

SONS OF THE

 **AMERICAN
LEGION**

HOW TO START OR RESTART A SQUADRON

Information for the Post who wants a new Squadron or wants to restart the one they started a long time ago.



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SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION; DETACMENT OF IOWA
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STARTING A NEW SQUADRON

1. Forming a new Squadron in the Post.
 - a. Post can only be associated with one Squadron.
 - b. There is no cost to the Post to apply for a Squadron or get the charter that is all free.
 - c. Need 10 new members, cannot use transfers.
 - i. Look at Post members first and then look at the whole community and surrounding area.
 1. Do you have volunteers that help with events, and they are not Legion members, maybe they can be SAL members?
 - ii. Do not worry about dues, that comes later. The Squadron at their organizational meeting will decide how much dues will be and when they will be collected.
 - d. If you get younger members into the Squadron, they need to have activities for them to do on meeting nights not just all meetings.
 - i. Young members will get bored at meetings and will become restless.
 1. Need to have some meeting time, so they get use to meetings and learn the procedures and traditions of the American Legion family.
 - ii. Half through the meeting let the younger members go do something fun.
 1. Color pictures for Veterans that are in the nursing home, hospital or homebound.
 2. Teach them flag etiquette or how to fold the flag.
 3. Roll silverware to get ready for an upcoming benefit.
 - iii. Have a couple of the parents be the advisors or leaders for those younger members.
 1. If you have an active Cub Scouts troop, talk to those leaders for ideas of things the young boys can do.
 2. Or if you have an active Junior Auxiliary, maybe they would work with the young boys too on their activities. The SAL members can earn Auxiliary badges too, great wait to get them excited to be involved.
 3. The SAL Handbook also carries suggestions for things to do each month of the year as activities.
 - a. The Ten Ideals program.
 - b. Five Point Program of Service.
 - e. Just as important as members in your Squadron, you need at least two (2) Legionaries to be advisors, National organization recommends three (3) advisors.
 - i. They must be just as excited about the Squadron as the new members.
 1. If advisors are not excited about the Squadron, it is hard for a Squadron to stay excited.
 - ii. One or all needs to be at all SAL meetings.
 - iii. They are to advisers to the Squadron, not to run the meetings; they need to let them be their own organization just to help them stay true to the principles of Legion.
 - iv. Advisors are liaisons to the Legion and SAL carrying news between the 2 organizations.
2. Recruiting members for the Squadron.
 - a. For the new member it is a great way to honor the Veteran whose service they are eligible to become a son's member

- b. Talk to the new members about being a part of the greatest service organizations in the world.
 - c. Being able to help their dad's or Grandfather's brothers in arms.
 - d. For the young Veterans with young families, it is a good way to have an activity for the whole family. With so many family members being in their own groups and running around for separate events, this would be the one thing the whole family could do together.
 - 1. Dad can join the Legion and possibly the SAL.
 - 2. Son(s) joins the SAL.
 - 3. Mom and daughter join the Auxiliary.
 - e. Helping to take care and say thank you to those who have given us our freedom.
 - f. Can be a member of the Sons of The American Legion from birth to death.
 - g. Be sure to highlight the discounts and other benefits available to Legion family members.
 - i. National Emergency Fund
 - ii. Motel discounts
 - iii. Computer and cell phone discounts
 - iv. Eye care discounts
3. What does it take to be a member in the Sons of the American Legion?
- a. Any male descendent of a male or female Veteran in their immediate family may join the SAL if the Veteran is eligible to join the Legion.
 - i. Examples: son, grandson, great-grandson, stepson.
 - b. Can be a member from birth to death.
 - c. Veterans must join the Legion the first year for the son to join the SAL, and then the son is a member forever, provided they stay a member in good standing.
 - i. The Veteran does not have to join the same Post as the sons going to join the Squadron at, can be any Post, anywhere.
 - d. The Sons get almost all the same benefits as the Legion member does with his membership.
 - i. Example: hotel discounts, eye care discounts, computer discounts, cell phone discounts and there are many more discounts you will be eligible for.
4. SAL is not here to take over, just here to support the Legion.
- a. We are a program of the American Legion, so we are only here to help.
 - b. But since we are a program of the American Legion the Post is ultimately responsible for the Squadron's actions.
5. Go back to your Post, share this information, if you would like someone from the Detachment to come and visit with your Post, we would be happy to. Suggest to your Post they take a month to think about this decision, and you can discuss it next month.
- a. This is not a decision the Post should make in a hurry or that night.
 - b. Do a head count of potential SAL members in your community; see if you have the numbers and the Advisors to start a Squadron.
 - i. Invite a member of the Detachment Officer's to come to your next meeting to help answer questions your Post might have.

- ii. At your next month's meeting invite those potential members to the meeting where you can explain to them what the Sons of The American Legion is all about, and how great the organization is.
 - iii. As you talk to these possible new members about the SAL, the Post should hopefully give a little explanation about the Sons to those potential members before the meeting.
 - c. Either at that meeting or at their next meeting the Post should have the vote to start the Squadron or not; but you might want to give those potential members a month to think about it before the Post votes on the Squadron.
 - i. If you, as a Post, vote that night of the second meeting after you share the information or third meeting to start and the potential members there agree to join the Squadron; if you have invited a Detachment Officer to your meeting, they will help you fill out the charter and prepare it to be mailed in.
 - ii. Remember the Post needs only ten (10) new members to do the application. When it comes to having the Charter members sign up, that will happen when the Charter gets back from National Headquarters. Then the Squadron will have them sign onto the Charter.
 - 1. This is also something the new Squadron and the Detachment Officer will decide when they do their organizational meeting when the application is sent in. The Squadron will decide who and how long they will be accepting the new members to be listed as charter members.
- 6. If the Post does decide to start a Squadron, and you don't have a started packet, contact the Department for a starter packet.
 - a. The charter application is a fillable document on myLegion.org.
- 7. You are not alone; the SAL is here to help you.
 - a. The Detachment will be here to help get the Squadron started. Our contact information is listed on our website www.iowaSAL.org.
 - b. We will help you get organized.
 - i. Constitution
 - ii. By-Laws
 - iii. Electing Officers
 - iv. Installing the New Officers
 - c. Help you with your first few meetings in procedures and getting used to running your Squadron and your Advisors use to working with you.
- 8. When the Charter comes back to the Detachment; the Detachment would like to come present the charter to the Squadron and the Post.
 - a. It only takes 15-20 minutes for the short program.
 - b. We open the meeting in proper fashion asking both the Post and Squadron Chaplains to lead the invocation and benediction respectively.
 - c. We invite the Department and Detachment dignitaries.
 - d. You invite the local dignitaries of the Legion, Auxiliary, and the Community. You also invite the local newspapers, TV and radio to come.

- e. If possible, provide lunch following the presentation for those that have driven a long way, and give you a chance to meet and greet the dignitaries.

RESTARTING A SQUADRON

Restarting a Squadron is way simpler than starting a new one. You still need to follow some of the steps it takes to start a new one, but you don't need to file a charter application to do it, and you can transfer members in to help restart the Squadron. All you need to do is cover the Detachment and National dues for the new members of the restarted Squadron.

1. If the Post is considering restarting the Squadron, take some time to make sure your Post is ready to support a Squadron again. Invite a member of the Detachment Officer's to come to your next meeting to help answer questions your Post might have.
2. Contact Department for a restart kit.
 - a. The kit contains membership cards, Squadron Officers Report form and Eligibility Verification Form, Squadron Data Report and some pamphlets to help recruit.
3. Does your Post have what it takes to restart your Squadron?
 - a. Just as important as members in your Squadron, you need at least two (2) Legionaries to be advisors, National organization recommends three (3) advisors.
 - i. They must be just as excited about the Squadron as the new members.
 1. If advisors are not excited about the Squadron, it is hard for a Squadron to stay excited.
 - ii. One or all needs to be at all SAL meetings.
 - iii. They are to be advisers to the Squadron, not to run the meetings; they need to let them be their own organization just to help them stay true to the principles of Legion.
 - iv. Advisors are liaisons to the Legion and SAL carrying news between the 2 organizations.
 - b. Do a head count of potential SAL members in your community; see if you have the numbers.
 - i. You can use transfers as well as new members to restart a Squadron. You need a total of ten (10) members to restart the Squadron.
 - ii. At your next month's meeting invite those potential members to the meeting where you can explain to them what the Sons of The American Legion is all about, and how great the organization is.
 - iii. As you talk to these possible new members about the SAL, the Post should hopefully give a little explanation about the Sons to those potential members before the meeting.
 - iv. Don't discuss with them what the old Squadron did, there will be plenty of time to share once they get going. You want these new members or transfers to come with new ideas to help grow the Squadron and it's activities.
 - c. Either at that meeting or at their next meeting the Post should have the vote to restart the Squadron or not; but you might want to give those potential members a month to think about it before the Post votes on the Squadron.
 - i. If you, as a Post, vote that night of the second meeting after you share the information or third meeting to restart and the potential members there agree to join the Squadron; if you have invited a Detachment Officer to your meeting,

- they will help you fill out the membership cards or member data forms to handle the transfers. You will also have to submit a membership transmittal so your new members can be processed.
- ii. The Post will need to help the new Squadron restart by covering the cost of the Detachment and National dues for this first time. Because the Squadron can only be reactivated once membership has been submitted to the Detachment and National.
 - d. Remember the Post needs only ten (10) new or transferred members to restart the Squadron.
4. You are not alone; the Detachment is here to help you. Our contact information is listed on our website www.iowaSAL.org.
- a. In the next month after the Post votes to restart the Squadron needs to start getting organized because certain paperwork will need to be submitted to both the Detachment and National ASAP.
 - b. The Detachment will help the Squadron and Post get started.
 - i. If you can't find the original Squadron Charter, contact the Department about getting a replacement copy.
 - ii. If you can't find the original Squadron Constitution and By-Laws, we will need to create a new set of documents.
 1. We will help you get organized.
 - a. Constitution
 - b. By-Laws
 - c. Electing Officers
 - d. Installing the New Officers
 - iii. The Squadron has almost the same paperwork as the Legion, so can use the Legion Officers as resources as well.
 1. Once officers are elected the Squadron needs to fill out a Squadron Officers Report and submit it to the Detachment.
 - a. The first year after restarting the Squadron, the Officers Report should be submitted within the first couple months after membership has been sent in.
 2. Squadron Data Report
 - a. Like the Squadron Officers Report, this form needs to be submitted within the first couple of months of restarting so National can reestablish the Squadron's online presence.
 - iv. The Detachment Officer will also help you with your first few meetings in procedures and getting use to running your Squadron and your Advisors use to working with you.