

Department of California



Sons of The American Legion Commission District and Squadron Advisors Handbook

Introduction

The American Legion has a long history of continual service for the United States. All Veterans in our organization swear that we would defend our way of life and through our service in civilian life we still uphold that oath. The members have instilled this oath in our sons and daughters.

Sons of The American Legion members have adapted these values, caring on the traditions of The American Legion to Honor those Veterans that allow them eligibility. If you ask members of the S.A.L. why they do what they do, they would say for my father, mother, or grandparents and those Veterans that cannot serve. This is noble in the highest form.

The Sons of The American Legion understands that some gave some and others gave the ultimate sacrifice. They want to assist The American Legion and the programs to be successful. The American Legion is an opportunity to mentor, teach, and learn from the Sons of The American Legion and to have success in many areas of The American Legion from membership, fundraising, and a positive direction for the programs.

Preamble to the Constitution Sons of The American Legion

Proud Possessors of a priceless heritage, we male descendants of veterans of the Great Wars, associate ourselves together as "Sons of The American Legion" for the following purposes:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;

To maintain law and order;

To foster and perpetuate a true spirit of Americanism;

To preserve the memories of our former members and association of our members and forefathers in the Great Wars;

To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the Community, State and Nation;

To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;

To make right the master of might;

To promote peace and goodwill 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 a letter and spirit all of the great principles for which the American Legion stands;

To assist in carrying on for God and Country.

Preamble to the Constitution American Legion

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY WE ASSOCIATE OURSELVES TOGETHER
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 one hundred percent Americanism;
To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars;
To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;
To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;
To make right the master of might;
To promote peace and goodwill on earth;
To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;
To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

S.A.L. History

The Sons of The American Legion was created in 1932 as an organization within The American Legion. The S.A.L. is made up of boys and men of all ages whose parents or grandparents served in the United States military and became eligible for membership in The American Legion. Together, members of The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion, and The American Legion Riders make up what is known as The Legion Family. All four organizations place high importance on preserving our American traditions and values, improving the quality of life for our nation's children, caring for veterans and their families, and perhaps most importantly, teaching the fundamentals of good citizenship.

S.A.L. Eligibility

All male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of members of The American Legion, and such male descendants of veterans who died in Service during World I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf War and the War on Terrorism, during the delimiting periods set forth in Article IV, Section 1, of the National Constitution of The American Legion, or who died subsequent to their honorable discharge from such service, shall be eligible for Membership in the Sons of The American Legion.

Note: youth membership and adult membership holds the same membership benefits. ie: a 6 month old can vote as well as any adult.

Our Parallels with The American Legion

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| The American Legion National Organization | <i>Sons of The American Legion National Organization</i> |
| The American Legion Department | <i>Sons of The American Legion Detachment</i> |
| The American Legion District/County | <i>Sons of The American Legion District/County</i> |
| The American Legion Post | <i>Sons of The American Legion Squadron</i> |

The Squadron / Post Relationship

Legally, the S.A.L. is a program, not an independent organization. The S.A.L. is not a recognized, legal corporate entity because it is organized under the auspices of The American Legion. The Constitution, By-Laws and policies of the Squadron must be approved by the Post. These documents then become policy of the post and if a conflict happens the reference is the Post policy.

The Squadron always retains jurisdiction - which means that the Squadron must act on a matter first before the sponsoring Post can approve or veto the activity.

Squadrons need to develop a niche; do 3 or 4 activities very well to make the Squadron a real asset to the sponsoring Post and community. Advertising these activities to the sponsoring Post and community will help build support for the S.A.L. and attract new members.

As the American Legion works on programs so must the Sons. These programs can be the same. The Post and Squadron working together for a common goal is imperative for success.

Due to the fact that the Sons are a program of The American Legion the finances of the Squadron should be reported to the Post no less frequently than monthly for tax purposes, if the Squadron holds their own account. The finances should be audited by the Post and Squadron to ensure that everything is in order.

A committed and dedicated Squadron Advisor is absolutely vital to the success of any Squadron. A Squadron Advisor negotiates with the Legion on behalf of the Squadron, advocates the Squadron's intentions and efforts, and educates the Legion Membership about the S.A.L.

Legion District and Sons District Relationship

The American Legion and the S.A.L. District is a unique relationship. The S.A.L. District must have the approval of The American Legion District to become active. Per the Detachment of California Constitution there must be at least Three (3) squadrons to form a district. It is recommended that the Legion District Commander appoint an advisor for all of their Squadrons in the District. This ensures there is continuity from the Dept. of California S.A.L. Commission, Legion District, and the Squadron Advisor.

Role of The Advisor

1. It is imperative that the Veteran wants the job. If the individual is not interested in the appointment, the Squadron may not be able to grow to their full potential. This appointee should also be trainable so that they are able to train the squadron leaders.
2. The Veteran must be a Legion member of the sponsoring Post. Membership in the American Legion is required. It is not required but a plus if the Veteran is also a member of the S.A.L.
3. Major focal point “GO between” for Post and SAL Squadron. The Veteran is the Advocate – Act as Liaison between Squadron and Post. Passing information, getting approvals from the Post and working toward a successful relationship between both the Post and Squadron.
4. The Advisor will need to provide guidance (mentor). As the S.A.L. is a program, this guidance is important to ensure that there are no illegal actions being taken and also the Squadron leadership may need help in designing a proper direction of the Squadron. This does not mean to take over and make the decisions. The Squadron needs to make their own choices with the approval of the Post.
5. A positive, upward driven Advisor is critical to the success of program. The Squadron and the leadership will want to move forward with the motivation of an advisor.
6. The Advisor must have strong leadership qualities. As a mentor the advisor will want to have example settings, good communications, and traits that can be emulated amongst the Squadron leadership.
7. The desire to see the SAL Program grow will in fact assist the entire Legion Family grow. With positive inflection of doing it right the membership and programs will get stronger.
8. Develop a great working relationship with SAL Leaders. This is by providing advice and administrative guidance when necessary with all operations of the Squadron. Finance, membership, fund raising, and program development to completion are some examples of experience driven advice that can be given.
9. Above all the Advisor assists & provides guidance/direction to ensure proper “Operation” of the Squadron.

Advisor Functions

1. Monitor Administrative matters (address changes, data forms, preparation of membership cards, membership registers)
2. Recognition and Encouragement
3. Communications with members
4. Membership:
 - a. Growth
 - b. Renewals
 - c. Understanding how to form Membership Teams
5. Activities based on age. This is due to the youth and adults in the same program.
6. Preparation of Reports for Post/Dept.
7. Get involved with Post (Joint Activities)
8. SAL meetings (be in attendance) and know how to run the meeting to advise the Squadron Commander, if needed.
9. Assist with Bulletins; Newsletters

Advisor's Responsibilities

1. To represent the best interest of both the Squadron and the Post
2. To Advise
3. To Mentor
4. To Provide Leadership
5. Teach
6. To Observe (see that meetings of the Sons of The American Legion are conducted according to the Bylaws and Roberts Rules of Order.)
7. Insure that Squadron operations do not conflict with Post policy and procedure or Constitution and By-laws
8. All meetings to be with God and Country to be treated with the proper ritual, tradition, and decorum.
9. Respect the Flag
10. See that all members needs are being met and all programs and events held by the Sons of The American Legion are conducted in the best interest of the sponsoring Post and The American Legion Family.
11. Proper protocol is observed when working with all members of the Legion Family.
12. Communicate with District Advisors and the Department Commission members in your area.

Advisor Tools

Squadron Handbook

American Legion Officers Guide and Ceremonies Guide

Detachment Information & Officers

Legion Experience

National, Department, District and Post Constitution, By-Laws and policies pertaining to the S.A.L.

National, Detachment, District (where applicable) and Squadron Constitution, By-Laws and policies

Roberts Rules of Order (the "For Idiots" Book will help)