

SONS of the AMERICAN LEGION COMMITTEE

ANTHONY L. "TONY" GLADDEN, (PDVC), CHAIRMAN

I first would like to Thank Commander Channel, **ALL** our Department Vice Commanders, and our entire Department Executive Committee, for the opportunity to chair this committee. Committee leadership members: Vice Chair Mike Smith (*Passaic*) along with Sophia Dmoch (*Bergen*), you both continued to work tirelessly. Their level of commitment and passion was evident in the way they represented us. Major **shout out** to Department Adjutant Baker and our entire headquarters staff... You all handle our business, and the Detachment is very grateful... Thank you everyone for supporting this committee as well as the SAL program.

This past Legion year, our SAL worked very hard with the Department Finance Committee in preparation for the 2026-2027 SAL budget. Our SAL officers and DEC's continued the search for new SAL leadership.

Congratulations to SAL ANEC Henry Hasselhan (*PDC*), this August he will be elected to represent New Jersey as National SAL Vice Commander East. Our New Jersey Sons have very exciting times ahead as the possibility of another high national office could be on the horizon. This further demonstrates the strength of our Sons of the American Legion in New Jersey. It has been a privilege to witness and be a part of the highly motivated and truly dedicated men and young boys who comprise our NJ Sons of the American Legion.

As this is my last report as Department SAL Chair, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the past seven years. I have been the Chairman since Legion year 2019-2020, and I have served at the pleasure of several Department Commanders: PDC's Bob Newell, Danny Dunn, Steve Fisher, Larry Bishop, Andy Jackson and Commander Dan Channel. I would like to thank each of them for the support and allowing us to work this committee and help navigate the advancement of the **LARGEST** American Legion program.

- Our New Jersey SAL has improved membership each year, going over the top for membership. As of now **OUR** Sons have over 10,000 members... that's 10,000 men and young boys in New Jersey helping to advance not just SAL programs but American Legion programs.
- Our SAL has made great strides in organizing to mirror our New Jersey American Legion and keep true to the mission of the Sons organization.
 - Under the direction of PDC's Matt Thalinos, Henry Hasselhan, Mark Natale, Keith Barnes, Rich Hodum and Commander Bill Murphy, our SAL has improved yearly and continues to be a showcase on the national level, maintaining award-winning programs.
- Financially our New Jersey SAL has been fiscally responsible with mentorship and guidance from our Department Finance Committee. We would like to thank Gene O'Grady and Larry Platt for their dedication, patience and leadership. Thank you both for the guidance and attention to detail when overseeing the budget. SAL Finance Officers, PDC's

Dave Page and Carl Alburn Jr. have worked together with our committee to ensure that the Sons have had a financial plan that will continue to advance.

- I must thank ANEC Mike Wilson (*PDC*) and Judge Advocate Danny Dunn (*PDC*); as Department Judge Advocates they have been tremendous allies, ensuring that our SAL has been on the right side of the rules. I would like to thank state SAL Judge Advocate, PDC Amel Belaga Jr. This man has ensured that the SAL is always on point and in compliance with the rules. His dedication is why our New Jersey Sons are one of the best in the nation...
- Finally, I would like to acknowledge past and current leadership of the SAL Committee. Thank You PDC Mike Babli, PDC Andy Jackson, Doug Herrin, Sophia Dmoch, Mike Smith and Ramila "*Missy*" Scott. Thank you all for all the work guidance and most of all your friendship as we all worked together as a TEAM,

Everyone, I truly am thankful for the many friendships we have made along the way. I am honored to have had the opportunity to chair this Committee for seven years, and for the opportunity to represent The Department of New Jersey. My father taught me, "*When something is left in your care... always return it better than you received it.*" I believe our New Jersey Sons of the American Legion is being returned to you BETTER than it was seven years ago!!!