

**SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
DETACHMENT OF COLORADO
HOME OF THE PAST SAL NATIONAL COMMANDER
MIKE MOSS**



Volume 8 Issue 1

Proud Possessors of a Priceless Heritage
Colorado Sons Electronic Update
Online at www.salcolorado.org



*An unofficial publication of the Sons of The
American Legion, Detachment of Colorado*

2012-2013

TRIPLE NICKEL DETACHMENT



December 2021

Electronic Update Reboot

Recognizing that communication is a vital key to the success of any organization, upon request of the Detachment leadership, we are rebooting the Detachment of Colorado Electronic Update. This publication is not intended to express the official position of the SAL Detachment of Colorado, The American Legion Department of Colorado or their respective National Organizations. It is a forum to share educational materials and information about events and happenings within the Detachment and National Organization of the Sons of The American Legion. Detachment Officers, Squadrons and individual members of the Sons of The American Legion are invited and encouraged to share information about programs and events relevant to the mission of the Sons of the American Legion. Email your write-up and pictures you wish to have published to: mark.kilstrom@comcast.net. This publication is compiled and published as a volunteer service by Mark Kilstrom.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

As we enter this holiday season, many of us may not feel the joy and celebration that normally comes with this time of year. Some of us have lost loved ones, some have lost jobs and even more due to the pandemic. However, with the season and the spirituality that it brings, may it also bring some joy and hope of better days to come. Lets remember those less fortunate that ourselves and remember that with faith, hope and love we shall prevail, and please remember to show love towards each other.

TIME TO REBOOT COLORADO

The Covid 19 pandemic which hit the United States of America about two years ago created a server drawdown in our activities as a Veterans Service Organization, and in some Posts, a virtual stoppage of all activities.

A lot of information, guidelines, directives and even mandates were proclaimed with varying levels of restrictions depending upon ones' city, county and state. Many of these readouts changed frequently throughout the pandemic. There was: no need to buy or wear a mask, everyone should wear a mask, masks should only be worn indoors, mask should be worn at all times, masks don't really provide any protection, you should wear two masks, you should wear three masks, the vaccine isn't

safe or effective, get the vaccine; don't get the vaccine, you must get the vaccine, you can still get and spread the virus even if you get the vaccine, etc., etc. Regardless of what side of the matter you may stand on, we must all agree that there was a lot of contradicting information that left most of us confused, bitter, divided, scared and even angry.

One thing we know for sure is that all of our lives were affected and disrupted. As a result of shutdowns and lockdowns, many of us suffered financial difficulties and coupled with mandated closures of various businesses, our lives were turned upside down. Many American Legion Post shut there doors, some remain closed which had dramatic af-

fects on our programs and activities. All of these events had a devastating impact on The American Legion and associated organization such as the Sons of The American Legion. The pandemic and related factors dramatically impacted our membership and our ability to support the various programs and organizations that have come to rely on our generosity.

Lets take a look. Our membership in 2010 was at 2,630 and steadily increased (with a couple slight dips) through 2018 when we hit our all time high of 3,245, nearly a 25% increase and along that journey we achieved the envious distinction of becoming a Triple Nickle Detachment. That's reaching 105% of the previ-

(Continued on page 2)



Flying Flags for Heroes



At the 2021 Nation Convention of the Sons of The American Legion, newly elected SAL National Commander, Michael Fox announced his Service Project of Flying Flags for Heroes. The objective of the project to ensure that veterans who have transferred to the Post Everlasting are not forgotten. To accomplish this objective, he has set a goal of placing 1,000,000 flags on the grave sites of those veterans who have passed on. Accomplishing this goal will take the commitment of each De-

tachment and therefore, Commander Fox has requested each Detachment appoint a member to lead the effort in their State and make a commitment to the number of flags they pledge to place. In concert with this project, Commander Fox has designated a National Chairman to coordinate the efforts throughout the various Detachments. The Commander, Detachment of Colorado has appointed past National Historian and past Detachment Commander Mark Kilstrom to lead

the efforts for Colorado. Mark laid out his plan at the DEC meeting held on November 20th at American Legion Post 1985 in Firestone. Colorado has committed to 5,280 flags. The cost of the "Made in America" grave side flags will cost about \$900.00. Mark has sent letters to the various American Legion Post Commanders within the Department of Colorado requesting donations to cover the cost of the flags. Mark is asking the various Squad-

(Continued on page 2)

BLAST FROM THE PAST

As we reboot the *Colorado Sons Electronic Update*, and as mentioned earlier, reboot the Detachment, I think it might be beneficial to reflect back to where we were. In this issue, and perhaps in issues to come, I will include an article or two from previous issues of years past. The following article appeared in the December 2014 (Volume 6 Issue 3). It is as relevant now as it was then, maybe even more so as we as an organization, reboot from the pandemic that brought our organization to a virtual standstill. Please note that currently I do not serve as the Detachment Adjutant, however at the time of initial publication, I was serving in that capacity.

Squadron and Post Relationships

By Mark Kilstrom, Detachment Adjutant.

Periodically, I get questions from various Post and Squadron Officers around the State asking about the relationship between the Post and the Squadron, and what obligations the Squadron has to the Post. Most often they revolve around Squadron Finances and what obligation the Squadron has to report their financial activities to the Post. The Squadron is a program of the post and does not carry its own national or state tax ID number or EIN. As a program of the Post the Squadron uses the Post tax ID numbers. A few years ago Department Adjutant Pat Smith wrote about the relationship between the Squadron and Post as part of a training seminar. I thought it worth while to revisit what Pat had to say, so here it is:

Contributed by Department Adjutant Pat Smith

During recent training events the question came up about the relationship of the SAL to The American Legion. The SAL is a "program" of the Legion and each individual post must agree to sponsor a charter at the post level. The charters are issued by the National Organization and are called "Squadrons." The SAL has a state level program called the "Detachment" sponsored by the Department Headquarters. While the squadrons can operate independently of the Legion they are still the

responsibility of the Legion Post leadership. The post leadership should be used only as an advisor to the SAL and should not try to run or dictate the SAL activities and events. They do an excellent job of supporting our Legion programs. At the Department level the SAL keeps their own checking and savings accounts with signatures of their officers and with the Department Finance Officer as signatory on those accounts also. Their financials are submitted to the Department annually and are filled with the Department's 990 income tax form as income and expenses to the Department. This should work the same way at the post level. The SAL has no district organization. A smooth operating SAL is a real asset to a Post. The question arose as to the legality of SAL members serving on a Executive Committee of the Post. There are two parts to the answer. First an Executive Committee of the Post should be organized solely for the operation and management of the American Legion programs. The post constitution and by-laws should designate the members of this committee but it should include the Commander, Adjutant, Finance Officer and Judge Advocate and other officers of the post as determined by the membership. This committee should conduct American Legion business only. Only paid up, bona fide, members of the Legion can sit on the Post Executive

Committee. As to the SAL's participation in this post executive committee, the SAL cannot be a voting member of this committee, since they are charged with determining the policies of the American Legion and policy decisions made at the post executive committee could be passed on to the department and national levels by resolution. Second, if the post operates a club or bar facility, an entirely separate board of directors should be designated to operate and manage that business. The Commander, Adjutant and Finance Officers should be a member of this board of directors, with other members as designated and elected by the post membership. If the post membership desires, both the SAL and Auxiliary can occupy voting seats on the Club Board of Directors (call it what you want, Executive Committee for the club. Board of Directors for the club, Trustees, Club Operation Committee, etc.). The decisions made there can only affect the operation of the bar and club business, not of the Legion since the American Legion does not legally recognize a club or bar operation.

REBOOTING COLORADO

(Continued from page 1)

ous years membership, chartering five new Squadrons and have at least an 85% renewal rate within one membership year, that being 2013. Contrasting our 2018 of 3245 members with our 2020 membership of 2,891 and 2021 membership of 2,348, granted we still have about a month left as of this publication date, but that represents nearly a 28% drop since that all time high just 3 short years ago.

Understanding that the pandemic is largely to blame, but now as our nation begins to open up, it's time to begin our reboot. It is understandable that many still have serious and valid concerns about the virus, but we need to start getting back on track doing the things we do best. "*Adopt in Letter and Spirit All of the Great Principles for which The American Legion Stands.*" And that requires a strong membership base.

Lets reach out to those members who have not

renewed due to the pandemic and *reboot our relationship with them.* Invite them back, and remind them of why they became a member back when they joined. Make them understand that they are an important element of the organization. Ask them to get reinvolved and help out.

Squadron Leadership should have contact information for your members, phone number, email or physical mailing address. Any type of contact is better than none. Sometimes all someone needs is to be asked, or invited back in.

The Detachment and the National Organization realize that years of continuous service is important to many of our members and that the pandemic brought financial hardship to many of our members and membership dues to an organization that couldn't function was probably a low priority. So as a reach out tool, the National Organization is allowing members who did not renew in 2020 due to

the pandemic to keep there years of continuing service if they renew for 2021. So if they had 18 years as of 2019, and did not renew in 2020, they can pay 2021 dues and stay at 18 years of continuous service. You can reach out to the Detachment Adjutant on how to report these renewals so they don't loose credit for prior years of service.

We hear it all the time, membership is the backbone of the organization. It may sound like a broken record, but it's as true a fact as that the sun rises in the east, and the Rocky Mountains are a special place created by God Almighty.

Let's reach out to those who have not renewed in 2020 and 2021 and remind them of why they were members and what we are about and how important they are to fulfilling our mission. Our communities and favored organizations depend upon us for support. And we need our membership to fulfill the mission.

Flying Flags for Heroes

(Continued from page 1)

rons within the Detachment of Colorado to provide a contact person and form a team of squadron members as needed to coordinate with local cemetery administrators to identify the grave sites of veterans buried at their cemetery and coordinate a date for the placement

of flags. Mark would like each squadron contact to reach out to him for further guidance and planning. Please provide your contact persons information to Mark either by email at mark.kilstrom@comecast.net or by phone at (719) 640-6692. Once the flags have been ordered they will be mailed to Mark and he will further provide them to the Squadron contact. Once Squadron events are set up,

provide Mark with the name of the cemetery, the date, number of flags and submit pictures to Mark by email. For further information about the project, feel free to reach out to Mark. This flag placing event should be separate from such events traditionally held on Memorial Day or Veterans Day.