



## **S.A.L. General Membership Meeting Minutes - December 21, 2016**

On December 21, 2016 the monthly meeting of the Sons of the American Legion Veterans memorial Squadron 347 was held at 7:00PM in the Post 347 Hall.

Membership cards were checked at the door by the Sergeant-at-Arms. There were 26 members in attendance, including 1 new member to be inducted at this meeting, and 12 Officers. Officers in attendance: Bill Preston, Gary Bishop, George Worton, Deano Mosingo, Danny Adams, Jack Dirga, Bill Gray, Doug White, Mike Shebel, Cory Meloni, Richard Duncan, and Butch Stroud. Absent was outgoing Treasurer Tom Laicha (Since the November meeting Tom Laicha resigned as Treasurer). Past Commander Joe Fazio was also in attendance, as well as Al Varrone, representing the Post.

Commander Bill Preston opened the meeting at 7:00PM. An opening prayer by Chaplain Jack Dirga was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for our fallen comrades and Veterans. The POW/MIA Empty Chair ceremony by Sergeant-at Arms Deano Mosingo and the reciting of the SAL Preamble to the National Constitution by the members closed out the meeting introduction.

The Sgt-at-Arms escorted the two guest speakers to the podium. Bill Gray, scholarship Chairman, introduced the two area students, both of whom received \$2,000 scholarships last year. Amanda Holloway from Belleview HS is now attending the University of Florida in Gainesville. Carly Taylor of Lake Weir HS is now attending the University of South Florida in St. Petersburg. Amanda spoke about her gratefulness to the Sons' for the scholarship as she can do more extracurricular activities instead of working while studying. She was elected a student Senator and is studying for dual majors in Telecom and Information Systems. Carly is a first generation college student in her family. She is majoring in Marketing and has a paid internship the Sons' helped arrange for her. She also thanked the Sons' for all the other work we do as her family has several veterans.

Commander Bill Preston announced that Tom Laicha had to resign from the Treasurer position due to personal reasons. Commander Bill Preston recognized Danny Adams as the newly appointed Treasurer. Commander also appointed Mike Shebel as the new Judge Advocate, replacing Danny Adams. Danny Adams officially resigned from his previous position as Judge Advocate.

1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander Gary Bishop gave a membership update:

- 524 Paid members for 2017 - 100%.
- Includes 56 New or Transfers year to date.
- 13 New this month.

Gary made a motion to accept the new members; seconded by Jack Dirga. Members voted Approval. The new member in attendance, Don Drogasch, was introduced and he spoke briefly as to why he joined the Sons'.

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander asked for an update on the upcoming Crab Race event and the Flag Refurbishment event. Gary Blanchard said the next Crab Race event will be on Saturday, March 18<sup>th</sup>; the doors open at 5 PM and the races run from 6 PM to 9 PM. There will be overhead video this time to help everyone see the races better. Gary also discussed the "Flags for Fallen Veterans" program. On January 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 the flags in storage will be refurbished for placement. The date for flag placement is 5/28/17, and flag removal is 6/2/17. Volunteers are needed for all of these important events. Gary also reminded the members that any used laptop computers that are donated will be refurbished and given to returning Veterans in transition. Please contact Gary for more details on any of these events and causes <[dixied39@embarqmail.com](mailto:dixied39@embarqmail.com)>.



2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander asked for an update on the upcoming Valentine's Day Dance. Mike Hicks said the dance is scheduled for Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup>; the doors open at 6 PM and the dance is 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM. Petrina, a very popular singer in The Villages, will be performing. Ads will be placed in The Daily Sun and online at [www.villages-news.com](http://www.villages-news.com). Tickets go on sale January 1<sup>st</sup> in the Lounge and the Office. Tickets are \$15 per person and reservations for a table of 8 or 10 can be made. Bring your own snacks (NO Beverages can be brought in) and a cash bar will be open. All proceeds from the event will be earmarked for the Honor Flight organization. Mike is asking for volunteers to help with table setup in the afternoon, and breakdown after the dance. Contact Mike at 352-504-1753 or <[mahgop@aol.com](mailto:mahgop@aol.com)>.

Danny Adams, our new Finance Officer, gave his first finance report. For the month of November, subject to audit, we had Income of \$7,824; Cost of Goods Sold of \$1,294; Profit of \$6,529; and Expenses of \$1,384; and Net Profit of \$5,145. The audit being done by the Post Finance Office is still underway.

Mike Hicks made a motion to accept the minutes of the November General Membership meeting as emailed to the members and posted on the meeting room door; motion was seconded by George Worton. The motion was Approved.

Commander noted that at the Detachment's Fall Conference a collection was held to support the family of John Jennings's 12-year old grandson, who is battling cancer. Commander donated \$100 personally and also \$100 from our Squadron. He is seeking approval after-the-fact for this Squadron donation. Corey Meloni motioned to approve the \$100 Squadron donation; seconded by Mike Kicks. Motion was Approved.

Adjutant Doug White suggested advertising the Sons' by printing a pamphlet that describes the military memorabilia displayed at The Villages Eisenhower Recreation Center. The pamphlet would include a sponsorship ad for the Sons' organization and how to join. Corey Meloni motioned to allocate \$200 for this purpose, subject to budget approval by the Treasurer; seconded by Jack Dirga. Discussion: Adjutant has not yet approached The Villages to gain approval for this pamphlet; he was awaiting membership approval first. Motion was Approved.

Richard Duncan motioned to approve a \$2,500 donation to the Fisher House; seconded by Gary Bishop. Discussion: Gary recommends to anyone to visit a Fisher House and see the excellent work they do to help bring comfort to families of recovering veterans. Our donation would be used to support Florida Fisher House activities; we hope to present the donation in person to a Fisher House representative, and/or Kirk Miller, the Sons' National Fisher House committee chairman, at an upcoming membership meeting. Motion was Approved.

Commander asked Special Olympics Chairman Corey Meloni to give an update on owl sales. Corey says there have been 46 owls were sold so far, and total profit so far is ~\$800, including donations. An additional 25 owls have been ordered, but Avon is discontinuing sales after 12/31/16. Corey also showed a new commemorative Special Olympics pin that is being sold for \$10. The pin shows emblems for all 4 Legion family organizations: Post, Sons, Auxiliary, and Riders. Ask any of the Officers if you'd like to purchase a pin <[SAL-347@comcast.net](mailto:SAL-347@comcast.net)>.

Commander mentioned that there are upcoming Special Olympics events in the area that volunteers are needed for. In particular, there is a 2-day State Equestrian Championship being held March 24-25 in Grand Oaks Equestrian Center, 3000 Marion County Road, Weirsdale, FL. Virgil Woodie says that these equestrian events are a fabulous opportunity to volunteer, even if you don't know anything about horses, since there are many different jobs needing to get done during the event. You can learn more about this event at <<https://specialolympicsflorida.org/compete/competitions/equestrian-sports-championships/>>. If you wish to volunteer at this magnificent event, contact the Commander at (904) 874-4614.



George Worton asks for an update on the website upgrade. Adjutant Doug White is working on the upgrade with Post member Mike Horn. The Post has approved the change in website content and the new version is expected to be published in mid-January.

Chaplain Jack Dirga discussed he has purchased and delivered a food basket to the family of Charlie McGlone, who is recovering from a serious operation.

Virgil Woodie mentioned that one of his regular kitchen volunteers sustained an injury and is out-of-commission for a few weeks. He is looking for additional Monday dinner volunteers. Contact Virgil at 407-516-0142 if you'd like to volunteer one or more Monday evenings.

Adjutant read a proposed letter of endorsement for Past Commander Tom Soeder for the position of Detachment Historian. Richard Duncan motioned to endorse Tom Soeder for Detachment Historian; seconded by Corey Meloni. Motion was unanimously Approved.

Commander asks the membership if they have suggestions for guest speakers at our membership meetings. If you have a recommendation, communicate that to one of the Officers.

Gary Bishop mentions that the Lake Weir HS JROTC is to be here at our February meeting and will perform color guard duty for us. At that time we will present them with a custom wooden case to hold the 9 parade swords we donated to the JROTC organization. The wooden case will have a dedication plaque honoring the student Command Sergeant Major Nicholas Watke, who was recently killed in an auto/motorcycle accident.

Commander mentioned that our own Matthew Duncan is to be attending Boy's State. He is currently in the process of applying for enrollment at the Air Force Academy.

Commander discussed we will be wrapping about 130 small gifts tonight, after the meeting, for hospitalized veterans at our area VA Hospitals and nursing homes. Chicken nuggets and french fries were served to the over 20 members who stayed to do the wrapping.

Al Varrone discussed to following:

- The Post is holding a special meeting on January 7<sup>th</sup> exclusively Vietnam-era veterans. A special commemorative pin will be distributed to those attending the meeting. The Commander asks if he can speak at the meeting to tell the veterans about The Sons' organization.
- The Post has accepted the addition of The Legion Riders as a new member of the Legion family in our Post.

Sergeant at Arms Deano Mosingo retired the POW/MIA chair cover and Chaplain Jack Dirga gave a closing prayer.

Commander Bill Preston adjourned the meeting at 8:05 PM

Yours in God and Country,  
Doug White, Adjutant  
Bob O'Neal, Assistant Adjutant