



S.A.L. General Membership Meeting Minutes – October 2016

On October 19, 2016 the monthly meeting of the Sons of the American Legion Veterans Memorial Squadron 347 was held at 7:00 PM in the Post 347 Hall.

Membership cards were checked at the door. There were 25 members, 8 prospective new members, and 2 guests in attendance. 13 Officers were in attendance; Bill Preston, Gary Bishop, George Worton, Deano Mosingo, Mike Shebel, Jack Dirga, Ben Kisielica, Bill Gray, Doug White, Danny Adams, Cory Meloni, Richard Duncan, and Butch Stroud. Bill Spriet was not present.

Commander Bill Preston opened the meeting at 7:00 PM. An opening prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance was followed by a moment of silence for our fallen comrades and Veterans. The POW/MIA Empty Chair ceremony and the reciting of the Preamble by the members closed out the meeting introduction. The Commander noted that 1st Vice Commander of the Post, Al Varrone, was in attendance, as well as our Detachment Historian and Past Eastern Area Commander Tom Soeder, and Mark Gilbert, Past Detachment Commander of Maryland.

Adjutant Doug White made a motion to accept the minutes from the September General Membership meeting as emailed to membership, and posted on the meeting room door; motion seconded by Gary Bishop. Discussion followed: Richard Duncan felt the minutes should be read aloud. The motion was Approved.

New Business:

Adjutant Doug White noted that the Executive Committee, at its October 5th meeting, approved a \$500 donation to the Lake Weir High School JROTC program run by instructor Sergeant-Major Michael Kelson. Mr. White then made a motion to donate \$500 to this program; seconded by Gary Bishop. Motion was Approved.

Commander Preston indicated that several local High School students who received scholarships last year were to be invited to speak at an upcoming meeting. Bill Gray, scholarship committee chair, said he has arranged for 2 students from Lake Weir HS and 2 from Belleview HS to attend our November 16th membership meeting. They will give a short speech describing their progress in school and their appreciation for the support given by the S.A.L organization. Bill said that last year the S.A.L awarded a total of \$7,000 in scholarships to students of both schools.

2nd Vice Commander George Worton said Halloween Dance tickets are on sale now. The Valentines Dance tickets will go on sale in November. Also, another Crab Race fundraiser is scheduled for March 18, 2017. Richard Duncan, who is coordinating the Halloween Dance, said he has relaxed the full-table reservation from 10 seats to 6, to encourage more full-table sales. Tickets are \$12 each and snacks may be brought into the Hall; a special exception for this dance (NO drinks are to be brought in). Richard is asking for volunteers to help setup the tables and chairs and decorations at noon of October 29th; and also for the breakdown after the dance (9 PM), which requires the hall to be setup with 325 chairs for Sunday religious service. Contact Richard at yoyouno@aol.com, or 352-391-7957.



Legislative Committee Chair Danny Adams discussed the By-Laws review meeting held October 12th. At this point only one change is being proposed, to remove the membership meeting time from the By-Laws. Danny has met with the Post Judge Advocate and is now preparing a formal By-Laws document for their review. Danny also reminded members of their duty as citizens to vote in the upcoming National and State elections.

The Commander noted that Special Olympics is a Detachment priority project for this year, and that our slogan of support for S.O. this year is "Squadron 347 Gives a Hoot for Special Olympics Athletes". Commander asked Corey Meloni, our Special Olympics Chair, to report on the progress with sales of our new S.O. stuffed owl. All proceeds from owl sales go directly to our contribution to the Special Olympics of Florida. Mr. Meloni reports that, after selling owls at dinners and other events for only a few weeks, 18 owls have been sold; giving a total profit to-date of over \$177. Owls are being sold for \$20. Mr. Meloni displayed the stuffed owl, and our new banner that is being used to help promote the Squadron's S.O. support. Richard Duncan asked if the Post might allow us to sell owls at Tuesday's Queen-of-Hearts event. Post 1st Vice Commander Al Varrone said that question would have to be put to the QofH coordinator, Ed Lawson.

1st Vice Commander Gary Bishop updated us on membership. To-date there have been 383 Renewals/New/Transfers, for a total of 73%. For the past 30 days there are 9 New Member and 2 Transfer applicants. (New: John Mattoccia, Michael Ferguson, Edward Pobudinski, Bruce Speck, Nicholas Capozzi, Jeffrey Leonard, James Knopp, John McCauley, John Steininger; Transfers : David Triplett, Eugene DeRosier). Mr. Bishop motioned to approve the new members and transfer applicants; seconded by Richard Duncan. Motion was approved. Gary asked the 8 new members in attendance to give a brief statement about themselves and their motivation to join. Mr. Bishop reminded members of the importance of volunteering for our various activities, as this important work is the lifeblood of our organization. Commander recognized Verge Woodie, our Monday night kitchen Manager, who made a brief statement that volunteers are always welcome and that even 1 or 2 nights per month is very helpful to our success.

Chaplain Jack Dirga relayed that our past Sgt-at-Arms Norm Anderson is recovering from major surgery and our thoughts and prayers are directed to his speedy recovery. Lastly, Mr. Dirga thanked his assistant, Ben Kiselica, for all of his help during the summer.

Adjutant Doug White read a summary of the latest Financial Report. Georg Worton motioned to accept the Finance Report as read; seconded by Bill Gray. Motion was Approved.

Post 1st Vice Commander Al Varrone was recognized to discuss several topics:

- Reported that the Post and the Sons attended a meeting of the Lady Lake Soccer and the Lady Lake Little League to deliver joint combined donations of \$1,500 and \$2,300 respectively.
- At the Post membership meeting of October 12th the Lake Weir High School JROTC color guard did an excellent job presenting colors. Sons' officers Gary Bishop and Doug White were in attendance. The Post presented the JROTC instructors Sergeant-Major Kelson and Sergeant Rosales with a \$1,000 donation in support of their excellent program.
- The Post held an initiation ceremony on October 16th where 61 new members were sworn-in. Sons' officers Gary Bishop and Doug White were in attendance.



- Reminder of the monthly breakfast on the 2nd Saturday from October through April. Next breakfast is on November 11th. Cost is \$6 and is open to the general public.
- The Early Bird Dinner is scheduled for Sunday, December 18th, from 2 PM to 5 PM for those members who have renewed, joined, or transferred by November 11th. Guests may also attend for \$5.
- The Post is opening its doors on Thanksgiving Day to welcome anyone who has no other option for Thanksgiving dinner.

Detachment Historian Tom Soeder was recognized to discuss one topic:

- The Past Commanders' Club is introducing a commemorative Special Olympics pin that contains the emblems of all four Legion family organizations and the Special Olympics organization. The pins will be for sale as a national S.O. fundraiser.

Past Detachment Commander Mark Gilbert was recognized to express his support for the upcoming Halloween Dance and encourage members and others to attend.

Commander Preston expressed his sincere appreciation for the thoughts, prayers, and kindness shown during his recent hospitalization.

Gary Blanchard was recognized to discuss the need for used laptop computers. These are being refurbished for the use of veterans who otherwise might not have access to a computer. Mr. Blanchard also emphasized how impressed he has been by the Lake Weir HS JROTC program and the good they do to support over 270 youth in our area. Mr. Blanchard also mentioned that he has S.A.L shirts for sale. He may be reached at 352-636-8004.

The meeting was properly closed at 8:00 PM with a closing prayer by the Chaplain and the retirement of the POW/MIA chair cover by the Sgt at Arms.

Yours in God and Country,
Doug White, Adjutant