hsVktHQTo9>

My Fellow Sons!

Just a reminder for the upcoming SAL VA & R Commission's Monthly Conference - ZOOM Tele-Conference Call, to be held on Monday, January 25 at 7:00 p.m. CST (Prevailing Time)

Here is your meeting info:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6354565336?pwd=STBkdUlJQlRoQTRndnJPN1hsVktHQTo9>

Meeting ID: 635-456-5336
Passcode: 405160

Dial by your location:

(646) 876-9923 US (New York)
(301) 715-8592 US (Washington D.C.)
(312) 626-6799 US (Chicago)
(253) 215-8782 US (Tacoma)
(346) 248-7799 US (Houston)
(408) 638-0968 US (San Jose)
(669) 900-6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 635-456-5336
Passcode: 405160

Find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kbxB58IHwp>

Passcode: 405160

*Butch Ray, Chairman
Sons of The American Legion
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission*



BUDDY CHECK

LET THEM KNOW WE CARE!

Veterans Employment & Education Commission Conference Call

Third Wednesday of each month
8:00 p.m. Eastern time
Call In # (605) 313-4111
Access Code: 893821



SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED FULL STEAM AHEAD

National Commander Clint Bolt's 2020-2021 Goals

Please remember as you travel and promote the Sons of The American Legion and National Commander Clint Bolt's goals for Membership and all Legion Charities.

- **RECRUIT, RETAIN, AND REINSTATE** to reach **400,000** members
- Renewal rate above 95%
- Obtain 105% in membership by National Convention in Phoenix, AZ
- Recognize our achievements
- Child Welfare Foundation \$500,000
- National Emergency Fund \$100,000
- Soldiers Wish \$100,000
- Legacy Scholarship \$100,000
- Veterans & Children's Fund \$100,000
- Operation Comfort Warriors \$100,000



2021 Individual Recruitment Award

The National Membership Committee offers an award for those members recruiting five (5) new members into the Sons of The American Legion within a membership year. This pin is suitable to wear upon your cover or lapel.

You must meet these minimum requirements to qualify:

To qualify you need to Recruit (5) new members into Sons of The American Legion.

(A new member is defined as any eligible Son joining for the 2021 membership year who was not a member of the Sons of The American Legion during the 2020 membership year).

Transfers or renewals do not count as new members.

Please make sure that the members have been processed before submission. Pins will not be mailed until they are verified in the national membership database.

This award form must be received by July 31st.

Recruiter Information

Name _____ Member ID# _____

Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip Code _____

Full Squadron Name/Number _____ Detachment _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Unless specified different, the pin will be sent to the above address

New Member Information

#1 Full Name _____ Membership ID # _____

#2 Full Name _____ Membership ID # _____

#3 Full Name _____ Membership ID # _____

#4 Full Name _____ Membership ID # _____

#5 Full Name _____ Membership ID # _____

RETURN COMPLETED FORMS TO: (Regional Membership Chairman)

East - Richard Huntley, Jr. (ME) dickie_huntley@hotmail.com 38 Whale Cove Rd., Machiasport, ME 04655

South - Jason Roberts (GA) robertsjason215@gmail.com 215 Oak Hollow Ct., White, GA 30184

Central - Jeffrey Vrabel, Sr. (OH) jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com 2222 Birch Bark Tri., Grove City, OH 43123

Midwest - Juan Torres (TX) juantorres10@hotmail.com 10828 Sycamore Dr. S, La Porte, TX 77571

West - Leslie "Jim" Stewart (NV) controller@bordertowncasino.com 664 Sheffield Ct., Sparks, NV 89431

That Bright Star is the Sons

John T. Dietz, Past National Commander

Special to Round-Up



We are all too familiar with the many problems and challenges confronting society in the United States these days. With each passing week, the pace of change seems to become faster and the future more uncertain. That anxiety is what fuels so much discord and discontentment in our Nation. It feels as if the social contract among Americans is slowly coming

apart.

The social contract is that implicit agreement among citizens to obey the laws, respect the rights and privacy of others, and to conduct ourselves as part of something bigger than ourselves, specifically our Nation. That contract is fundamental to a free Republic and is a founding principle of the United States. Tolerance, civility, mutual respect, and restraint are at the core of our American democracy. Yet those standards seem to be evaporating right before our eyes.

You can see it on the roads, you can see it in the stores, you can watch it on television, and you can feel it in our politics. You saw on the steps of our Nation's capital. This deterioration is occurring because of the modern focus on self rather than society. My parents' generation lived through the Great Depression, the Second World War, and the Cold War. They understood deprivation and sacrifice and commitment to a larger purpose in this life and they clearly understood their obligations as American citizens.

Unfortunately, a growing portion of the American populace has a completely casual disregard for any and all things historical. That lack of understanding and historical context fosters detachment from their obligation as citizens, breeds contempt and distrust of others and a complete disdain for the social contract that so many of us strive to abide by each day of our lives. To paraphrase the author Oscar Wilde, there are a growing number of people in the United States who "know the price of everything and the value of nothing."

This is not the ramblings of some old curmudgeon who is afraid of change. This is a strange and terrifying phenomenon for me, and for my generation

because it poses a very real threat to the viability of our Nation.

But there is a bright star in this otherwise dark horizon and dismal sky – the Sons of The American Legion.

My own mother died when I was only 11 years old. My Legion family stepped in and provided much needed care, attention, support, and guidance. They provided a surrogate family to help me and to teach me. The education I gained from my Legion Family helped me to grow and learn in ways that seem remarkable in this day and age. My membership in the Sons provided a wonderful structure to teach me essential life skills, the value of hard work, the importance of honesty and a devotion to causes larger than myself. It made me a good American citizen. It can do the same for other young men in today's world.

In a time when traditional family structures are becoming a thing of the past, and other institutions fall short in helping young men become adults, the Sons can fulfill an essential need to help young men develop integrity, build character, honor commitments, learn compassion, demonstrate civility, and understand charity. All of the key ingredients for good citizenship. Through the wide variety of activities operated by the Sons, we can provide a sense of structure for these young men and help them develop an awareness of the rules of a civilized society. To steal a line from the Auxiliary, to know the value of Service Above Self.

So, the next time you are asked why someone should become a member of the Sons of The American Legion, you'll know the answer. Our Nation's future depends on it.



**PROUD POSSESSORS
OF A PRICELESS HERITAGE**